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HIGASHI HONGWANJI HAWAII BETSUIN BULLETIN

December 2017
12

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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Editor: Ken Saiki

CELEBRATING BODHI DAY

Rinban Kenjun Kawawata

Generally, people think the Buddhism is a religion, but Buddhism does not fit into the general concept of religion. Buddhism is the teaching of the Buddha and this teaching is called the Dharma. Essentially, Buddhism is a way of *self-awareness* or *understanding*.

Buddhism was developed over 2,500 years ago in India. The founder of Buddhism, Siddhartha Gautama, was born to the king and queen of the Shakya clan. He was set for life. His father wished that he would succeed him as king and live a comfortable life, with wealth and power, sheltered from human sufferings.

However, the first time Siddhartha ventured out from the palace, he saw sickness, aging and death—the realities of human life. From then on he was always thinking about suffering he witnessed. He pondered how he might be able to transcend human suffering and have peace of mind. How does one achieve peace of mind? He knew wealth and power couldn’t lead him to real peace.

At age 29, he left the comforts of his palace home. In an effort to transcend human suffering, he visited ascetic practice teachers to learn how to attain his desired state of mind. At that time in India, ascetic practice was thought to be the path to pure mind and pure spirit—the state of Nirvana.

After six years of futile searching, he finally gave up. He washed his body and went under a big Bodhi tree for meditation. He realized he would have to reconsider his way to attain peace of mind.

It is said that in the early morning of December 8, while gazing at a morning star, he realized the cause of human suffering is Ignorance. He found ignorance in himself. He shouted, “Oh darkness, Ignorance!” and became The Awakened One.

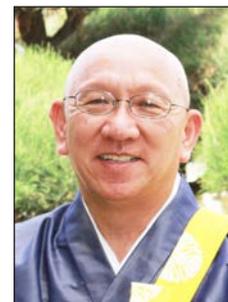
Exactly what is ignorance? Ignorance means we don’t know the truth. Then what is truth for us? Truth is impermanence. For us, impermanence means aging, sickness and death.

But in our daily lives we don’t want to think like this. We always try to avoid or escape from this truth. We always wish to be young and healthy. Buddha, too, wished to be young and healthy. He wished to live an unchanging life. Buddha shouted to himself, “Ignorance!”

This was the real understanding of himself and his truth. Buddha found he lived in world of impermanence that is himself. Impermanence is life. Life is impermanence. He accepted his life as it is. From this point he could discover the teaching of the truth—the Dharma—and a new life.

Buddhism is based on his awakening and his teaching, which lead us to have the true understanding of self and peace in our daily lives. That’s why we celebrate the day of his awakening, Bodhi Day, and reflect on how his awakening has shaped each and every one of our individual lives.

I look forward to seeing you as we celebrate Bodhi Day this month.



Rinban Ken Kawawata

HAWAII BUDDHIST COUNCIL BODHI DAY SERVICE
9:30 am Sunday, Dec. 3
Soto Mission of Hawaii
1708 Nuuanu Ave. (above N. School St.)

BETSUIN BODHI DAY SERVICE
10:00 am Sunday, Dec. 10
Higashi Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii
1685 Alaneo St. (corner N. Kuakini St.)



Oosouji • Yearend cleaning

Even from ancient times in Japan, the end of the year marked the annual custom of 大掃除 (*oosouji*, or “big cleaning”), a top-to-bottom major house cleaning effort to get rid of clutter and dirt and start the new year fresh.

During the Edo era, *oosouji* was also thought of as a purification ritual in preparation for greeting the *toshigami* new year gods. Today *oosouji* represents an ideal time to start anew with a clean beginning.

An important element of *oosouji* is ridding your home of dirt and dust, known as 煤払い (*susuharai*, or dust cleaning). *Oosouji* is a family affair, and everyone has to help. While cleaning, one gives thanks for the blessings of the bygone year and ensures the purity of the home for the year ahead.

The end-of-year deep cleaning gets at the places usually bypassed in daily or weekly cleaning, such as tops of cabinets, light fixtures, stove hoods and verandas.

Schools and workplaces also want to put their best face forward for a clean start in the new year. Many parents join the students and teachers in helping with the cleaning.

Most schools in Japan don't have custodial staff to do the daily cleaning. Students, along with their teachers, conduct the basic maintenance in the classrooms, hallways and school grounds, including the bathrooms. The duties rotate. In this way, students learn how to work as a team to keep common areas clean and learn to appreciate cleanliness and those who maintain a clean environment.

