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harmony

HIGASHI HONGWANJI HAWAII BETSUIN BULLETIN

10
October 2019

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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 Higashi Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

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Editor: Ken Saiki

SPARK JOY IN YOUR LIFE

Rev. Steven Toyoshima

With the end of September and beginning of October, it finally seems like Hawaii is entering the fall season. The weather is cooling and the displays at Foodland have changed from “Back to School” to Halloween-themed. Although the Ōsouji year-end cleaning at the temple seems to be far away in December, these past few days at the Hawaii Betsuin we have started early.

Led by our board members Emi Tsuji and Ken Saiki, we began the cleaning of the temple office. Using the techniques from Marie Kondo, we spent a lot of time going through the many things piled up in the office to see if it was sparking any joy.

Even though I have been here since April, the condition of the office didn't seem too strange or overtly messy. This immediately changed when we started pulling things off the shelves and seeing just how much un-useful things were cluttering the room in plain sight.

Many of the books and files we went through are older than me, and though there were photographs and other historically important items, much of it was stuff that could be safely tossed away.

When it comes to personal possessions I am reminded of the Buddha's teaching of the raft. A person who needs to cross a wide and deep river cuts down trees and binds the trunks together to make a raft. After he crosses the river safely, he does not need the raft and leaves it at the river's edge. How wasteful it would be if we continued to carry the raft with us as we make our way inland, unable to part with something that was once useful to us long past the point it should have been left behind.

I am very guilty of this kind of thinking, something I inherited from certain ancestors of mine. From the useful impulse to *mottainai* to avoid wasting something that could be useful sometime in the future, we end up keeping around a lot of things that we never get around to using.



A work in progress: This corner in the office will soon be tested to see if any items still spark joy (or maybe needed for next year's Bon Festival!!)

making cleaning a more and more intimidating task.

Though it can be a difficult task, making cleaning a regular part of our schedule can have immense benefits. Having other people to help and encourage us can help take the intimidation out of getting started and reexamine our relationship with the things we surround ourselves with.

Shoukei Matsumoto, a minister at the Nishi Hongwanji Kōmyōji temple in Tokyo, leads a cleaning event twice a month at his temple. People from all

(cont'd on p. 2)



Rev. Steve Toyoshima

SPARK JOY IN YOUR LIFE (cont'd from p. 1)

walks of life come to help with the hour-long cleanup at 7:30 in the morning. A popular event with local people, it fosters a sense of community. Rev. Matsumoto actually wrote *"A Monk's Guide on a Clean House and Mind,"* a book on the benefits of cleaning around the time Marie Kondo had published her first guide. He wrote in *The Guardian* British daily newspaper about the benefits of cleaning:

"Cleaning practice, by which I mean the routines whereby we sweep, wipe, polish, wash and tidy, is one step on this path towards inner peace. In Japanese Buddhism, we don't separate a self from its environment, and cleaning expresses our respect for and sense of wholeness with the world that surrounds us."

The basics [of cleaning] are very simple. Sweep from the top to the bottom of your home, wipe along the stream of objects and handle everything with care. After you start cleaning your home, you can extend cleaning practice to other things, including your body. How you can apply cleaning practice to your mind is a question I want to leave unanswered, but if you practice cleaning, cleaning and more cleaning, you will eventually know that you have been cleaning your inner world along with the outer one.

We can look at our lives like filling up a glass jar with pebbles and stones. If we fill the jar with pebbles, there is little space left over for the stones. However, if we put the stones in the jar first, the pebbles will fit in the gaps between in a good balance. The stones are the things that are important in our lives like family, faith, work. The pebbles are the non-essential material things that we acquire over our lifetimes.

Once we strip away the clutter, we have space for the things that are really important and breathing room to examine our priorities. The space we make by clearing out what we don't need can be used for things that are important for us here and now.

By cleaning, we can realize what really brings us joy in our lives. It also gives us a chance to more deeply appreciate the things we decide to keep or pass on to others. One person's unused exercise bike could be another person's gateway to a healthier life.

Enka vinyl collectors like myself would love to take in no-longer-listened-to Japanese records. One person's junk could be another person's treasure.

Next year we've scheduled a *Nomi no Ichiba*—a combination flea market and plant sale—so if you have items that may bring joy to someone else, be sure to save them for our sale next fall!

While it's the Betsuin office and the small storage room in back undergoing the KonMari treatment right now, we'll be working our way to other spaces as well. We hope to update you with "before-and-after" photos.

