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harmony

## HIGASHI HONGWANJI HAWAII BETSUIN BULLETIN

3  
March 2016

### 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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Asst. Sec’y & Auditor: Ken Saiki

Rinban: Kenjun Kawawata  
Minister: Koen Kikuchi

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

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Editor: Ken Saiki

## DO YOU SEE DEVILS?

Rev. Koen Kikuchi

The following is the dharma message presented by Betsuin minister Rev. Koen Kikuchi on February 21, 2016, adapted for publication in Wa.

On February 3 at shrines all over Japan, you’ll find actors and actresses, sumo wrestlers and other celebrities tossing roasted beans to chase away evil spirits. This custom has been popular for centuries in Japan at the start of spring.

When throwing the beans, people shout, “*Oni wa soto! Fuku wa uchi!*,” or “Evil out, happiness in.” Afterwards, people pick up and eat the number of beans which correspond to their age. Tradition says that will help them avoid bad things in the coming year.

This event emphasizes throwing away bad things and keeping only good things. As human beings, this is what we prefer. But as Rev. Ryojin Soga (1875-1971), an influential thinker in the Higashi Hongwanji denomination, said, “A person who sees other people as devils, that person is also a devil.” In Japanese, 相手を鬼と見る人は、自分もまた鬼である (曾我量深). In our denomination, we think we are the beings that possess the devil inside of us. In this case, the devil means a person who is heartless, not sympathetic, and not kind. This kind of person does harmful things and takes away our future wishes and hopes.

Do you know what a *tsunokakushi* is? It’s a traditional wedding headwear still popular in Japan, worn when a bride wears a kimono in a wedding ceremony. *Tsuno-kakushi* literally means “to hide one’s horns,” and so the headwear is supposed



Do you think this bride’s *tsunokakushi* is hiding any “horns of jealousy”?

to veil the bride’s horns of jealousy, ego and selfishness. It also symbolizes the bride’s resolve to become a gentle and obedient wife for her dear husband.

Well, it might have been common belief in the olden days that only women had shortcomings when they got married. But what about men? Some claim that women possess more of the jealousy, ego and selfishness DNA than men. But what would happen if we look at this tradition from Rev. Ryojin Soga’s point of view? He would answer that men are just as jealous, egotistic and selfish. Or, could it be that men are not honest and, in fact, quite stupid because they don’t admit to their own shortcomings?

Recently I’ve begun to feel that men are really little boys at heart. Males tend to absorb themselves in things such as sports and hobbies and can think and do only one thing at a time. More and more, I’m convinced that’s true about men and find that it applies to me as well.

On the other hand, females are more mature. Take Kokoro, who is my daughter and middle child. Her mind, in several ways, is already more advanced than her older brother, Ren. She takes care of her two siblings like a mother. Being more mature, females may appear to exhibit more jealousy than males. At any rate, we can say that both men and women can’t see themselves clearly and don’t want to admit to their own shortcomings. They point fingers at each other. Men want to blame women and women want to blame men.

I’ve had dharma talks about our self-ego and our self-centeredness before and now I’d like to introduce a parable called *The Black Mouse and the White Mouse*, taken from a Buddhist sutra.

There was once a traveler walking in the wilderness. All of a sudden, out of nowhere, he saw a huge elephant charging toward him. Out of fear for his life, he ran for cover, but there was no place to hide. Desperate, he spotted a dry well, so he jumped in and held on to some hanging vines. As he descended into the well, he was dismayed to find four large snakes slithering and hissing at the

(cont’d on p. 2)



Rev. Koen Kikuchi

## SEEING A DEVIL (cont'd from p. 1)

bottom. Afraid to let go, he hung on tightly to the vines. But then, looking up, he noticed a black mouse and a white mouse gnawing at the vines.

Meanwhile, at this critical moment, five honeybees flew over the well and dropped five drops of honey right into the mouth of the traveler. Ecstatic while savoring the blissful sweetness of the honey, the traveler finds all thoughts of danger have melted away.

What is the meaning of this story?

The wilderness is this world, in which the traveler is walking, while the elephant represents the impermanence of time that is always chasing us. We always panic when we happen to see sudden and unexpected events.

The four snakes at the bottom of the well are the four elements of our bodies: earth, water, fire, and wind. These four elements depend on the lifeline of the vine, which helps sustain us for the time being.

The black mouse and the white mouse, which are slowly but steadily gnawing away at the vines, are night and day. And the vines themselves represent our lives.

The five drops of honey from the bees are the five desires of wealth, beauty, fame, food and sleep. Upon tasting the sweetness, the traveler forgets about all the imminent dangers.

