

和

‘WA’
harmony

HIGASHI HONGWANJI HAWAII BETSUIN BULLETIN

November 2018

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

Rinban Kenjun Kawawata
Rev. Koen Kikuchi
Rev. Hidesato Kita

Vice President: Jonathan Tani
Secretary: Debra Saiki
Treasurer: Edmund Nakano
Asst. Sec’y & Auditor: Ken Saiki

1685 Alaneo Street
Honolulu, HI 96817
Tel: (808) 531-9088
Fax: (808) 531-3265
Email: betsuin@hhbt-hi.org
Website: betsuin.hhbt-hi.org

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

SHARING THE JOY OF LIVING

Rev. Hidesato Kita

August and September were especially hectic months for me, both in my official duties as Higashi Hongwanji Hawaii District minister and my personal life. Between my responsibilities for organizing a statewide district meeting and making preparations for a Hawaii District Hoonko gathering and service and arrival of our associate abbot from Japan, I was making trips back and forth between Hawaii and Japan and Los Angeles, too. At times I had to stop to think about where I actually was!

I had gone back to Japan in August to help my home temple with Obon for five days. Three days after returning to Hawaii, I received the news that my grandmother had passed away. It seemed impossible, because I had just been with her and she was fine! When I returned to Japan to attend my grandmother’s funeral service and saw her body in the temple, I finally realized that it was true. Grandmother had passed away.

Because I am a minister, I am comfortable talking about death. So, I would like to share my feelings about my grandmother’s funeral with you.

As I viewed her body, many memories came to me. When I was child, my grandmother took me out to eat and we’d go shopping together. She visited me in Kyoto when I entered the Honzan, in Oita when I was a university student and many other times. She loved any excuse to travel. She even came to see me last May in Hawaii. That was her last overseas trip.

For me, I can honestly say that I only made one special trip just to see my grandmother. That trip was for her funeral.

When I last saw my grandmother, I was very busy with my temple’s Obon services. I told my grandmother that I would see her again in October when I returned for our Hoonko observance. I always assumed she would have a “tomorrow.” Then, Renny’s letter, “On White Ashes” came to mind:

“When we deeply meditate on the transient nature of this world, we realize with sorrow that life is fleeting. It is like an illusion from beginning to end. Thus
(cont’d on p.2)



Rev. Hidesato Kita

白骨の御文

北 秀慧 師

今年の8月11日から15日までの間、お盆の手伝いのため帰省しておりましたが、ハワイに到着してから3日が過ぎた18日の朝に家族から祖母の訃報が届きました。高校から実家を出て15年程一緒に暮らしてないこともあり、連絡を受けた後も祖母が亡くなったという実感が全くなく、日本に帰るため航空券の手配をしながら、また祖母に会えるのではないかとさえ思っておりました。お通夜の日初めて祖母と対面すると亡くなったということ少しづつ感じ、過去のことを思い出しました。一緒に住んでいた頃は、よく食事や買い物に出かけ、高校で京都、大学では別府に行った時は、旅行と行って会いに来てくれました。また、今年の5月には勤務先のハワイまで叔母と一緒に旅行で訪れてくれました。こうして考えると一緒に住んでいる時も離れて暮らしている時も祖母はいつも私のことを気にかけてくれていたのに私が祖母に会うために帰ってくることは祖母の葬儀が初めてだと思いました。

お盆に実家へ帰った日に挨拶だけし、お盆中は忙しくあまり会話をすることがありませんでした。帰る日に「また10月の報恩講に帰ってくる」と言って家を出てきました。亡くなる当日まで元気でしたので、その時は祖母に会うのがこれで最後になるとは夢にも思っておらず、もう少し話をすればよかったと思いましたが、蓮如上人の白骨の御文では、人生は儚く、幻のような生涯。

