

和

‘WA’
harmony

HIGASHI HONGWANJI HAWAII BETSUIN BULLETIN

5
May 2014

HIGASHI HONGWANJI MISSION OF HAWAII

At Higashi Hongwanji, we remain true to our origins as an open Sangha, welcoming anyone who wishes to learn more about the Jodo Shinshu tradition of Buddhism.

A registered 501(c)3 organization

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Wa is published monthly by Higashi Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii for its members and friends. Comments, articles and other items for publication consideration are welcomed.

Editor: Ken Saiki

BIRTH

Rinban Ken Kawawata

Last month, we had the celebration of Buddha's birth, *Hanamatsuri*. This month, we celebrate *Tanjo-e* (*Tanjo* means birth and *e* means gathering), the birthday of our founder, Shinran Shonin.

So let's think about our own birth. You may sometimes wonder about your birth, life and death. We probably think that we are born in this world with the only condition being that we have a mother and a father, and they are the cause of our birth. You might think that they are fully responsible for our birth and life.

None of us can choose our parents nor can we choose when or where we are born. We don't know who our parents will be. But once we have received life, we have to live it.

We can complain about our lives, but we can't change the conditions of our birth. We have to just live with the conditions that we received.

Shan-tao, a Chinese Pure Land teacher and one of the seven masters of Jodo Shinshu, said that we had a wish to be born in this world before we were born, and we couldn't have been born into this world with the only condition being that we had parents. He said we needed both a cause and condition for our birth.

Our parents are the condition of our birth. The cause of our birth was a wish, "I want to be born in this world," or "I want to have life." This kind of wish we already have before we are born.

Rev. Gyoko Saito, who was Rinban at the Betsuin in 2000, wrote an article about four bean plants with shiny green leaves growing in the temple garden.

When English Egyptologist Howard Carter excavated the tomb of King Tutankhamun in 1922, among the many very rich objects discovered were stored bean seeds, which had been asleep underground for 3,300 years. Because of his affection for the beans, he had them planted in rich soil.

Given sunshine, fertilizer and water, the ancient seeds soon sprouted and grew into healthy plants.

Once this became known, many people wanted offspring seeds of these plants. In 1956, Haruki Taki of Oita, Japan, obtained some and set about to growing the beans. After successfully harvesting them, he shared his joy by announcing in the newspaper that he would send seeds to the first hundred people who asked for them. Mrs. Saito's sister-in-

law obtained some and, like Mr. Taki, she wanted to share her joy with others and gave some to Rev. Saito, who planted them in the Betsuin garden.

Observing these plants made Rev. Saito start to think of his own life. His life, too, had such a long history, even more than the beans' 3,300 years. It goes back to the beginningless beginning of life.

Rev. Saito said, "In order to be what I am, I had to have a father and mother, each of whom had a father and mother, and so on, going back endlessly, without breaking the chain of life, to the very beginning."

According to Rev. Saito, Shan-tao thought that it is very natural to think of birth as the result of having parents. But when he thought deeply about his life, parents weren't the cause. They were the conditions.



Rev. Saito's Egyptian beans illustrate how even a bean can have an "innermost wish" to be born.

(cont'd on p. 2)

BIRTH (cont'd from p. 1)

"The cause of my being as a human is my innermost wish to be born," Rev. Saito said. "When cause and conditions meet, the human being will be born."

"It's very difficult to understand 'innermost wish,' but it becomes clear to me when I think of the Egyptian beans. The bean seeds had slept for 3,300 years, but they held a strong wish to be born as plants. This inner strength is the 'cause.' And the 'conditions' of fatherly sun and tender

loving motherly Earth, with the 'affection' of water and fertilizer, have made the seeds ripen into fine plants."

Mothers and fathers are the conditions, but the cause of our birth is our innermost wish to be born a human being.

Shan-tao understood the conditions and the cause of birth into the Pure Land as similar to our own birth. Amida Buddha is the father, which is symbol of wisdom, while the light is the illumination of wisdom, the mother.

The cause of our birth into the Pure Land is our deep aspiration to be born into the Pure Land, which is the state of great nirvana.

I think that we always have a wish to have this state of great peace in our daily lives. For that, we need to re-examine the meaning of our birth and find our deepest wish for our individual lives.

