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## HIGASHI HONGWANJI HAWAII BETSUIN BULLETIN

8  
August 2015

### 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

# BON DANCE BLESSINGS



When first arriving at the temple on Friday morning, strong winds were mercilessly swirling around the hanging lanterns. Uh-oh, I thought, same thing may happen this year as happened last year when a downpour stopped the dancing 30 minutes early.

But nothing of the kind. We had perfect weather. It surely must have been the dozens of *teru-teru bozu* worn by every member of the Honolulu Fukushima Bon Dance Club that did the trick during the two nights of our obon festivities. There wasn't enough rain to quench the thirst of a single gecko. Where are the nay-sayers who believe *teru-teru bozu* don't work?? *Blessing #1.*

Harada NaoAtsusa Kai members were delighted that dancers joined in to their live performance music, which normally is heard from prerecorded sources. The group is comprised of singers and musicians who found their passion in folk and classical music of Japan. Atsuko Nonaka, the *shihan* of the group, along with these performers, had an extremely successful fundraising concert in June with noted singers and musicians from Japan to help raise funds for the Tohoku tsunami disaster relief. *Blessing #2.*



Dancing to live music performed by Harada NaoAtsusa Kai.

Our obon festivities have always been very well attended, but in the past two years, we have seen many new faces. We humbly like to think that this newfound popularity is because of the magnetic personalities of our members and volunteers, but truthfully, it's more likely the FOOD...the highlight of every bon dance across the state!



Bon dance food has that nostalgic, old-time taste.

Our "chefs" are from Hawaii and Japan, and they are seniors...I mean traditional. This is a very important component of the food offered at bon dances. As with many temples across the state, we prefer to prepare familiar, tasty selections. Andagi, dango jiru, somen, nishime, zenzai, shave ice, BBQ sticks, along with the standard hot dogs and saimin, they all scream BON DANCE! *Blessing #3.*

As the national bon dance capital, and possibly of the world, Hawaii is probably the only state to have so many bon dance clubs. Thanks to them,  
*(cont'd on p. 2)*

**BON DANCE** (cont'd from p. 1)

the color and excitement typical of bon dances add to the success of the night. What is not evident is the hard work that every club goes through every year. Each club maintains and provides instructions to its musicians and dancers. New music and dances are taught, practice sessions held, and that's just the beginning.

Honolulu Fukushima Bon Dance Club provides the yagura



Honolulu Fukushima Bon Dance Club's yagura & folk musicians are a fixture at many bon dances.

(tower) to many temples. They design, build, maintain, transport, all the while insuring the safety of everyone who uses the yagura. This yagura is approximately 10 feet by 10 feet square, and at least 20 feet tall. Doesn't fit in a garage or storage facility, so where do you store this important part of the obon festivities, especially during non-obon season? A corner of the Betsuin parking lot!

The Iwakuni Odori Aiko Kai also faces storage and transportation problems for its large drum, in addition to conducting practice sessions and taking care of the normal work that goes into maintaining a club with meetings and legal and non-legal paper work. Both organizations are asked to perform throughout the year in other festivals.

We also enjoy the senior bon dance clubs such as the Koolau group from Kaneohe, who started up as a senior club, and meet regularly for exercise, for camaraderie, and is an important and familiar part of the obon season.

The newest group to join our festivities is the Ryukyukoku Matsuri Daiko Hawaii, a lively group of performers from young children to seasoned adults. They add a high level of excitement only able to be generated through their youthful dedication. These groups together make up our *Blessing #4*.

The members of Higashi Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Betsuin can be proud of their temple. The Board of Directors do their best to maintain a safe and welcoming place for much more than our annual obon festivities.

We have two major fundraisers, and observe Hanamatsuri, Ohigan, Hoonko and Bodhi Day annually, in addition to other special projects such as the Tohoku disaster fund drive. We receive constant support from our members and friends, who help to make this temple the strong organization that it is



Volunteers among our members and their families & friends, sister temples, martial arts groups and others make the bon dances possible.

today. The obon season is by far the most popular activity of the year. Thank you all for your generosity throughout the years. *Blessing #5*.