「それ、人間の浮生なる相をつらつら観ずるに、おおよそはかなきものは、この世の始中終、まぼろしのごとくなる一期なり。されば、いまだ万歳の人身をうけたりという事をきかず。一生すぎやすし。いまにいたりてたれか百年の形体をた

(次のページに続く)

SHARING THE JOY OF LIVING (cont'd from p. 1)

we do not hear of anyone living ten thousand years. Life passes quickly. Who among us can live a hundred years? Will I die first, or will my neighbor? Will it be today, or will it be tomorrow? We do not know. The people we leave behind and the people who go before us, are more numerous than dewdrops that rest briefly on leaves and branches. Hence, I may have a radiant face in the morning, but in the evening, become no more than white ashes. With the coming wind of impermanence, these eyes will eventually close, and this breath will be forever still. This radiant face will drain of life, its vibrant glow will disappear. Family and friends may gather and grieve broken-heartedly, but to no avail. Nothing can be done, except to take this once familiar form to an outlying field. There, in the midnight smoke, it vanishes, and nothing is left but white ashes. How pitifully sad.

Impermanence in this world creates a condition of uncertainty for young and old alike. Therefore, let us immediately take to heart the true nature of this world, and from here after live a life of deep reflection guided by the words Namu Amida Butsu.

Respectfully,

I understand these words a little better now, but not completely. I understand that I don't understand. I still think I will always have a "tomorrow," which means that I am not accepting death. These are just my feelings. My grandmother was old and I'm still young. But sometimes death does not recognize age.

In today's world, some families do not have traditional funeral services. My grandmother's very traditional Buddhist funeral helped me to realize that she really had passed away. A funeral service is not only for the person who died. It is for the living, too. The person who died teaches us that we all will die someday.

Shinran Shōnin said, "Of those who encounter the power of the Primal Vow, not one passes by in vain." We chant this quote at every funeral. Again, the funeral and chanting are for the living, as well as the dead. I received this teaching from my grandmother and her funeral. It is, at the same time, very simple and yet very difficult. The funeral is sad. But from the service of the one who passed away, we learn the Dharma and share the joy of living.

October 5 was the date of my grandmother's 49-day service. By coincidence, that was the date of the Hoonko service at my home temple. Grandmother was calling me home for this most important service and for her special service. While this was only my feeling, I felt it strongly.

Perhaps you attended Hōonko services at the Betsuin or Kaneohe temple recently. If you're on the Big Island, I'd like to encourage you to attend the Hōonko service at our Hilo temple on Nov. 3, and back on Oahu, at Palolo Hongwanji on Nov. 18. Both of these events will be an opportunity to share the joy of living.

Hope to see you at the service!

Gasshou,
Hidesato Kita

白骨の御文 (前ページより続く)

もつべきや。我やさき、人やさき、きょうともしらず、あすともしらず、おくれさきだつ人は、もとのしづく、すえの露よりもしげしといえり。されば朝には紅顔ありて夕べには白骨となれる身なり。すでに無常の風きたりぬれば、すなわちふたつのまなこたちまちにとじ、ひとつのいきながくたえぬれば、紅顔むなしく変じて、桃李のよそおいをうしないぬるときは、六親眷属あつまりてなげきかなしめども、更にその甲斐あるべからず。さてしもあるべき事ならねばとて、野外におくりて夜半のけぶりとなしはてぬれば、ただ白骨のみぞのこれり。あわれというも中々おろかなり。されば、人間のはかなき事は、老少不定のさかいなれば、たれの人もはやく後生の一大事を心にかけて、阿弥陀仏をふかくたのみまいらせて、念仏もうすべきものなり。あなかしこ、あなかしこ。」

何度も読んでいた御文でわかった気になったつもりでも、いざ祖母が亡くなった時まで身にしみていないことを痛感しました。また、御文の後半には人生の終わりは年齢に関係なくやってくるとおっしゃっております。祖母の死に直面して、なお自分はまだまだ大丈夫と思っていることに気づかされます。今回は祖母がたまたま先だけであり、私がかかもしれなかったということに思いを巡らすずにはいられないです。