This story really shows that human beings do not look at themselves truly, and we are only looking at the things right in front of us. Quoting Rev. Ryojin Soga again, "A person who sees other people as devils, that person is also a devil."

One teacher taught me that the path on which Jodo Shin Buddhists walk is to have glasses to see others as Buddha—not as devils. We cannot always see others' good points, even in our own families. When we see people we dislike, our devil mind appears and we don't regard them as human beings. At the same time, we become a devil.

On the other hand, if we can somehow get the glasses of Buddha's eye, we will be able to see others as a Buddha, who is going to be a teacher for us. We can live as human beings in the real world.

The Board of Directors of  
Higashi Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii  
cordially invite you to attend  
**Spring Ohigan Service**

Sunday, March 20, 2016  
10:00 a.m.

1685 Alaneo Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii

Dharma message by Rev. Thomas Okano  
Former Bishop, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

Otoki lunch immediately following the service.

心地よい天候が続く中、皆様にはお元気で過ごしの事と存じます。  
さて春のお彼岸法要を下記の如くお勤め致しますのでご案内申し上げます。  
お彼岸は古く聖徳太子の時代より行われてきた伝統ある法要です。  
私ども先達はこの機会を仏様の教えを聞く良き機会とまいりました。  
ご家族で一緒にお参り下さい。

### 春のお彼岸法要法要

日時 2016年3月20日 午前10時  
法話 岡野 亮珠 師(前本派本願寺ハワイ教団総長)

\*法要後お齋がございます。ご家族お揃いでお参りください。

## NEW HAWAII DISTRICT MINISTER, REV. KITA

**H**ello! I am Hidesato Kita, your new Hawaii District minister, replacing Rev. Takafumi Bansaka.

I was born in Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost prefecture. I went to Kyoto to attend Otani High School to study Shin Buddhism. Then I moved further south to Kyushu, to major in sociology at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University. Of course, to get to Hawaii, I had to fly south from Japan. So I'm steadily moving south. The funny thing is that my name, Kita, means north! You'll remember my name!

I already feel connected to Hawaii, as my mother worked at the Hawaii Betsuin 30 years ago. Also, when my father was attending Otani University, he was friends with Bishop Kawawata.



Still, I'm a little apprehensive about my new assignment since I am totally new to Hawaii and not yet confident about my English language skills.

I'll try my best, though, and hope you will encourage me if you happen to notice any improvement.

The Betsuin centennial, Shinran Shonin 750th Memorial Service for Hawaii District and the 12th World Dobo Gathering in L.A. are all being held this year. I will need your full support and cooperation and will

devote my energy into working together with you to ensure the events meet all your expectations.

I'm looking forward to learning from and working with all of you. Mahalo for your support!



Bishop Kawawata took the reins for Dr. Haneda at the Feb. 6 district gathering.

### Awakening theme discussed at District Dharma Gathering

With scheduled speaker Dr. Nobuo Haneda unable to attend the District Dharma Gathering Feb. 6 due to illness, Bishop Kenjun Kawawata assumed the duties and started the joint retreat's "Awakening to Your Deepest Wish" discussion in the morning.

Following lunch, a panel comprised of Hawaii temple ministers Revs.

Fujimori, Maeda and Kikuchi and moderated by the bishop, expanded on the theme and fielded audience questions, which further encouraged lively, on-topic discussion among the many contributors eager to participate.

Among the conclusions reached was that we all have the aspiration, and the deeper we go, the more difficult it is to describe and put into words. One apt way to express this formless inconceivability might be "Amida...No Boundaries."

### Like Father, Like Son to be featured as movie of the month at Betsuin

Ryota Nonomiya (Masaharu Fukuyama) is an elite businessman who is focused so much on work that he neglects his wife, Midori (Machiko Ono), and 6-year-old son, Keita (Keita Ninomiya). Upon his return home one day, Midori tells him that the hospital where Keita was born needs to speak to them urgently, and Ryota senses trouble. After arriving at the hospital, the couple learns that their biological son Ryusei (Shogen Hwang) was accidentally switched

with Keita after birth, and after DNA tests prove the error, they must now make a life-changing decision to either keep Keita, the boy they raised as their own son, or switch him for their biological son. Also stars Yoko Maki as Yukari Saiki and Lily Franky as her husband, Takehiro.

*Like Father, Like Son*, directed by Hirokazu Koreeda and released in 2013, received international acclaim, winning a Jury Prize (2013 Cannes Film Festival), People's Choice Award (Vancouver International Film Festival), 2014 Japan Academy Awards (Best Actor - Masaharu



Fukuyama), among other awards.