Of course, there are many more blessings we can all come up with that haven't been addressed above. Please tell us of your blessings, so we can share them with other members through this Wa newsletter.

Arigato gozaimashita to everyone, Bon or No, Bonno.

— Faye Shigemura



Dancers, young and old, representing a cross-section of the community, turn out for our annual bon odori. Photos courtesy of Ken Kawawata & Ken Saiki



Fukunaga-sensei showed special techniques to thread the string through tight corners.

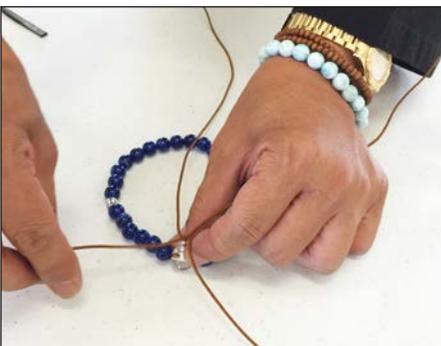
**Ojuzu-making class held by master**

On July 19 after our Sunday service and board meeting, a dozen Betsuin members and friends were fortunate to have ojuzu master Shozo Fukunaga teach the group how to make their own ojuzu.

The 9th-generation proprietor of Fukunaga Nenju Store, which is located across the street from the Higashi Hongwanji headquarters in Kyoto, Mr. Fukunaga demonstrated the intricate technique of threading the beads, tying knots into symmetric patterns and making the final touches on attractive ojuzu we expect to see hanging on wrists at upcoming Sunday services.

Each participant received a set of beads, string and a helpful sheet of instructions. The size, number and sequence of beads is different for men and women.

While some participants made more than one ojuzu, others had Mr. Fukunaga help repair ones that had fallen apart due to mishandling. He recognized one of the repaired ojuzu as one he had made several years ago.



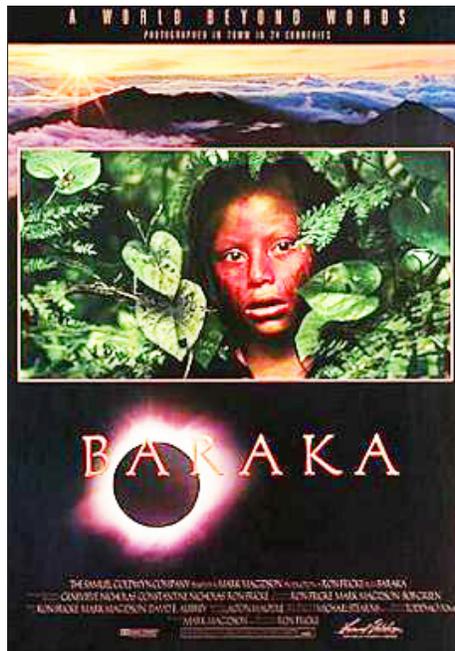
Evenly and tightly tied knots result in attractive patterns and an ojuzu that will last for years.

**Next movie night features *Baraka***

*Baraka* is a 1992 documentary film with no narrative or voice-over. A visual masterpiece, it explores themes via a kaleidoscopic compilation of natural events, life, human activities and technological phenomena shot in 23 countries on six continents over a 14-month period.

Locations include Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Cambodia, China, Ecuador, Egypt, France, Hawaii, India, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Japan, Israel, Kenya, Kuwait, Nepal, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Tanzania, Thailand, Turkey, United States and Vatican City.

Roger Ebert included the film in his



“Great Movies” list, writing that “if man sends another Voyager to the distant stars and it can carry only one film on board, that film might be *Baraka*.”

Showtime: 6:30 pm, Tues., Aug. 25 , 96 min.. Free admission. Bring your own popcorn or you're welcome to share in our light refreshments.

**BBQ chicken & sushi pickup 8/30**

We hope you'll be able to support our fundraising efforts with our end-of-summer Hoku barbecue chicken and sushi sale. Pick-up is Sunday, Aug. 30, from 10 am to 2 pm.

Once you catch a whiff of the nostalgic aroma of this local favorite

and get a taste of the hot-off-the-grill barbecue chicken, you'll want more... along with good, old-fashioned maki-sushi. Team that combination with some kimchee and you have meal that'll satisfy your taste buds and tummy, too!