Ready for cleaning? Please keep these dates in mind:
Sun., Dec. 13: Omigaki polishing of altar accessories
Sun., Dec. 20: Ōsouji year-end temple cleaning
Sat., Sep. 26, 2020: Nomi no Ichiba flea market/plant sale

人生がときめく

豊島ステイヴェン

今週、ハワイ別院の事務室を掃除するプロジェクトを開始しました。事務室には、もう必要のないドキュメントやものがたくさんあります。私たちが棚にどれだけ古い文書や本を保管していたかにおどろいた。

掃除しながら、釈尊の「ラフトのたとえ」について考えていました。その例えに川を渡るために、例えの男はいかだを作りました。川を渡った後、いかだを持ち歩き続けるのは愚かなことです。よく、私たちはもう役に立たない物を溜めこめています。

東京の本願寺派の光明寺の松本先生によると、自分と自分の環境は別のことではないので、クリーニングは、私たちを取り巻く世界に対する私たちの尊敬と一体感を表しています。

不用な物を取り除くと、本当に重要なことのためのスペースができます。必要のないものを片付けることで作るスペースは、今ここで私たちにとって重要なものに使えます。

掃除することで、私たちの生活に本当に喜びをもたらします。

また、不要なものを使用できる人に渡すこともできます。他の人が使用できると思うものがあれば、来年9月の「蚤の市馬」に備えて保存してください。

BUDDHISM 102

Sunday, October 13, 12 noon

2nd in a series of workshops

Rev. Steve Toyoshima will continue to focus on the history of Buddhism in Japan. From Shingon to Zen, we'll look at the important people, art and traditions of the schools that arrived and grew in Japan.

If you're curious about the history and teachings behind the temples of the different denominations here in Hawaii, be sure to join us!

Just bring a pen & notepad. Study materials provided.

Buddhism 101 not a prerequisite. No fees to attend. Come as you are!

ALL ARE WELCOME!

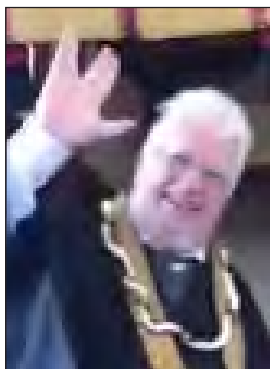
Shinran memorial observed with Hoonko Gathering and Service

The Hawaii District Hōonko Gathering on Sept. 14 at Otani Center with a panel discussion by district temple representatives Masago Asai, CharlAnn Nakamoto, Carl Okuda and David Kohara giving their personal stories about how they approach discovering the joy of living in their lives.

“Buddhism is about stories,” guest lecturer and admitted Trekkie Rev. Fred Brenion said before proceeding to relate more stories to illustrate how the Nembutsu, as taught by Shinran Shonin, is the key to being born in the Pure Land.

The Gathering was capped by a full-course New Mui Kwai Chinese buffet and a selection of favorite Japanese and Hawaiian melodies by the temple’s Dharma Hawaiians ukulele ensemble, including a hula lesson dancing to the hapa-haole favorite, “At the Hukilau.”

The next morning Jay Fisher of Hilo Higashi Hongwanji and Daniel Abramowicz of Palolo Hongwanji gave short *kanwa* presentations prior to our 2019 Hōonko service in memory of the founder of our Jōdō Shinshu tradition, Shinran Shōnin. Overseas District Abbot Chōyu Otani officiated the service and Hyōbyaku, leading the chanting of Shōshinge



Rev. Fred Brenion

with the assistance of the Hawaii District ministers. As Rev. Brenion approached the lectern to present Sunday’s Hōonko address, he flashed a Vulcan salute as a nod to other Star Trek fans present.

Rev. Brenion’s message centered around Shinran’s final days when he was in “active passing.” Shinran’s life

had become the Nembutsu. To have Namu Amida Butsu is to have Amida.

“Nembutsu alone is true and real,” Shinran had written in *Tannisho*.

Rev. Brenion entreated us to recite, “Namu Amida Butsu” whenever we see our reflections as we pass a mirror at home. “Life is living us now!”

And yes, for some of us, exploring this strange new world could mean boldly going where we have never been before.

Honpa’s Rev. Kazunori Takahashi speaks at Betsuin’s Ohigan service

Our guest speaker at our Sept. 22 Ohigan service was Rev. Kazunori



Rev. Kazunori Takahashi

Takahashi, executive assistant at the Honpa Hongwanji headquarters in Hawaii. He shared his experiences as a minister on Kauai

and the Big Island for 11 years, including helping translate documents and letters. Once a member asked him about the significance of the phrase “*rokuji no na*” in the 2nd verse of the gatha, *Shinshu Shuka*, as the phrase also appeared in a poem that he cherished.

