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## HIGASHI HONGWANJI HAWAII BETSUIN BULLETIN

April 2018  
**4**

### 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

## WHY CELEBRATE SHAKYAMUNI’S BIRTH?

Rev. Koen Kikuchi

Shakyamuni’s birth is celebrated on April 8 as Buddha Day in many parts of the world, or Hanamatsuri (“Flower Festival”) in Japan. In this article I’d like to address why we celebrate his birthday.

But first, let’s consider what Hanamatsuri is. Why do we prepare the *hanamido*, flowers and sweet tea? You’ll often find a decorated white



Rev. Koen Kikuchi

elephant at Buddhist temples on Buddha Day. Do you know the story of the elephant and what it stands for? One day, Queen Maya dreamed of a white elephant entering her body. Then she became pregnant. People considered that the white elephant brought Shakyamuni Buddha to Maya’s body and thus celebrated Shakyamuni’s birth with a white elephant.

Elephants are significant for other reasons in India. In Hinduism, an elephant is considered sacred. Hindus worship a god called “Ganesha,” who has the body of human and the head of an elephant. Ganesha is called a god of wealth and a god of wisdom. Ganesha is also a god of new beginnings and gives people power for starting new things, such as a new business. So, the story of the elephant entering the dream is steeped in Hindu tradition.

How about the flowers? When Queen Maya became pregnant, she decided to go back in her hometown to have her baby. On the way, she stopped at Lumbini Garden, which had many flowers, and ended up giving birth there. And that’s why we celebrate Shakyamuni’s birthday with beautiful flowers.

As for the origin of pouring sweet tea on the statue of Baby Buddha, one account says that when Shakyamuni was born, there was a gentle rain in the Lumbini Garden. Another says that when Shakyamuni was born, nine dragons appeared and poured pure, sweet tea for his first bath.

Right after birth, it is said Shakyamuni walked seven steps and said, “Above the heaven and below the the heaven, I am the only noble one,” which shows the importance and preciousness of our lives.

Shinran Shonin said, “When I consider deeply the Vow of Amida, which arose from five kalpas of profound thought, I realize that it was entirely for the sake of myself alone. All of Amida’s work is only for myself. In other words, the teaching of the Buddha and the wish from the Amida are only for my life and to make me realize the preciousness of my life. No one can be a substitute for my life. I understand the meaning of this precious life of mine.”

(cont’d on p. 2)

## Hanamatsuri 2018

Please join us for special services commemorating the Buddha’s birth

### HBC Buddha Day service

Sunday, April 1 at 9:00 am  
Soto Mission of Hawaii  
1708 Nuuanu Ave.  
(half-block mauka of N. School St.)

### Betsuin Hanamatsuri service

Sunday, April 8 at 10:00 am  
Higashi Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii  
1685 Alaneo St. (corner N. Kuakini St.)



## HANAMATSURI (cont'd from p. 1)

The two expressions from Shakyamuni and Shinran Shonin look similar. Both of them mention “only me” or “are only for me.” Do you think this is an arrogant attitude or a self-centered way of thinking? The important point is the way of viewing oneself. What is the way to look at ourselves?

If I think that I am the most noble one in this world, unconsciously, I am comparing myself to others and thinking that I am more noble than others. This means that I think I am the most noble one in this world of five billion people. Many people share this world, and I am part of the larger group—but I am the most noble.

Since our childhood, we’ve been taught to think, “I am one of many groups in society. I am one of the students. I am one of the workers. I am one of the citizens.” If we think in this way, the words, “I am the only noble one” may appear as an arrogant attitude. But that’s not what Shakyamuni and Shinran Shonin were saying.

Their point was that each one of us has an individual world. We cannot compare ourselves to others. Nobody can be a substitute for our lives. We can see other people in our world, but we cannot see others’ worlds through our own world. Each world is standing independently.

If we think in this way, the phrase “I am the only noble one” will not be an arrogant attitude. If we think in this way, we can see everything in the world as connected to and in support of our lives. All the things from the past and even in the future are making up my existence. All the complicated interrelatedness give us the meaning that I am here and now.

What I would like to say is that there are two different ways of seeing the world. We tend to think the way of seeing things is through comparing. But what Shakyamuni said, “I am the only noble one,” and what Shinran Shonin expressed, “All of the Amida’s work is only for myself,” teach us that we are living our own precious lives which we cannot compare to or replace with another. Shakyamuni and Shinran Shonin teach

**“Hanamatsuri shouldn’t be just another event, but rather it should be the only event from which we can learn from the meaning of his birth.”**



Rev. Kikuchi believes that celebrating Shakyamuni’s birth is not the main point of Hanamatsuri, but should be the day we reflect upon our connection with Shakyamuni or his teachings.