Temples and shrines in Japan count on volunteers in their communities to assist in *oosouji*. To this day, temple and shrine members in Hawaii have carried on the time-honored tradition of assisting in the yearend cleanings.

Betsuin members and friends will gather at the temple at 9 am on Sat., Dec. 30 for *oosouji* and clean windows, жалousies, screens, shelves, cabinet tops and other areas normally skipped in regular cleaning. A lunch reward awaits at Otani Center after 11.

Also, don't forget our *omigaki* polishing of the Betsuin's altar accessories, scheduled for Sun., Dec. 10 at 12 noon, following the Betsuin Bodhi Day service and lunch. Armed with microfiber cloths and metal polish, volunteers gather around the conference room table to put a shine on the dozens of brass items. It's actually fun to transform tarnished altar ornaments into gleaming ones, and while you're at it, you'll learn a lot about all the others gathered around the table.

So *oosouji*, really, isn't much different from spring cleaning, except Americans presumably put off the chore until spring because frigid winter weather keeps folks from starting any earlier. Well, that excuse might work in Duluth, Minnesota or upstate New York—possibly even Wahiawa Heights—but everyone else will be much better off making it a tradition before the beginning of a new year.

Eliminating the dirt and cobwebs of an old year gives you a clean slate to start with and allows you to plan for a more organized, successful new year!

— Ken Saiki

New 2018 calendar available at temple

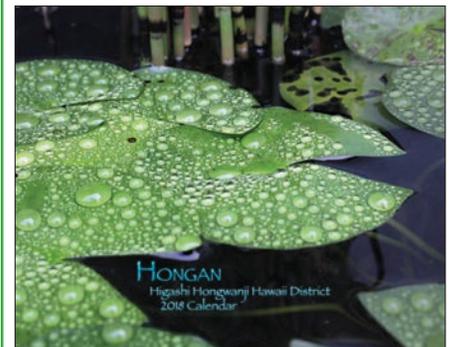
Our 2018 Higashi Hongwanji Hawaii District calendar is hot off the presses and is now available at all Higashi temples in Hawaii.

Some Betsuin members may have already received their copy of the full-color calendar, or will soon see it in their mailboxes. The calendar continues the theme of *Hongan: Awakening to Your Deepest Wish*.

We hope that whenever you glance at the 2018 calendar, either on a wall or at your desk, you'll take the time to pause and reflect on being a selfless seeker of the truth. As a starting point, we must first realize our own ignorance to become a learner.

Through colorful photographs, the calendar attempts to put a face behind some basic dharma concepts, including Appreciation, Harmony, Nurture, Study, Community & Togetherness and Honor & Service.

In our modern lives, the events in our home or around the world may bring surprising causes and



conditions. Let's seek and learn each day, each moment, throughout the year as a Sangha community, loving and enriching this one community.

As with our past Higashi Hongwanji Hawaii District calendars, we appreciate your donations to help defray the costs of printing and mailing.

We thank you for your support. If you would like additional copies of the calendar, please call the Betsuin office at 531-9088.



Dr. Tanabe describes Buddhism's appeal as a religion as well as a spirituality in the West.

Both Old and New Buddhism flourish in Western culture

Buddhism's relevance in Western culture got a thorough examination in Dr. George Tanabe's two-part Dharma Study Center lecture series held at the Betsuin Nov. 9 and 10.

Mahayana Buddhism successfully migrated from India to China in the 1st century and then to Japan via Korea in the 6th century. During the ensuing 1,700 years in Japan, Dr. Tanabe said that various interpretations of the teachings of the historical Buddha—including those espoused by Shinran Shonin, founder of our Jodo Shinshu denomination—may have made Buddhism easier to understand for many but, at the same time, possibly more difficult to practice.

Some may see Jodo Shinshu and other traditional Japanese Buddhist sects as being old-fashioned, ritualistic and not compatible with the "American way." At the same time, a modern form of "protestant" Buddhism, reaching back to Old Buddhism and the original teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha, including practice of meditation and self-reliance, has become popular in the West.

As Bishop Emyo Imamura, Honpa Hongwanji's second bishop in Hawaii suggested, however, Jodo Shinshu is actually "perfect for America since it teaches equality," a sentiment echoed by pioneer Buddhist educator Ernest Hunt, who touted the denomination's teaching of human equality. Other

scholars such as Otani Komyo found in Amida's vow a close fit to true peace and Western social-political tradition, especially in Hawaii, where East meets West, and Japanese tradition is revered and preserved. Old Buddhism still flourishes in Hawaii as it does in Japan.

