



### Monshu visits Hawaii district

Monshu Sennyō, visited Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii from September 9 – 13 as part of his visitation to the overseas districts and regional districts. Since his appointment as Monshu (Head priest) in June 2014, this is his second visit to an overseas district, following his first visit that was made to Canada. Covering the four islands of Big Island, Maui, Oahu, and Kauai, Monshu Sennyō made visitations to a total of 15 temples during which a Confirmation Ceremony was held at three temples. While in Hawaii, Monshu Sennyō also attended the dedication and grand opening ceremony of the new campus of Pacific Buddhist Academy, the first Jodo Shinshu Buddhist high school in the U.S., and the centennial of the completion and dedication of Hawaii Betsuin's main temple building.

Monshu and his entourage, with Governor Keiichi Abe as his attendant, were warmly greeted with leis and well wishes by kaikyōshi ministers and sangha members at the temples. Temples with preschool facilities also joined in the festive moment as they lined up with excitement to welcome Monshu Sennyō.

After entering the temple and offering incense, Monshu Sennyō offered a message in English before those gathered, expressing his respect to our predecessors who first immigrated to Hawaii from Japan, and with the temple as their spiritual place helped to establish the Hawaii Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha temples and transmit the teaching to us today. Monshu Sennyō stated, "The Jodo Shinshu teaching expounded by Shinran Shōnin about eight hundred years ago became known and supported by more and more people during Rennō Shōnin's tenure due to his skillful propagational efforts. After the Meiji era, the teaching was spread beyond the national borders to the rest of the world, therefore making it possible for us to meet here today. This global propagation is realized because the Jodo Shinshu teaching can essentially serve as anyone's spiritual foundation without regard to time and place. Being aware of Amida Buddha's great compassion embracing every one of us, we are enabled to accept each incident we come across as a great opportunity, and thus we are able to live our lives energetically even though life itself is filled with a variety of limitations. However, we cannot help but stop thinking of only our own desire or convenience and find it difficult to accept things as they are. That is why it is important for us to continue listening to the Dharma and understanding how Amida Buddha's working reaches us. Through such efforts, our views and ways of living gradually changes. In conclusion, I hope that every one of you who have gathered here today will continue your efforts in listening to and sharing of the Dharma with as many others as possible."

A brief history on the respective temple was shared by the resident minister that preceded a message by the temple president who introduced the temple's current activities and situation. Those in attendance later gathered for a group photo with Monshu Sennyō before he toured the temple facilities and interacted with members and preschool children.

Welcome dinners and luncheons were also organized for the special occasion with lively entertainment and fellowship.

(Hongwanji Journal, October 10, 2017, p.1)

## Dharma Names received by 134 participants from ages 1 to 93

A total of 134 Jodo Shinshu followers ranging in age from 1 to 93 received their Dharma Names during the Confirmation Ceremony which was conducted at Hilo Betsuin on the Big Island, Wailuku Hongwanji on Maui, and Hawaii Betsuin on Oahu. Many families were among those taking part in the ceremony.

Peyton Tanabe (1) was carried by her mother Lisa Tanabe, a member of Hilo Betsuin, to take part in the ceremony. “This is a good opportunity for my daughter to encounter Buddhism. I am relieved that she was quiet during the ceremony. This will be a memorable event in my daughter’s life,” shared Tanabe as Peyton playfully watched her mother being interviewed.

Hawaii Betsuin members, Miki Saito (48) and her children Byron (14), Cora (11), and Vincent (9) took part in the Confirmation Ceremony as a family. Saito’s grandparents were devout members and her parents had their wedding ceremony at the betsuin. While being raised in the mainland U.S., she would go to the temple for funerals. Since moving to Hawaii, she and her family have been going to the temple regularly. She expressed her appreciation to her parents and grandparents, and also for being able to take part in the Confirmation Ceremony.