## Seven years after the devastation...

**Young people from Fukushima have come here to share their stories. Let’s listen to what they have to tell us.**

Date: Sunday, April 1

Time: 11:00 am

Following HBC Buddha Day service

Place: Soto Mission of Hawaii Social Hall

1708 Nuuanu Ave. in Honolulu

Speakers: Ayami Asagi (浅木彩未)

Shiori Azuma (吾妻志緒莉)

Minon Endo (遠藤美音)

Toshimi Endo (遠藤としみ)

## Fukushima Children’s Recovery Project

Sponsored by

Higashi Honganji Hawaii District

us about our precious lives, and they teach us about our tendency, or danger, of comparing.

Is the purpose of Hanamatsuri for celebrating Shakyamuni’s birth? Do you think that celebrating is the main point of Hanamatsuri? I don’t think so. Hanamatsuri should be a day of reflecting upon the connection between Shakyamuni and me, or between his teaching and me.

We should think about how Shakyamuni and his teaching became our energy for living. We should think about how Shakyamuni and his teaching have influenced our lives.

Hanamatsuri shouldn’t be just another event, but rather it should be the *only* event from which we can learn from the meaning of his birth. I think celebrating is second after first considering the relation of Shakyamuni and ourselves.

Then, and only then, can we share this Hanamatsuri together to the point of where we connect to Shakyamuni Buddha. Everyone and everything is making up my present existence from the past, present and future.

What Shakyamuni did for us is he left Buddhism in this world. I would like to express my appreciation to Shakyamuni Buddha, and to all of you reading this article.

— Rev. Koen Kikuchi



Besides his lecture, Rev. Conway shared his unique American perspective at a dharma talk and discussion session at the Betsuin.

### Dr. Conway's week in Hawaii not all blue skies and sunshine

While on a normal trip to Hawaii one might expect time to relax in shorts in the surf and sun, Rev. Michael Conway's cold and wet time off on Saturday was better outfitted with a poncho and rain boots.

But what are expectations anyway? As Rev. Conway reminded us in his Sunday dharma message at our Rennyō Shōnin memorial service on March 25, mistaken expectations are recipe ingredients for suffering, and everything going according to plan is not a necessary condition for happiness.

District ministers had spent three days during the week training with Dr. Conway, who is a lecturer at Otani University in Kyoto. Then on Friday, he conducted a Shinshū Center of America public lecture at the Betsuin describing the Komyō Honzon scroll, with overviews of the persons depicted and the sutra and patriarch passages inscribed on the scroll.

On Saturday evening, we held a poolside potluck barbecue at Kei Tsuji's home. It was a great way to thank Rev. Conway for sharing his knowledge of Shin Buddhism with us, get to know each other better, wish him a safe trip back and subtly coax him to visit again, and yes, without any expectation of sunshine or blue skies.

### Q: What's yellow & black, has 10 legs & runs 25K in about 2.5 hours?

A: A Higashi Hongwanji Betsuin Rainbow Ekiden relay team!

On March 11, our five Betsuin team members—Rev. Koen Kikuchi, Kevin Kawawata, Margaret Hamachi, Mai Kikuchi and Rev. Hidesato Kita—each ran a 5K Diamond Head relay leg starting and ending at Kapiolani Park to finish 38th among 110 teams with a time of 2:25:36.

Another District team also ran in the relay, after which our runners and supporters enjoyed a picnic lunch of Spam musubi, sandwiches and other goodies.

You, too, can have a yellow Higashi Hongwanji t-shirt just like our intrepid runners. Indicate your size (S, M, L or XL) and send your check for \$15 for each shirt to Higashi Hongwanji Hawaii District, 1685 Alaneo St., Honolulu, HI 96817.



Don't delay! Order now for best selection of sizes. Call Rev. Kita at 531-1231 at the Hawaii District Office if you have any questions.