Happy Birthday, Shinran Shonin.
Happy Birthday, everybody.

In gassho,
Kenjun Kawawata

Family Picture Day

by Faye Shigemura

When was the last time you took a family portrait? For me, it was in 1996 when my daughters were still in their 30s.

There were five of us: my two daughters, our dog, Friskie, our cat. Kylee, and me, the Queen. We let our parrot, Mikey, sit this one out because of our adorable but unpredictable adopted feral cat. My parents had both passed away by 1995, and with the girls all grown up, work and play consumed a large part of our lives.

Betsuin centennial coming up.

As you may know, in 2016 the Betsuin is celebrating its 100th year of serving the community, and we're working on a centennial memorial book to chronicle our history, highlight on our current programs and project our vision for the future.

Our goal is to include photos of original member families who helped build this temple, as well as current members, who are the glue that holds our temple together. Our members have always been the center of our history, and will continue to be the primary reason this temple exists.

Wanted: Family photos.

We're looking for group shots of temple member families to put in our centennial book. Besides current pictures, we're looking for photos from back in the early days of the temple. We'd like to have the photos

by June 1, 2015 to give us ample time to put the book together. We'd prefer digital files that don't need to be returned, but we'll gratefully accept prints, too. When we return your photos, we'll include digital files of the photos we scanned.

And now for the exciting part.

If you don't have a current family portrait, we'll do one for you! **Our first family portrait session is on Sunday, May 4**, after the service, using the lush backdrop of Nuuanu Valley Park, next to the Queen Emma Summer Palace at the corner of Pali Hwy. and Puiwa Rd., between 12:00 noon and 3:00 pm. Bring the whole family! No appointment necessary.



Rev. Fukao and family in a 1930 portrait.

If you can't make it to the May 4 sitting, we're also scheduling photo sessions at the temple every month on the 1st Sunday starting at 12 noon.

If you have family members who cannot make it to the temple because of health or mobility issues, we will gladly go to you, anywhere on Oahu. Please let us know when and where we might be able to schedule the picture taking.

We want to ensure that as many Betsuin member families as possible are included in this commemorative book, and we'll do our best to accommodate everyone to make this book more meaningful to you.

Family history wanted, too

Along with your photos, we'd like to include family histories, such as founding family members' names, deceased dates, occupation, area of Japan your family is from, in what part of Hawaii they lived, and other interesting bits of information you may wish to share. Of course, not everything submitted will necessarily be included in the book, but this is a good opportunity to document some little-known but noteworthy facts about your family which can be perpetuated through this book.

I cannot emphasize enough how much we want your family to be included in this book. You are an important part of our history, and have every reason to be proud of your grandparents and great-grandparents, who worked hard in a foreign land to forge a better life for themselves and their families. We urge you not to miss this opportunity to make sure your family is included in this book of our history.

Please call us at 531-9088 or email us at betsuin@hhbt-hi.org if you have questions or would like to make an appointment.

Did Shakyamuni Teach Japanese Buddhism?

Dr. George Tanabe conducted another well-attended four-part lecture series for Higashi Hongwanji's Dharma Study Center in April. Each session drew about 50 listeners curious about his view on Shakyamuni vs. the brands of Japanese Buddhism taught by Nichiren, Honen and Shinran, founders of the Nichiren, Jodo and Jodo Shinshu Japanese Buddhist denominations respectively.

No stranger to controversy, Dr. Tanabe shared his theories developed through the years while a professor of religion at UH - Manoa, with an audience largely made up of followers of various Japanese Buddhist sects.

At the very outset he pointed out that *all* scriptures incorporate mythology to enhance the spiritual message, including incredible examples of a virgin birth or a baby who's able to walk seven steps and talk at birth.

Dr. Tanabe went on to explain that the founders of the various



Dr. Tanabe compares practices of Shakyamuni with those of Nichiren, Honen and Shinran.

Japanese Buddhist sects could not have had first-hand knowledge of what Shakyamuni Buddha preached, despite what the sutras seem to imply. Nichiren, Honen and Shinran lived centuries after Shakyamuni died, and had but scant knowledge of Shakyamuni's life. Just about the only thing everyone accepts as fact is that he died of food poisoning.