Join us for mochi pounding 12/24

Here's a suggested activity for you and your family during the morning on Christmas Eve. Pounding your own mochi is fun to do, helps perpetuate the age-old tradition, teaches the next generation how it's done and best of all, you get to take your mochi home to use as decorative *kagami mochi* and put in *ozoni* for New Year's, or eat with *kinako*, *shoyu* or other favorite way!

Pounding begins at 9 am Sunday, Dec. 24. Since we'll need to know how much mochi rice to prepare the day before, please let us know ahead of time how many you'll be bringing by calling the temple at 531-9088.

Confucius say, "Family who pound mochi together, stick together!"

Jazz G-Men is a charming tale of seeking "the impossible dream"

Honjo, a town in northern Saitama Prefecture. Kawamoto (Toshiya Sakai), head of the Honjo Chamber of Commerce, and Sasakawa (Yu Tokui), manager of the shopping mall, dream up a project to revitalize their sleepy town by forming a citizen jazz band. The two persuade Nozute (Shogo Shimizu), a retired junior high school music teacher, to be the bandleader.

They seek experienced brass players but the only people who gather are elderly amateurs, except for the mysterious and beautiful pianist, Hitomi Sakurai (Tomomi Miyashita). Cake shop owner Goto (Jun Inoue) likes jazz and buys a vintage sax for this occasion. Matsuko (Matsumi Fuku) of the wagashi shop has only played a recorder. Cucumber farmer Hanayama (Koichi Ueda) doesn't even know jazz. Nakano (Sabu Kawahara), a stubborn noodle shop owner, brags that he was the best trumpet player in middle school. Christmas is just three months away...

The film won awards at the 2011

Tokyo International Women's Film Festival and 2012 Jecheon (Korea) International Music & Film Festival.

Showtime: 6:30 pm, Tues., Dec. 26, 92 min. Directed by Yui Miyatake (2011). Color, Japanese audio, English subtitles. Free admission. Light refreshments, or bring to share!

JAZZ 爺MEN (JAZZじいMEN)

埼玉県北部にある町、本庄。人通りのないこの町をなんとか町おこししようと、本庄商工会議所事務局長・川本（酒井敏也）とショッピングモールの支配人・笹川（徳井優）は、即席市民ジャズバンドを結成するプロジェクトを立ち上げる。2人に口説かれ、中学の音楽教師を定年退職した野津手（清水章吾）が、指導に当たることになる。吹奏楽経験者を市民から募集するが、集まったのは、謎めいた美人ピアニスト桜井瞳（宮下ともみ）以外は、ド素人の高齢者ばかりだった。お調子者の洋菓子店店主の後藤（井上順）はジャズ好きで、この日のためにビンテージ・サクスを買ってしまっていた。和菓子屋の登代子（ふく・まつみ）は、リコーダーしか吹いたことがない。キュウリ農家の花山（上田耕一）は、ジャズ



すら知らない。頑固な製麺店の中野（河原さぶ）は、中学でトランペットがいちばんうまかったと自慢するが。クリスマスまであと3ヶ月...

賞歴：第24回東京国際女性映画祭正式出品、第8回韓国堤川国際音楽映画祭出品。

監督：宮武由衣、公開：2011年、カラー、言語：日本語、字幕：英語、映時間：92分、12月26日(火)午後6:30時、入場無料。

A magical day at Magic Island

by Debra Saiki

The downpour the evening before, complete with crackling lightning, booming thunder and a flash flood warning, wasn't very encouraging. The temple picnic was all planned out for Ala Moana Park's Magic Island for the next morning.

By the time dawn broke, however, the day magically turned out to be a perfect one for a picnic: sunshine and clear blue skies, kissed by gentle, cooling breezes.

The Nov. 12 Betsuin gathering at Magic Island was actually one of our periodic outings to supplement the Sunday dharma school classroom activities normally scheduled for the children.

A small makeshift altar was set up, along with a couple of rows of folding chairs. As we sat under monkey pod trees facing the ocean with a Diamond Head vista to our left, Rinban Kawawata led the chanting of *Shoshinsan* for our short service. Rev. Kikuchi's dharma talk about a hike he took in Nuuanu and the magnificent view at the end of the trail, illustrated how Nature is intertwined in our daily lives.



Can Hana beat Kevin to the finish line?