The “*rokuji no na*” refers to the six kanji characters (南無阿弥陀仏), or Namu Amida Butsu, which comprise Amida’s name. Rev. Takahashi reminded us that during Fall Ohigan, let us all recommit to reciting those six words with great joy.

Fright Night Halloween special in Oct. movie offering, *Kuroneko*

Oyone (Nobuko Otowa) and her daughter, Oshige (Kiwako Taichi) live in a house in a bamboo grove. A group of field samurai attacks and kills them, setting fire to the house. A black cat snuggles up to the dead bodies. When the samurai are set upon by vengeful vampire-like

ghosts, it falls to the warrior Gintoki (Kichiemon Nakamura) to slay the malicious spirits, but his connection to the victims leads to conflict.

The film directed by Kaneto Shindo was entered by Japan in the Cannes Film Festival in 1968. Unfortunately the festival was canceled due to a violent student revolt throughout France that year. Meanwhile, in Japan the film won a Best Cinematography award at the Mainichi Film Concours and a Best Actress award for Otowa.

Showtime: 6:30 pm, Tues., Sep. 24, 99 min. Monochrome, Japanese audio, English subtitles. Admission free. Light refreshments provided, or bring something to share!

藪の中の黒猫 (やぶのなかのくろねこ)

戦に取られたまま戻らない息子を待つ母と嫁が一軒の藪の中の家に住んでいます。そこを野武士の集団が襲い、二人を殺して、家に火を放ちます。焼け跡には遺体に寄り添う黒猫の姿がありました。そして、夜な夜な羅生門ならぬ「羅城門」に若い女が立ち、彼女に招かれた武士たちが次々に怪死するのです。

そうです。殺された二人の怨霊が黒猫に乗り移り、猫が人間に化けていたのです。1968年に第21回カンヌ国際映画祭コンペティション部門に出品したが、期間中にカンヌ国際映画祭粉砕事件のため賞はなかった。

監督：新藤兼人、出演者：藪銀時（中村吉右衛門）、中年女 おヨネ（乙羽信子）、若い女 おシゲ（太地喜和子）、公開：1968年、モノクロ、言語：日本語、字幕：英語、映時間：99分、10月23日(火)午後6:30時、入場無料。



namaste

INDIA: AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE

By Vivian Takagaki

I recently returned from a trip to India and Kawawata-sensei asked me to write about the journey. For me, there are no limits to describe India. But on paper, well, there is a little limit. So, in a brief description, here are some of the memories of India I brought home.

What impressed me was seeing India as a large canvas of serene, almost monochromatic, background colors. The sky, monuments and open spaces are the perfect stage where



the people are the bright spots of color in their smiles, activities and clothes. Tourists like myself, dressed in neutral and pastel colors become part of the background letting the beautiful and vibrant colors of *sarees*, festivals and spirit shine around us. Even on the dusty

roads, the women bring an excitement of color against the soothing scenery with their bright, everyday *sarees*.

Beginning the journey in Varanasi, I was amazed at the Ganges River, with its size and majesty of spirit. Along its banks I witnessed people bathing, holding cremations and observing rituals in and along the sacred waters of the goddess Ganga. A multitude of wide stone steps, each with its own name, allowed people to access the river from higher ground. I wondered at the height of these stairs until three days later, when we left. In that short time this immense river had risen 10 to 15 feet and the stairs were halfway under water.

One evening we witnessed priests offering fire to Ganga during an *arati*. People filled the stairs around the ceremony and more were in boats. Crowded six rows deep, our boat

was one of many lined in front of the stairs where the ceremony took place. After the *arati* we offered little votives with flowers to Ganga from the stairs. Two of the women in our group took a whole body dip in the Ganges together with many of the devout Indians around them. I sprinkled my face and head. I wasn't as brave as the other two.



One memory to cherish was in an enclosed courtyard in Sarnath. A second-generation cutting from the original bodhi tree, under which the Buddha was enlightened, grows green and tall. After spinning the prayer wheels surrounding the tree, I was fortunate to have a leaf fall near me. It has traveled pressed in a book and now resides at my home.



A short bus ride later we were at Deer Park, a beautifully kept site which preserves a sense of its history and has an open feeling of mind and spirit. The Dhamek Stupa where Buddha first spoke of the Dharma dominates the ruins of the original sangha.