Showtime: 6:30 pm, Tues., March 22. 120 min. Color. Japanese audio, English subtitles. Free admission. Everyone welcome to attend. Light refreshments provided but feel free to bring your own snacks.

### そして父になる (そしてちちになる)

大手建設会社に勤務し、都心の高級マンションで妻と息子と暮らす野々宮良多は、人生の勝ち組で誰もがうらやむエリート街道を歩んできた。そんなある日、病院からの電話で、6歳になる息子が出生時に取り違えられた他人の子どもだと判明する。妻のみどりや取り違えの起こった相手方の斎木夫妻は、それぞれ育てた子どもを手放すことに苦しむが、どうせなら早い方がいいという良多の意見で、互いの子どもを"交換"することになるが……。

受賞：第66回カンヌ国際映画祭、審査員賞、第32回バンクーバー国際映画祭、観客賞、第37回日本アカデミー賞、優秀主演男優賞(福山雅治)、その他。監督：是枝裕和、出演者：福山雅治、尾野真千子、真木よう子、二宮慶多、黄升炫、リリー・フランキー。

公開：2013。言語：日本語、字幕：英語、映時間：120分、カラー、3月22日(火)午後6:30時、入場無料。



**SHINNENKAI HIGHLIGHTS:** Clockwise, from upper right: The catered Korean lunch was so ono! Entertainment included Ren as guest minyo vocalist with Harada Naoatsusa Kai. Everyone enjoys winning prizes. The Kitā & Kikuchi Yokai Family show some fancy footwork.

## Hoonko Hoshidan 2015: "A once-in-a-lifetime experience"

I was very fortunate to be part of a group that traveled to Japan last year to attend the Hoonko service on Nov. 28 at Shinshu Honbyo, the Higashi Hongwanji complex in Kyoto. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for me to attend this memorial service for Shinran Shonin, the founder of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism.

Our Hawaii traveling group included Jane and Jay from Hilo, Alex from Kauai, Ivan from Palolo and Jim and Wendy from Kaneohe. We were guided by Rev. Hiroko Maeda from Kaneohe. We met up with other members from Berkeley, L.A., West Covina and Chicago. and were the English-speaking participants, joining many others from Japan and Brazil. We stayed at the temple's Dobo Retreat Center for three days, attended morning and evening services, and participated in daily discussions led by Rev. Conway. Even though we were all meeting for the first time, I felt so at ease with the group, and I know others have expressed similar views. I think it was because we could all sense that this was something very special.

Rev. Conway translated the Japanese portions of the services for us, which we could listen to with earbuds via a transmitting device. He had such a soothing voice I had to fight to stay awake in my jet-lagged state.

Recently, our board president, Faye, asked me what my most memorable moment was from my trip. Without having to think about it, I said, "Hearing hundreds of people singing *Shinshu Shuka* together. We sing this at the Betsuin services occasionally, but hearing hundreds of people singing this, quite loudly, made something so ordinary, extraordinary.

I grew up in West Covina, where there is a Higashi temple. I probably started going there when I was a baby, attended Sunday School as a kid and also participated in Junior YBA activities in high school. After that, I didn't attend church as regularly, but kept up with the news via "The Gateway," West Covina's version of our "Wa" newsletter, as well as getting updates from family and friends. So I had heard of church members going to the Hoonko service in Kyoto, and they usually wrote "Gateway" articles about their experience. The thing I remember reading about year after year was how hard it was for them to sit during the services. I didn't quite understand why everyone kept mentioning this, until I experienced it for myself! More on this later.

After I moved to Hawaii, my father told me I should go to the Betsuin, because "Rev. Ken" was there. That's what members affectionately called Bishop Kawawata when he was at the West Covina temple. So of course, being a good



Margaret Hamachi, 2nd from left, along with other Hoonko Hoshidan members.

daughter, I listened to my dad and finally attended my first service here a couple of years ago. I didn't actually meet Bishop Kawawata until then. The members were so welcoming and the service format familiar, so I felt right at home. Thanks, Dad!

So when Bishop Kawawata asked me if I would like to go to Japan for the Hoonko Hoshidan, I was really excited. This would be my first trip to Japan!

Attending the Hoonko service in the Founder's Hall, one of the largest wooden structures in the world, we sat among thousands of people. A special form of chanting, *Bando Bushi*, is performed only during Hoonko in Kyoto. It is a dynamic chant. Rows of priests sway forward from a sitting position, left to right and back up. It reminded me of hula, where sitting dancers will roll backwards onto their backs and up again. Ministers also perform live music in front of the altar. It was truly a wonderful experience. And yes, it really is a challenge to sit through the service, which ended up lasting 2 ½ hours!