Shakyamuni's practice to improve

karma was the "self power" approach to moral perfection. Being difficult to achieve on one's own, Mahayana Buddhism along the way introduced various rituals, ceremonies and deities to assist, in particular for the uneducated and weak.

For several centuries, Japanese Buddhism was orthodox Tendai and Shingon as imported from China by Saicho and Kukai. During the Kamakura Period, however, Nichiren, Honen and Shinran, all of whom were Tendai monks, started to espouse a different brand of Buddhism. They were considered heretics, choosing to teach a different path to enlightenment from the orthodox one.

Nichiren (1222-1282) saw that the large number of sutras were saying different things, often contradictory, and realized that not all sutras can be right. He concluded that the Lotus Sutra was the highest teaching to attain enlightenment.

Honen (1133-1212) sought to teach an easier path to rebirth in the Pure Land that anyone could follow, through meditation on Amida or simply reciting the nembutsu. Ironically, this "easy" path to obtain deliverance was difficult because it seemed so easy that it was hard to believe.

Shinran (1173-1262) came to the realization that that we have already received everything from Amida and nothing depends on one's own power, and anyone can access the great power of Amida's vow simply by "turning on the light switch" and reciting the nembutsu.

Dr. Tanabe admitted that some of his views might not be fully embraced by everyone. Regardless, they should serve as starting points for healthy discussion or further study to deepen our own understanding of our beliefs.

His list of recommended reading included *What the Buddha Taught*, Waipola Rahula; *Buddhist Philosophy*, David Kalupahana; and *Heretical Imperative*, Peter Berger.

My Mother

Mothers Day is just around the corner; the day reserved for honoring mothers.

My mother passed away in 1995 but somehow it doesn't seem that long ago. I still see her kind and gentle face and sometimes feel as though she's with me.

Mom had an abundance of patience. She not only raised three daughters but also cared for my father's two younger siblings and her mother-in-law. I recall being in the kitchen with her when I was perhaps 8 years old and in my eyes being of help but in reality probably not so much. She never shooed me away. No matter how busy she was she always seemed to be time for me and the many questions an 8-year-old has.

Softball was one of her favorite sports. We lived a few blocks from Lanakila School so she would walk to the field when there was a game and she'd sit on the bleachers in the hot sun cheering everyone on. It didn't matter who was winning, she just enjoyed the game. I also remember her taking me to Toyo Theater on River Street to watch samurai movies with my then-favorite actor, Nakamura Kinnosuke.

Mom was also a great cook. She often cooked shoyu chicken wings, I like to think because it was one of my favorite dishes. We recently had shoyu chicken wings for one of our regular after-service Sunday lunches, which brought back memories of her.

Looking back I realize Mom made many sacrifices for us; putting our needs before hers.

I miss Mom.

— Debra Saiki

News on the Betsuin Wireless



Debra and Dennis Saiki give a "poodle cut" to the temple's black pine tree.

Kokua Day at the Betsuin

April showers bring May flowers... as well as tall weeds, overgrown hedges and various unwanted shrubs on Betsuin grounds. Even our black pine "giant bonsai" near the temple entrance had sprouted an unsightly cowlick.

Although we have a regular yardman, there are certain tasks which are beyond the maintenance schedule, yet we need to get them done to maintain a neat and orderly appearance to the grounds.

So who you gonna call? You're right...Yard Busters! An energetic squad of volunteers reported for duty early on a clear, sunny Saturday morning on April 19. Armed with weed-whackers, power mowers, hedge trimmers, shears, weeders and sickles, they managed to fill two



Rev. Bansaka (left) rakes up the hedge trimmings while Bishop Kawawata bags.

green waste bins in short order. Meanwhile, others were planting ginger shoots, raking and sweeping the trimmings or trying to repair an extension cord cut by a certain rinban (who shall remain nameless) while operating a hedge trimmer. Still others were re-doing bulletin boards, doing data entry or preparing lunch for the volunteers.

Speaking of lunch, the Busters were rewarded with *grande* beef burritos, crafted by Joyce Masaki and Jeanne Kawawata, which were so *grande* they barely fit in the mouth. Plus Spanish rice on the side, which brought back nostalgic memories of elementary school cafeteria lunches.