### April movie Kikujiro a whimsical journey full of laughter and tears

For Masao (Yusuke Sekiguchi), a 3rd grader who lost his father when he was very young and lived in Asakusa with his grandmother (Kazuko Yoshiyuki), summer vacation wasn't much fun. All his school friends went on trips with their families, the soccer club was idle and his grandmother was also working and not at home during the day. He decides to go see his mother, whom he has never met, in a distant town. Masao leaves home with a picture diary, homework and a little pocket money in



his backpack. A neighborhood lady (Kayoko Kishimoto) who knows about his feelings has her irresponsible husband, Kikujiro ("Beat Takeshi" Kitano) accompany Masao. Onward to Toyohashi in Aichi prefecture...

At the Japan Academy Awards, this 1999 film directed by Beat Takeshi won Best Supporting Actress (Kayoko Kishimoto) and Best Music Score (Joe Hisaishi) as well as other recognition.

Showtime: 6:30 pm, Tues., Apr. 24, 121 min. Color, Japanese audio, English subtitles. Free admission. Light refreshments, or bring to share!

### 菊次郎の夏 (きくじろうのなつ)

幼い頃に父親を亡くし、今はおばあちゃんとふたりで浅草に暮らしている小学校3年生の正男(関口雄介)にとって、夏休みはそんなに楽しいものではなかった。学校の友達はみんな家族で旅行に出かけてしまっし、サッカークラブもお休み、おばあちゃん(吉行和子)も仕事で昼間は家にいないのだ。そんな時、彼は遠くの町にいる会ったことないお母さんに会いに行く決心をする。絵日記と宿題と僅かな小遣いをリュックに詰めて、家を飛び出した正男。そんな彼の気持ちを知った近所のお婆さん(岸本加世子)が、夫で遊び人の菊次郎(北野武)を同行させることにした。目指すは愛知県豊橋市...

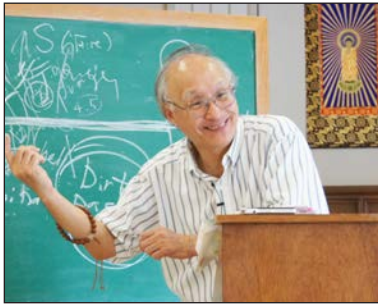
受賞歴:第23回日本アカデミー賞・最優秀助演女優賞(岸本加世子)、賞・最優秀音楽賞(久石譲);その他。

監督:北野武、公開:1999年、カラー、言語:日本語、字幕:英語、映時間:121分、4月23日(火)午後6:30時、入場無料。

# JOINT BUDDHIST SEMINAR

sponsored by Higashi and Honpa Hongwanji

## Shakyamuni Buddha and Shinran: Buddhism as the teaching of self-examination

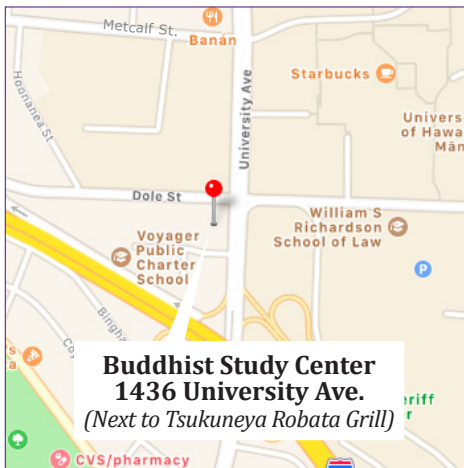


“Shakyamuni (ca. 469-380 BCE), the founder of Buddhism, and Shinran (1173-1262) lived in their respective social and religious environments. Their teachings seem different, i.e., they used different terminology and expressions in their teaching. Some Buddhist scholars, in fact, claim that Shinran’s teachings are a historical deviation from the original teachings of Shakyamuni. I, however, believe that their teachings are basically the same; they focused on one issue of self-examination.”

—Dr. Nobuo Haneda  
Maida Center of Buddhism

### A five-part seminar with Rev. Dr. Nobuo Haneda

Schedule: Friday, April 13 Part 1: 6:30 pm - 8 pm  
Saturday, April 14 Part 2: 9 am - 10:30 am, Part 3: 10:45 am - 12:15 pm  
Part 4: 1 pm - 2:30 pm, Part 5: 2:45 pm - 4:15 pm  
Location: Buddhist Study Center, 1436 University Ave., Honolulu, HI 96822  
Fee: \$20.00, payable to **Higashi Honganji** (includes lunch & dinner on Saturday)  
Higashi Honganji Hawaii District, 1685 Alaneo St., Honolulu, HI 96817 • Tel: 531-1231