また、最近では近親者のみで葬儀を行うことやお別れの会といった儀式を伴わない形で行われることあるようです。親しい方をなくした悲しみははかり知れず、なかなか故人と親交のある人へ連絡することが



大変であり、故人を偲ぶ場さえあればいいと思うかもしれせん。もちろん故人を偲ぶことは大切なことです。が、葬儀は残された私たちが教えにあう場であるのです。先ほども祖母が亡くなったということに実感が湧かなかったと言いましたが、やはり葬

儀になるとそこに「死」があるということを感じさせられます。人として生まれたからには必ず訪れる「死」を私たちはどこか忘れ、他人事のように考えておりますが、亡くなった方はそのことを私たちに教えてくださっていると思います。そのため、亡くなった方は仏であり、葬儀は亡くなった方が私たちに教えを聴聞させ仏とたらしめる場だと思います。

葬儀で読まれる和讃に「本願力にあいぬれば むなしくすぎるひとぞなき」(高僧和讃)とあります。故人に対して生前にお念仏の教えに生きたから、その人生はむなしいものではなかったと亡くなった方、そして自分自身の喪失感への慰めと考えてしまいがちですが、このことは今生きている私たちへの教えなのです。はからずとも私たちは願われて今を生きております。しかし、現代社会を生きる中でそのことを忘れ、命を粗末にするようなことをしてしまっているかもしれません。葬儀とはそういった中で信心獲得せんとの心のおこる場であるように思います。

合掌
北 秀慧

News on the Betsuin Wireless

Harmony of Japan: Traditional kabuki dance meets folk music

An appreciative audience of temple members and guests were treated to a non-traditional medley of traditional Japanese dance by Takamasa Fujima's *Harmony of Japan* troupe on Sunday, Oct 21 at Ōtani Center as part of the 150th Gannenmono Celebration.

Fujima-sensei, a personal friend of Betsuin member Kei Tsuji, fused together classical Japanese dance with folk, enka and pop melodies



Above: Anju Madoka was an audience favorite with her deft *minyō* performance. Below: *Harmony of Japan* students dance to "Sakura, Sakura." Takamasa Fujima also held dance performances and workshops at the Otani Center for us in 2014 and 2016.



for a uniquely entertaining showing. Fujima's *Harmony of Japan* non-profit corporation, supported by The Japan Foundation and Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan, has held dance performances and workshops in France, Russia, Lithuania and Hawaii.

Nagauta shamisen artist Anju Madoka demonstrated her skill with a virtuoso performance singing *minyō*, *Hole Hole Bushi* and pop song *Sukiyaki*.

Fujima-sensei and his *Harmony of Japan* ensemble also performed at Orvis Auditorium on Oct. 24 with the Hawaii Gagaku Society. Betsuin Rinban Kenjun Kawawata and Rev. Koen Kikuchi, both accomplished gagaku musicians, were also part of the Orvis public performance.

Share, chat, listen and learn at our 99 Lunch Bunch & Tea Time sessions

The *chirashi* bowl was the most popular *lunch du jour* at October's 99 Lunch Bunch session. And Tea Time was a refined bowl of *matcha* served with some *omiyage* confections. Wondering what's in store for us at our November activity...

Coming up:
99 Lunch Bunch, Mon., Nov. 12, 12 pm
 Moanalua 99 Food Court
Tea Time, Thu., Nov. 15, 7 pm
 Higashi Hongwanji Betsuin
 1685 Alaneo Street



Little Buddha is November movie

At our recent Hawaii District Hoonko Gathering, Rev. Peter Hata showed us clips from the 1994 Italian-French-British drama film, *Little Buddha*, with Keanu Reeves as Prince Siddharta to spice up his "Let Us Discover the Joy Living" lecture. For November's movie night, we're showing you the whole movie.