With thirst quenched and tummies filled, the volunteers had only one other activity in mind: head straight home for a siesta.

The next day, a few of the helpers not accustomed to outdoor manual labor admitted to waking up feeling a wee bit stiff, but they weren't complaining. In fact, to them it felt good to be closer to nature for a few hours, offering a greenish opportunity to renew the mind and soul, and think more closely about life.

But everyone agreed that our Kokua Day was a great way to "give back" and help beautify the Betsuin grounds for the benefit of everyone ...not only for our temple members today, but for the sake of *Jiji*, *Baba* and everyone else inured in the columbarium, as well as for the generations of grateful descendants who come to visit and pay their respects. After all, we're one big family.

Watch for an announcement of the next opportunity to be part of a Yard Busters squad on a future date.

"The Burmese Harp" to be shown as May movie of the month

An Imperial Japanese Army regiment surrenders to British forces in Burma at the end of World War II and finds harmony through song. A private, thought to be dead, disguises himself as a Buddhist monk and stumbles upon spiritual awakening. The 1956

b&w film is an eloquent meditation on beauty coexisting with death and remains one of Japanese cinema's most powerful antiwar statements, both tender and brutal in its grappling with Japan's wartime legacy.

Awarded the San Giorgio Prize at Venice Film Festival, 1956, and nominated for Best Foreign Film at the Academy Awards, 1957.



Kon Ishikawa's "The Burmese Harp" was magnificently shot in hushed black & white.

Stars Rentaro Mikuni as Capt. Inoue & Shoji Yasui as Pvt. Mizushima. Directed by Kon Ichikawa.

Showtime: 6:30 pm, Tues., May 27. Free admission, open to all. Ample seating in Fukuhara Conference Room.

ビルマの豎琴 (ビルマのたてごと)

1956年に一度映画化された竹山道雄の同名小説を同じ市川崑監督で再映画化。日本兵の霊を慰めるため、僧侶となってひとりビルマの地に残る兵士の姿を描く。1945年夏。ビルマ戦線の日本軍はタイ国へと苦難の撤退を続けていた。そんな逃避行の最中、井上小隊長率いる部隊は、みな音楽好きで水島上等兵の弾く豎琴の音に合わせ力強く合唱していた。やがて終戦を知った彼らは投降し、ムドンに護送されることになったが、水島だけは未だ抵抗を続ける日本軍に降伏を勧めるため隊を離れるのだが…。

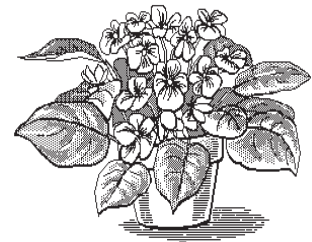
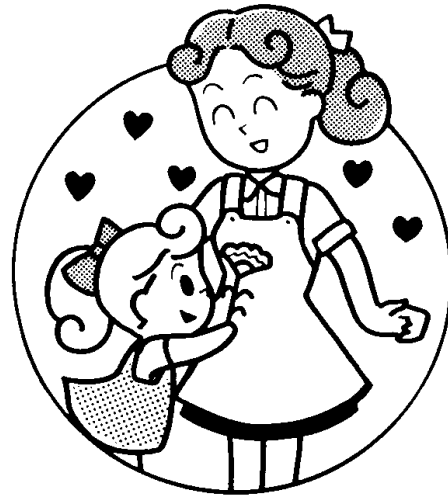
1956年、ヴェネツィア国際映画祭サン・ジョルジオ賞受賞。1957年、アカデミー外国語映画賞にもノミネートされた。

出演者 井上：三國連太郎 水島：安井昌二 言語：日本語、字幕：英語 映時間：116分 白黒 入場無料 5月27日(火)午後6:30時

Mothers Day Family Service

Sunday, May 11, 2014
10:00 a.m.

Message : Mr. Kenneth Saiki



母の日家族礼拝

2014年5月11日

午前10時

メッセージ：佐伯 ケネス氏

After-service refreshments served by the men of the temple.