Next, an elephant ride in Jaipur! A totally tourist thing to do but so much fun! That day the hot sun heated my cell phone to the point I couldn't take pictures. It finally cooled under the

shade of the Amber Fort courtyards. It is but one of many beautiful structures built long ago and still magnificent. Jantar Mantar deserves mention just for its fantastic astronomical observatory. Its sundial, the largest in the world and built in 1724 by the Maharaja Jai Singh II, is said to be accurate to two seconds of the local time.

And there was much more. Fort Agra, where I got my first view of one of the most famous monuments to love. Early the next morning trying to meet the sunrise, we were there. We were at the Taj Mahal. A jaw-dropping, inspiring declaration of love, art and symmetry. Then, in city after city, there were temples of vast size and age to Krishna, Hanuman, Shiva and others, each attended by devotees, served by priests and having the feeling of ages in darkened halls and sanctuaries. All "no pictures allowed."



But India would not be India without the food! From northern India to its southern shores the flavors of India shifted from heavy, aromatic curries, dals, bryanis and chana to lighter, coconut-flavored versions of the same in the south. And the breads! *Naan*, *chapati* and my favorite, *papadams*. All so delicious! All so addictive! I had to eat Indian food within a week of returning to Honolulu.

I cannot say it was all beautiful and wonderful. There was much in India that I was not prepared for. The heat and humidity, the lack of cleanliness in some cities, the hawkers and beggars almost everywhere. But I experienced a country that is unique and unforgettable, had the opportunity to meet some charming people and received smiles whenever I met a stranger's eye and greeted them with *Namaste*, *Vanakam* or *Sairam*.

India will definitely be remembered.



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TEMPLE ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

OCTOBER

10/1	Tue	6 pm	The Larger Sutra study class led by Rinban Kawawata in English
10/2	Wed	6 pm	Karaoke night at the Betsuin
10/6	Sun	10 am	Shōtsuki/Eitaikyo service Dharma message: Rinban Kawawata
10/7	Mon	10 am	Meditation Sutra study class
10/8	Tue	3 pm	Ukulele class/band practice
10/13	Sun	10 am	Sunday service Dharma message: Rev. Toyoshima
10/13	Sun	12 pm	Buddhism 102 Facilitated by Rev. Toyoshima
10/14	Mon	12 pm	Lunch Bunch at Moanalua 99 Food Court
10/17	Thu	6 pm	Teatime Okō discussion group
10/20	Sun	10 am	Sunday service Message: Rinban Kawawata (Japanese) Rev. Toyoshima (English)
10/20	Sun	12 pm	Betsuin board meeting
10/20	Sun	12 pm	Art of Paper Folding class
10/21	Mon	10 am	Meditation Sutra study class
10/22	Tue	3 pm	Ukulele class/band practice
10/22	Tue	6:30 pm	Movie night: Kuroneko 藪の中の黒猫
10/27	Sun	10 am	Hōonko service at Kaneohe Higashi (No service at Betsuin)
10/28	Mon	10 am	Shinran Shōnin memorial service

NOVEMBER

11/3	Sun	10 am	Shōtsuki memorial service Dharma message: Rinban Kawawata
11/3	Sun	12pm	Basic Buddhism discussion in Japanese 仏教入門 (お話と座談会) Fukuhara conference room
11/4	Mon	10 am	Meditation Sutra study class
11/5	Tue	6 pm	The Larger Sutra study class led by Rinban Kawawata in English
11/6	Wed	6 pm	Karaoke night at the Betsuin
11/10	Sun	10 am	Sunday service Dharma message: Rev. Toyoshima
11/11	Mon	12 pm	Lunch Bunch at Moanalua 99 Food Court
11/12	Tue	3 pm	Ukulele class/band practice
11/17	Sun	10 am	Sunday service Dharma message: Rinban Kawawata
11/17	Sun	12 pm	Betsuin board meeting
11/17	Sun	12 pm	Art of Paper Folding class
11/18	Mon	10 am	Meditation Sutra study class
11/21	Thu	6 pm	Teatime Okō discussion group
11/24	Sun	10 am	Hōonko service at Palolo Hongwanji (No service at Betsuin)
11/26	Tue	3 pm	Ukulele class/band practice
11/26	Tue	6:30 pm	Movie night: The Third Murder 三度目の殺人
11/28	Thu	10 am	Shinran Shōnin memorial service

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.