(Hongwanji Journal, October 10, 2017, p.1)

~Smiles of three generations of Big Island family~

Hilo Betsuin members, Jill Yokoyama Atwall (45), daughter Maya (13), son Tevin (11), and mother Netlie Yokoyama (70), took part in the Confirmation Ceremony. The family of three generations regularly attends weekly Sunday service. Atwall shared, “I wanted to share my joy with my children. Being able to receive our Dharma names by Monshu here at our home temple is truly meaningful. The temple is a place where we learn many things. I would like my children to continue learning at the temple.” In receiving their Dharma names, Atwall’s children shared, “In receiving our Dharma name, we feel even closer to Buddhism. Beginning today, it’s as if we took a new step as Buddhists.”

(Hongwanji Journal, October 10, 2017, p.1)



## **Buddhist high school Pacific Buddhist Academy new building completed**

—Monshu expresses bright expectations of PBA to “develop bright young leaders at the global level”—

On September 8, a dedication ceremony was held at the Pacific Buddhist Academy to celebrate the completion of its new school building. Beginning with the offering of lit candles and flowers by students and the offering of incense by Monshu Sennyō, words of appreciation and congratulatory messages were given by PBA representatives and distinguished guests as everyone gathered in the multi-purpose hall of the new facility. PBA started out using the dormitory facilities of Hawaii Betsuin that were renovated into four classrooms. As the first Jodo Shinshu high school in the U.S., in order to be able to increase student enrollment, the construction of the new facility was started as a project in conjunction with the 120th anniversary of the establishment of Hawaii district.

Despite a five year delay due to difficulties in the collecting of funds, through generous contributions by the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha, the Buddhist Women's Federation, Ryukoku Sogo Gakuen, and many other countless supporters, the project was efficiently completed. The 2-story 10-classroom building consists of a Japanese tea room, an extensive open-spaced foyer where students can both socialize and study, and the multi-purpose hall which houses the school's Buddhist altar. The interior design concept of the classrooms and science lab on the second floor allows for rearrangement to cater to the lessons being instructed.

With Buddhism as its foundation, PBA continues to nurture the importance of peace within their education principles. Enrollment at PBA currently consists of a total of 55 students, ranging from grades 9 through 12.

(Hongwanji Journal, October 10, 2017, p.8)

## **Hawaii Betsuin temple hall turns 100**

To mark the opening celebrations of the centennial since the construction of the Hawaii Betsuin temple hall, a special service was held on September 10, with attendance by Monshu Sennyō. The service began with the unveiling of the newly decorated altar walls with painted images of the phoenix and Gumyocho, or two-headed bird which both represents the inconceivable light and life of the Buddha, by Monshu Sennyō and Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Bishop Rev. Eric Matsumoto. Following the chanting of Sam Butsu Ge, congratulatory messages by Monshu Sennyō, Bishop Matsumoto, and Hawaii Betsuin Rimban Rev. Hagio were presented, before the Dharma School and Adult choir of Hawaii Betsuin collaborated in a performance of Buddhist gathas, and the service closed with everyone joining in the singing of Ondokusan.

Takeko Oda (85), who was attending the service commented, “I am so thankful to have such a special opportunity to attend the ceremony and an honor to meet Monshu Sennyō for the first time.”

Expressing concerns of the younger people distancing themselves from Buddhism in Hawaii, Betty Morimoto (88) hopes that the Nembutsu can be transmitted on to the next generation. With the upcoming centennial activities, Hagio shared his concerns of the many challenges Hawaii district is confronted with. Last December, the last sugar plantation in Hawaii closed on Maui, marking the end of an era in Hawaii. As younger families move to Oahu for work, adjustments are necessary so that the younger families will come to the betsuin. Conveying the Nembutsu on to younger family members is becoming difficult, that immediate action needs to take place in developing a program in Hawaii that is similar to Japan's *Monto Suishin-in* (membership promotion committee) to assist ministers in propagation activities.

(Hongwanji Journal, October 10, 2017, p.8)

Altar palace-like structure that houses the image of Amida at Honohina Hongwanji on the Big Island. It was made from used wooden orange boxes. The carpenter is unknown, but was likely a member who built the structure, using what was available when the sermon hall became a temple in 1969.

(Hongwanji Journal, October 10, 2017, p.8)