While some couldn't wait to go to the beach or explore the park, others preferred talking story under the canopy of shade trees. Picnic photos courtesy of Carl Okuda

Immediately following was lunch. It must have been the salt air mixed with being outdoors; the potluck lunch was extra delicious. And what a great spread to pick from, including musubi and other rice dishes, chicken, potato salad, veggies, egg rolls, fruits, boiled peanuts, scones and chocolate chip cookies.

Next up, games. Remember the *kenjinkai* picnics from small-kid time with the spoon relays with the raw egg? Ping pong balls have replaced the eggs, but the game is just as much fun and everybody wins a prize!

It was also a great day for the water balloon toss. Choose a partner and gently toss the water balloon back and forth from progressively farther away. Last team standing with water still in the balloon instead of soaked in their clothing was none other than the young minister team of Kikuchi- and Kita-sensei.

The *suika-wari*, or watermelon-splitting contest, was an opportunity for the alpha males to see if their latent samurai DNA was still alive. Blindfolded and wielding a kendo *bokken* wooden sword, all the would-be Zatoichis set out one by one to make mincemeat out of the watermelon. Every single one of them failed. Fortunately Debbie and Margaret made contact and Mai, a.k.a. Lady Naotora, struck the final blow. Once the watermelon was split, nearly everyone was burying their faces in the refreshing ice-cold treat.

Winner of the "Guess the Number of Hershey's Kisses in the Jar" contest was Debbie, whose guess of 121 won her the prize of, naturally, the jar of Kisses.

Once the organized games were done, it was official leisure time. While some ventured into the water, others wanted to bask in the sun, practice their cool soccer moves or handstands, jog around the park or simply kick back under the shade trees and talk story.



Refreshing ice-cold seedless watermelon... Yum! It can't get much better than this!

Everybody seemed to enjoy themselves at the Sunday school picnic—even the children!—and now there's talk of doing this more often.

We'll keep you posted once we decide on the next one. Hope to see you next time!



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TEMPLE ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

DECEMBER

12/3 Sun 9:30 am	HBC Bodhi Day service (No Sunday service at Betsuin)
12/4 Mon 10 am	Betsuin study class
12/10 Sun 10 am	Betsuin Bodhi Day service
12/10 Sun 12 pm	Omigaki altar items polishing
12/12 Tue 3 pm	Ukulele class/band practice
12/14 Thu 7 pm	The Larger Sutra study class led by Rinban Kawawata in English Fukuhara Conference Room
12/17 Sun 10 am	Shōtsuki service/Sunday school
12/17 Sun 12 pm	Betsuin board meeting
12/17 Sun 12 pm	Art of Paper Folding class
12/18 Mon 10 am	Betsuin study class
12/19 Tue 7 pm	O-kō: Dharma discussion at Betsuin
12/24 Sun 9 am	Mochi pounding
12/26 Tue 3 pm	Ukulele class/band practice
12/26 Tue 6:30 pm	Movie night: Jazz G-Men (Jazz 爺 Men) Fukuhara Conference Room
12/28 Thu 10 am	Shinran Shōnin memorial service
12/30 Sat 9 am	Oosōji temple cleaning
12/31 Sun 5:30 pm	Year-end service - Jōya-e Ritual bell-tolling 108 times Join us after service for toshi-koshi soba

JANUARY 2018

1/1 Mon 10 am	New Year's Day service - Shūshō-e Join us after service for ozōni soup
1/7 Sun 10 am	Shōtsuki service/Sunday school
1/7 Sun 12pm	The Larger Sutra study class led by Rinban Kawawata in Japanese 無量寿経 日本語仏教講座 現代語で仏教を聞こう!
1/8 Mon 10 am	Betsuin study class
1/9 Tue 3 pm	Ukulele class/band practice
1/11 Thu 7 pm	The Larger Sutra study class led by Rinban Kawawata in English Fukuhara Conference Room
1/14 Sun 10 am	Sunday service/Sunday school
1/15 Mon 10 am	Betsuin study class
1/16 Tue 7 pm	O-kō: Dharma discussion at Kaneohe
1/20 Sat 10 am	Joint Dharma Gathering
1/21 Sun 10 am	Sunday service/Sunday school
1/21 Sun 12 pm	Betsuin board meeting
1/23 Tue 3 pm	Ukulele class/band practice
1/23 Tue 6:30 pm	Movie night: Dog in a Sidecar (サイドカーに犬) Fukuhara Conference Room
1/28 Sun 10 am	Shinran Shōnin memorial service Sunday service/Sunday school

Everyone is welcome to join the morning chanting held at 7 am daily (except on Sundays & the 28th day of the month) in the Betsuin main hall.