Call the temple office at 531-9088 or email us at [betsuin@hhbt-hi.org](mailto:betsuin@hhbt-hi.org) if you need more tickets, or if you want to be included in our fundraising efforts but were left out.

Of course, if you received Hoku chicken and sushi tickets and do not wish to participate any longer, you can let us know that, too.

Mahalo, everyone, for your current and past support!

**Asai to present peace message**

Palolo Hongwanji member Masago Asai will be the guest speaker at her temple's 10 am Sunday service on Aug. 9. The title of her presentation is “Human Inner Maurity Is the Core of Global Peace.”

Asai, a 2nd-generation atomic bomb survivor, frequently organizes events focusing on peace, such as last year's well-received Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace presentation “A-bombs Exhibit for Peace - Face the Past to Heal the Present.”

Palolo Hongwanji is located at 1235 Palolo Ave. Call the temple at 732-1491 for information.

**Were you born in 1935?**

Attention all temple members born in 1935. This is your lucky year in which you attain the age of 80.

As the temple is a member of the United Japanese Society of Hawaii, you're eligible for an invitation to celebrate *Keiro no Hi* (Respect for Aged Day) and your 80th year with a free lunch and entertainment at its annual *Nenchosha Ian Engei Taikai* (Senior Citizens Festival). The event be held at the JCCH Manoa Grand Ballroom on Sunday, Sept. 27 from 9:30 am to 2 pm.

Call us at 531-9088 if you'd like to attend. We must submit your name by Aug. 7 so call right away! Family and friends may also join you at the celebration at \$38 per person.

# Appreciating our roots

Following is a transcript of the lay speaker message presented by Ken Saiki at the July 19 Sunday service.

Last week I missed Sunday service. I'm here for service almost every Sunday but instead, last week I was at Ala Moana Park at the annual picnic held by Takata Gunjinkai.

So what's "Takata Gunjinkai"? Well, most of you know what a *kenjinkai* is. It's an organization of people who trace their roots to a particular *ken*, or prefecture, in Japan. The *issei* felt very comfortable with others who spoke the same dialect, ate the same kind of foods and laughed at the same jokes. Members would help each other in times of need and help them find jobs, or even a husband or wife.

A *gunjinkai* is like a *kenjinkai* except it represents a smaller area. A *gun* is district, similar to a county in the U.S. Our Takata Gunjinkai is comprised of folks who trace their roots to Takata District in Hiroshima, where my father was from. Since the members come from a much smaller area, the *gunjinkai* is more closely knit than *kenjinkai*.

When there's a death in the family, the club might be called upon by the family to help with manning the *choba* reception table to collect the *koden* sympathy envelopes, provide an emcee and represent the organization for *oshoko*, or offering of incense.

Most all *kenjinkai* hold a *shinnenkai*, or new year party, sometime between January through March. Besides having lunch and electing new leaders, usually there are bingo games, goodie bags, lucky number drawings and entertainment.

They also have summer picnics at Ala Moana Park. And that's where I was last week. Besides eating bento lunch together at the park, we have goodie bags, shave ice and games. I've been going to the picnics almost every year since I was a little boy.

We have a spin-the-wheel game called *bun-mawashi*. It's a tricycle wheel mounted on a board so it

spins, with a pointer so when the wheel stops spinning, it points at your prize. People line up to try their luck. The tricycle wheel at last week's picnic was the exact same one from when I was in elementary school 65 years ago.

We also have geta race, sack race relays, water balloon toss and a vegetable pickup game in which we



"Golden Harvest" game is popular among seniors.

empty sacks of carrots, potatoes, round onions, cabbage and oranges on the ground and people have so many seconds to pick up as much as they can carry in their arms to take home.

If you win your race you're handed the 1st place flag and you get to go first to the prize table to pick up your prize. I remember as a kid sometimes the adults who were passing out the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place flags didn't hand the right flags to the right winners. When I missed out on a winner's flag I used to get upset and think those old folks must be either blind or have very poor judgment. Now, of course, I'm one of the people passing out the flags and with everything happening so fast sometimes I have difficulty picking out the right winners. Only now do I understand.