Lama Norbu comes to Seattle in search of the reincarnation of his dead teacher, Lama Dorje. His search leads him to young Jesse Conrad, Raju, a waif from Kathmandu, and an upper class Indian girl. Together, they journey to Bhutan where the three children must undergo a test to prove which is the true reincarnation.

The life story of Prince Siddharta, later known as the Buddha, is told by reading from a book over the course of the movie. The story traces his spiritual journey from ignorance to true enlightenment.

Directed by Bernardo Bertolucci. Soundtrack was entirely composed by Japanese pianist and composer, Ryuichi Sakamoto.

Showtime: 6:30 pm, Tuesday, Nov. 27, 123 min. Color. Language: English. Free admission. Light refreshments, or bring to share!

November: My Favorite Month

My #1, all-time favorite month of the year? Hands-down, November! What's not to love about November? The cooling breezes all but erase memories of suffering through the harrowing heat, humidity and hurricane near-misses of the past few months.

For sports fans, football fever is right at the season's halftime and dominating the television airwaves. Meanwhile NCAA basketball tips off this month and diehard fans are already looking forward to filling out their March Madness brackets.

Shoppers are chomping at the bit to snatch up Black Friday bargains and Cyber Monday deals this month.

And holidays! Everybody loves holidays, and November rules, with the most...*three* this year! Sometimes General Election Day and Veterans Day fall in the same week for even greater joy! Then later in the month, there's a whole day devoted to giving thanks, plus feasting on roast turkey and all the familiar trimmings, such as lup cheong stuffing, ahi limu poke, Okinawan sweet potatoes and

macaroni salad! Lucky you live Hawaii! Oh, and let's not forget November is National Peanut Butter Lovers' Month.

For me, November is special because it's when I celebrate my birthday, and it's also my favorite month to be in Japan, with ideal weather for traveling. If it's not too deep into November, chances are there will be clear skies, mild temperatures and very little rainfall, and you can enjoy viewing autumn leaves in their full palette of glorious colors. Japan in November is truly awesome!

In fact, there's only one year in the past 15 years that I wasn't in Japan in November. This year is no different. A group of 19 of us will be traveling on a *satogaeri* trip, a return to our ancestral homeland in the former district of Takata-gun (now known as Akitakata-shi) in Hiroshima. We bring flowers and offer incense at our family gravesites and thank our ancestors for the gift of life. The feeling of interconnectedness becomes very apparent as we tread the same land our ancestors did for generations before us.

With the assistance of local officials, we try to help reestablish ties for those in our group who may still have relatives in the area.

Our group will first visit Kyōtō and take advantage of the JR Sanyō-San'in Area Pass to explore the Japan Sea coast region by train, including the sand dunes in Tottori and the inner sanctum of Izumō Grand Shrine.

We hope that remote Tsuwano will reward us with Instagram-worthy shots of autumn leaves in their vividly stunning hues, but if not, that's OK, as the quaint castle town is picturesque enough in its own right. Then we board an early Showa-era soot-spewing steam locomotive for a two-hour ride to Shin-Yamaguchi and transfer to a shinkansen bullet train to Hiroshima.

The *Bunka no Hi* holiday, observed on Nov. 3, is another cool November bonus. Many places throughout Japan hold festivals on the Culture Day holiday, such as the huge Karatsu Kunchi in Saga and Hiroshima's Betcha Matsuri in Onomichi and Otōri Matsuri in Jinseki-gun.

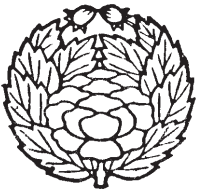
By the way, new and/or exciting places to see in Japan is among the favorite topics brought up at our 99 Lunch Bunch get-togethers every 2nd Monday of the month at Moanalua 99 Food Court. At these chat sessions, we pick up lunch at one of the wide variety of plate lunch/ethnic food stalls and gather around a table on the Watanabe Bakery side of the food court. We talk about our favorite things, ask questions and hope someone can help. Miss the last episode of a drama series? More than likely someone will be able to tell you how it ended!