Writing this article and reflecting on our discussions got me thinking of the Sangha and gratitude. When we are young, we think of ourselves as being the center of the universe, and as we grow, we come to realize that is not the case. However, we still look at things from our own limited perspective, and that can be a source of conflict and suffering. Even the ministers struggle with this, as they related anecdotes relating to their wives or mothers-in-law. Rev. Conway laments over why his wife has to put her handbag down in the middle of the hallway, or why she doesn't do what he wants. We discussed the three blind, poisonous passions: greed, anger and ignorance. Based on our limited way of looking at things and our selfish perspective, we make value judgments, either liking or disliking something—it's right or wrong, etc. Recognizing our own limitedness is important and can awaken us to unlimited life and light.

As a child, I didn't realize all the effort it took to keep a church running, or how much work it took my mom to keep a house full of seven people going. I have much more gratitude now for all that it takes and how important compassion and interdependence are to our lives. There are so many people to thank that make Hoonko Hoshidan happen every year, but special thanks to Bishop Kawawata, Rev. Bansaka, Rev. Maeda, as well as everyone at the Honzan headquarters in Kyoto.

So, as we all lead busy lives and get caught up in the day to day, it is important to step back and listen to the voices of our teachers, to return to a broader perspective more encompassing than our own. Bishop Kawawata frequently talks to us about leading a "meaningful life" by listening to the Dharma.

I really encourage (challenge, ha!) all of you who read the "Wa", to come to a service. One of Shinran's three virtues in his life was to make Shin Buddhism flourish. And I would love to hear more voices singing *Shinshu Shuka*!

In Gassho,  
Margaret Hamachi



Showing sweeping skills.  
Photos by Hiroko Maeda



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

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## TEMPLE ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

### MARCH

3/6	Sun	10 am	<b>Shōtsuki memorial service &amp; Sunday school</b>
3/6	Sun	12 pm	<b>Omigaki</b> (Altar implement polishing) Fukuhara Conference Room
3/8	Tue	3 pm	<b>Ukulele class/band practice</b> Fukuhara Conference Room
3/10	Thu	7 pm	<b>ABCs of Buddhism study class</b> led by Rinban Kawawata in English Fukuhara Conference Room
3/13	Sun	10 am	<b>Sunday service &amp; Sunday school</b>
3/13	Sun	12 pm	<b>Basic Buddhism study class</b> <b>現代語で仏教を聞こう</b> led by Rinban Kawawata in Japanese Fukuhara Conference Room
3/15	Tue	7 pm	<b>O-kō:</b> Dharma discussion at Kaneohe
3/20	Sun	10 am	<b>Spring Ohigan service</b> <b>Guest speaker:</b> Rev. Thomas Okano
3/20	Sun	12 pm	<b>Betsuin board meeting</b>
3/22	Tue	3 pm	<b>Ukulele class/band practice</b>
3/22	Tue	6:30 pm	<b>Movie night: <i>Like Father, Like Son</i> (2013)</b> Fukuhara Conference Room
3/27	Sun	10 am	<b>Rennyō Shonin memorial service &amp; Sunday school</b>
3/27	Sun	12 pm	<b>Art of Paper Crafting class</b> Fukuhara Conference Room
3/28	Mon	10 am	<b>Shinran Shonin memorial service</b>

### APRIL

4/3	Sun	10 am	<b>Shōtsuki memorial service &amp; Sunday school</b>
4/10	Sun	10 am	<b>HBC Buddha Day and Betsuin Hanamatsuri service</b> Joint Hawaii Buddhist Council service held at Betsuin hondo (main hall) Refreshments at Otani Center Food collection for Hawaii Foodbank
4/12	Tue	3 pm	<b>Ukulele class/band practice</b> Fukuhara Conference Room
4/14	Thu	7 pm	<b>ABCs of Buddhism study class</b> led by Rinban Kawawata in English Fukuhara Conference Room
4/17	Sun	10 am	<b>Sunday service &amp; Sunday school</b>
4/17	Sun	12 pm	<b>Betsuin board meeting</b> Fukuhara Conference Room
4/19	Tue	7 pm	<b>O-kō:</b> Dharma discussion at Betsuin
4/24	Sun	10 am	<b>Sunday service &amp; Sunday school</b>
4/24	Sun	12 pm	<b>Art of Paper Crafting class</b> Fukuhara Conference Room
4/26	Tue	3 pm	<b>Ukulele class/band practice</b> Fukuhara Conference Room
4/26	Tue	6:30 pm	<b>Movie night: <i>Tokyo Sonata</i> (2008)</b> Fukuhara Conference Room
4/28	Thu	10 am	<b>Shinran Shonin memorial service</b>

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