But what was really great about the games was that even if I finished last, I would still get a prize. That prize was slightly different from the top prize. The lesson I learned was that it doesn't matter that you're not good at something or not, you can still get something out of it just by doing it. The only real losers are those who don't try at all.

Perhaps the most rewarding

project our Takata Gunjinkai undertakes is our semi-annual *satogaeri*, or visits to our ancestral homeland. We travel to Japan together to visit the actual villages or towns where our ancestors came from, pay respects at family gravesites and temples, and occasionally end up finding distant relatives by talking to people in the neighborhood or with the help of city officials. We're doing our fifth trip later this fall and usually have from 15 to 25 people on our trips, including some young 4th and 5th generation members.

Besides visiting our ancestors' *urusato*, we also go on side trips to different places such as Kyushu, Shikoku or Kyoto. We do some cultural and fun things such as riding river boats through "white water" or take steam locomotive train rides, but the main focus of our *satogaeri*, of course, is going back to the land of our forebears. We're there to gain appreciation for our ancestors and a better understanding of *Okage sama de...* we are what we are because of them. We pause at our ancestors' gravesites and thank them for the happy lives we can live today, all because—and only because—of them.

On these *satogaeri* trips we hope to instill this appreciation of our heritage and our ancestors among younger members so that they, too, can one day pass down the same tradition to succeeding generations.

And that's why many of us volunteer our time and effort and work hard to keep the club going,...even if it means missing a day of rest or a Sunday service every once in a while.



We say "Okage sama de" and thank our ancestors.



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## TEMPLE ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

<b>AUGUST 2015</b>		<b>SEPTEMBER 2015</b>	
8/2	Sun 10 am	9/6	Sun 10 am
<b>Shōtsuki memorial service</b> (Rinban Kawawata) & <b>Sunday school</b>		<b>Shōtsuki memorial service</b> (Rinban Kawawata) <b>Sunday school</b>	
8/2	Sun 12 pm	9/6	Sun 12 pm
<b>Basic Buddhism study class</b> led by Rinban Kawawata in Japanese Otani Center		<b>Basic Buddhism study class</b> led by Rinban Kawawata in Japanese Fukuhara Conference Room	
8/2	Sun 12 pm	9/8	Tue 3 pm
<b>Jimmy's Auto Basics</b> led by Jimmy Hirakawa Fukuhara Conference Room		9/10	Thu 7 pm
8/8	Sat 10 am	<b>ABCs of Buddhism study class</b> led by Rinban Kawawata in English Fukuhara Conference Room	
8/9	Sun 10 am	9/12	Sat 10 am
<b>Sunday service</b>		<b>What on Earth Is Namuamidabutsu?</b> led by Rev. Frank Childs Fukuhara Conference Room	
8/11	Tue 3 pm	9/13	Sun 10 am
<b>Ukulele class/band practice</b>		9/15	Tue 7 pm
8/13	Thu 7 pm	<b>O-kō: Dharma discussion at Kaneohe</b>	
<b>ABCs of Buddhism study class</b> led by Rinban Kawawata in English		9/20	Sun 10 am
8/16	Sun 10 am	<b>Ohigan service</b> Guest speaker: Rev. Toshiyuki Umitani Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii	
<b>Sunday service</b>		9/20	Sun 12 pm
8/16	Sun 12 pm	<b>Betsuin board meeting</b>	
<b>Betsuin board meeting</b>		9/27	Sun 10 am
8/18	Tue 7 pm	<b>Sunday service</b>	
<b>O-kō: Dharma discussion at Betsuin</b>		9/28	Mon 10 am
8/23	Sun 10 am	<b>Onicchu Shinran Shonin service</b>	
<b>Sunday service</b>		9/29	Tue 3 pm
8/25	Tue 3 pm	<b>Ukulele practice</b>	
<b>Ukulele class/band practice</b>		9/29	Tue 6:30 pm
8/25	Tue 6:30 pm	<b>Movie night: TBA</b>	
<b>Movie night: Baraka</b>			
8/28	Fri 10 am		
<b>Onicchu Shinran Shonin service</b>			
8/30	Sun 10 am		
<b>BBQ chicken &amp; sushi sale</b> Otani Center			

*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.*