What is *your* favorite month? Share your thoughts in a submission to Wa, or at our 99 Lunch Bunch or evening Tea Time discussions at the Betsuin. We'd love to hear from you!

— Ken Saiki



November photo of autumn leaves on the grounds of the Shinran Shōnin Mausoleum in Higashiyama, Kyōtō, during a Hōonko Hoshidan trip. Our Jōdō Shinshū denomination founder's date of death coincides with what is considered by many to be the most beautiful time of year to be in Kyōtō. **Note:** Readers of the print version of Wa can switch to the email version in full color at betsuin@hhbt-hi.org or view at betsuin.hhbt-hi.org.



HIGASHI HONGWANJI MISSION OF HAWAII
1685 ALANEO STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Honolulu, HI
Permit No. 693

In this issue of WA...

- **Share the Joy of Living** p.1
白骨の御文 p.1
- **News on the Betsuin Wireless** p.3
- **Harmony of Japan kabuki dance** p.3
- **Tea Time/99 Lunch Bunch** p.3
- **Movie night: Little Buddha (1994)** p.3
- **November: My favorite month** p.3
- **Mahalo Gozaimasu** p.5
- **November shōtsuki service** p.5
- **Temple activities calendar** p.6

TEMPLE ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

11/4 Sun 10 am	Shōtsuki service
11/5 Mon 10 am	Betsuin study class Fukuhara conference room
11/11 Sun 10 am	Sunday service/Sunday school
11/11 Sun 12 pm	Betsuin board meeting Fukuhara conference room
11/12 Mon 12 pm	99 Lunch Bunch chat session Moanalua 99 Food Court
11/13 Tue 3 pm	Ukulele class/band practice Fukuhara conference room
11/15 Thu 7 pm	Tea Time - informal dialogue session Fukuhara conference room
11/17 Sat 10 am	MAP class Fukuhara conference room
11/18 Sun 10 am	Palolo Hōonko service (No service at Betsuin)
11/19 Mon 10 am	Betsuin study class Fukuhara conference room
11/20 Tue 3 pm	O-kō : Dharma discussion at Kaneohe
11/25 Sun 10 am	Sunday service/Sunday school
11/27 Tue 3 pm	Ukulele class/band practice Fukuhara conference room
11/27 Tue 6:30 pm	Movie night: Little Buddha (1994) Fukuhara conference room
11/28 Wed 10 am	Shinran Shōnin memorial service

DECEMBER

12/2 Sun 9 am	HBC Bodhi Day service Higashi Hongwanji Betsuin
12/3 Mon 10 am	Betsuin study class
12/9 Sun 10 am	Sunday service/Sunday school
12/9 Sun 12 pm	Omigaki polishing of altar accessories Fukuhara conference room
12/10 Mon 12 pm	99 Lunch Bunch chat session
12/11 Tue 3 pm	Ukulele class/band practice
12/15 Sat 10 am	MAP class
12/16 Sun 10 am	Shōtsuki service
12/16 Sun 12 pm	Betsuin board meeting
12/16 Sun 12 pm	Art of Paper Folding class Otani Center
12/17 Mon 10 am	Betsuin study class
12/18 Tue 3 pm	O-kō : Dharma discussion at Betsuin
12/20 Thu 7 pm	Tea Time - informal dialogue session
12/23 Sun 10 am	Sunday service/Sunday school
12/23 Sun 11:30am	Ehime Maru Memorial cleaning Kakaako Waterfront Park potluck lunch
12/28 Fri 10 am	Shinran Shōnin memorial service
12/29 Sat 9 am	Oosōji - year-end temple cleaning
12/30 Sun 9 am	Mochitsuki - mochi pounding
12/31 Mon 5:30 pm	Year-end service - Jōya-e Bell-tolling 108 times/ <i>toshi-koshi</i> soba

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.