### Rev. Dr. Nobuo Haneda Biography

1946 Born in Nagano, Japan  
1968 Read Shuichi Maida’s work and became interested in Buddhism  
1969 Graduated from Tokyo University of Foreign Studies  
1971 Studied under Revs. Gyomei Kubose & Gyoko Saito  
1979 Received PhD from University of Wisconsin  
1979 Lecturer, Otani University, Kyoto, Japan  
1981 Lecturer, Buddhist Educational Center, Chicago, IL  
1984 Head Professor, Institute of Buddhist Studies, Berkeley, CA  
1987 Researcher, Numata Center, Berkeley, CA  
1997 Director, Maida Center of Buddhism, Berkeley, CA

✂  
Clip here

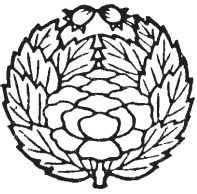
### HIGASHI-HONPA HONGWANJI JOINT BUDDHIST SEMINAR

Shakyamuni Buddha and Shinran: Buddhism as the teaching of self-examination  
Higashi Honganji Hawaii District, 1685 Alaneo St., Honolulu, HI 96817 • Tel: 531-1231

YES! Please register me for the Higashi-Honpa Hongwanji Joint Buddhist Seminar on April 13/14.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Total enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_



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## TEMPLE ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

### APRIL

4/1	Sun	9 am	<b>HBC Buddha Day service</b> @ Soto Mission (No service at Betsuin)
4/8	Sun	10 am	<b>Hanamatsuri service</b> @ Betsuin
4/10	Tue	3 pm	<b>Ukulele class/band practice</b>
4/12	Thu	7 pm	<b>The Larger Sutra</b> study class led by Rinban Kawawata in English
4/13	Fri	6:30 pm	<b>Joint Higashi-Honpa seminar</b> Pt 1 led by Dr. Nobuo Haneda Buddhist Study Center next to UH-Manoa
4/14	Sat	9 am	<b>Joint Higashi-Honpa seminar</b> Pt 2-5 (At BSC all day, including lunch & dinner)
4/15	Sun	10 am	<b>Sunday service/Sunday school</b>
4/15	Sun	12 pm	<b>Betsuin board meeting</b>
4/16	Mon	10 am	<b>Betsuin study class</b>
4/17	Tue	7 pm	<b>O-kō:</b> Dharma discussion at Betsuin
4/22	Sun	10 am	<b>Shōtsuki service/Sunday school</b>
4/22	Sun	12 pm	<b>Art of Paper Folding</b> class Led by Jeanne Kawawata @ Otani Center
4/24	Tue	3 pm	<b>Ukulele class/band practice</b>
4/24	Tue	6:30 pm	<b>Movie night: Kikujiro</b> 菊次郎の夏 (1999)
4/28	Sat	10 am	<b>Shinran Shōnin memorial service</b>
4/29	Sun	10 am	<b>Ehime Maru Memorial cleaning</b> Kakaako Waterfront Park Short service and picnic to follow

### MAY

5/6	Sun	10 am	<b>Shōtsuki service/Sunday school</b>
5/6	Sun	12 pm	<b>The Larger Sutra</b> study class led by Rinban Kawawata in Japanese Fukuhara Conference Room
5/8	Tue	3 pm	<b>Ukulele class/band practice</b>
5/10	Thu	7 pm	<b>The Larger Sutra</b> study class led by Rinban Kawawata in English Fukuhara Conference Room
5/13	Sun	10 am	<b>Mother's Day family service/ Sunday school</b>
5/15	Tue	7 pm	<b>O-kō:</b> Dharma discussion at Kaneohe
5/20	Sun	10 am	<b>Shinran Shōnin birthday service/ Sunday school</b>
5/20	Sun	12 pm	<b>Betsuin board meeting</b>
5/20	Sun	12 pm	<b>Art of Paper Folding</b> class Led by Jeanne Kawawata @ Otani Center
5/21	Sat	9 am	<b>HBC Memorial Day service</b> Punchbowl National Memorial Cemetery
5/22	Tue	3 pm	<b>Ukulele class/band practice</b>
5/22	Tue	6:30 pm	<b>Movie night: Go for Broke!</b> (1951) Fukuhara Conference Room
5/27	Sun	10 am	<b>All Wars Memorial service/ Sunday school</b>
5/28	Mon	10 am	<b>Shinran Shōnin memorial service</b>

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.