HIGASHI HONGWANJI MISSION OF HAWAII

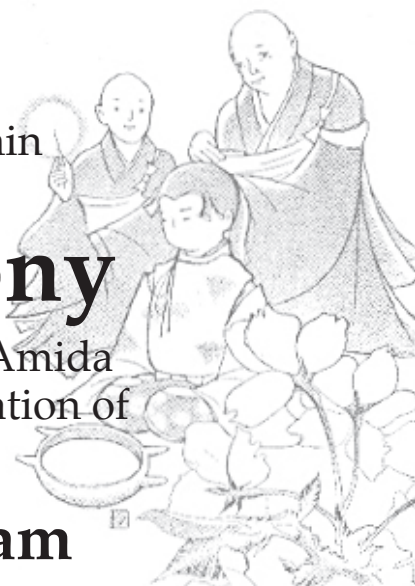
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Tanjo-e Service

in celebration of the birth of Shinran Shonin

Hatsumairi Ceremony

to present children up to 6 years of age before Amida Buddha for the first time, signifying the foundation of a healthy spiritual life.



Sunday, May 18, 2014 10:00 am

Message by Rev. Frank Childs



親鸞聖人誕生会 新生児初参り法要

2014年5月18日 午前10時

初参りは、新しいいのちの誕生を祝う儀式です。6才までのお子さんを受け付け致します。お早めにお寺まで申し込んでください。

日本語法話：河和田賢淳輪番

HIGASHI HONGWANJI HAWAII BETSUIN HATSUMAIRI CEREMONY PARTICIPATION APPLICATION

YES! I wish to have my child/grandchild participate in the May 18 Hatsumairi ceremony.

Child's Name _____ Sex: M / F Birthdate _____

Parents' Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP code _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

HIGASHI HONGWANJI MISSION OF HAWAII

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TEMPLE ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

MAY 2014

5/4	Sun	10 am	Shotsuki memorial service & Sunday school
5/4	Sun	12 pm	Mothers Day picnic at Nuuanu Valley Park - Family portrait sitting
5/8	Thu	7 pm	ABCs of Buddhism study class led by Rinban Kawawata in English
5/10	Sat	10 am	What on Earth Is Namuamidabutsu? led by Rev. Frank Childs
5/11	Sun	10 am	Mothers Day family service & Sunday school
5/11	Sun	12 pm	Basic Buddhism study class led by Rinban Kawawata in Japanese
5/13	Tue	3 pm	Ukulele class/band practice
5/18	Sun	10 am	Shinran Shonin birthday service
5/18	Sun	12 pm	Betsuin board meeting
5/20	Tue	7 pm	O-ko: Dharma discussion at Betsuin Fukuhara Conference Room
5/25	Sun	10 am	All Wars memorial service
5/27	Tue	3 pm	Ukulele class/band practice
5/27	Tue	6:30 pm	Movie night: <i>The Burmese Harp</i>
5/28	Mon	10 am	Shinran Shonin memorial service
5/28	Mon	11 am	Recitation circle

JUNE 2014

6/1	Sun	10 am	Shotsuki memorial service & Sunday school
6/1	Sun	12 pm	Family portrait sitting
6/8	Sun	10 am	Sunday service
6/8	Sun	12 pm	Basic Buddhism study class led by Rinban Kawawata in Japanese
6/10	Tue	3 pm	Ukulele class/band practice
6/12	Thu	7 pm	ABCs of Buddhism study class led by Rinban Kawawata in English
6/14	Sat	10 am	What on Earth Is Namuamidabutsu? led by Rev. Frank Childs
6/15	Sun	10 am	Sunday service
6/15	Sun	12 pm	Betsuin board meeting
6/17	Tue	7 pm	O-ko: Dharma discussion at Kaneohe
6/22	Sun	10 am	Sunday service
6/22	Sun	11:30 am	Ehime Maru Memorial cleaning Picnic lunch at Kakaako Waterfront Park
6/24	Tue	3 pm	Ukulele class/band practice
6/24	Tue	6:30 pm	Movie night: <i>The Hidden Blade</i>
6/28	Sat	10 am	Shinran Shonin memorial service
6/28	Sat	11 am	Recitation circle
6/29	Sun	10 am	Sunday service

Everyone is welcome to join in on our sutra chanting at 7 am daily (except Sundays) in the Betsuin Main Hall.