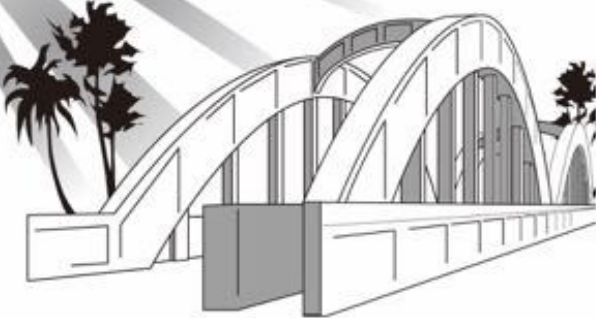


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# Haleiwa Jodo Mission

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION



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# HALEIWA JODO MISSION

AUGUST, 2024



## *FAMILY SERVICE*

10:00 AM

SUNDAY, AUGUST 4, 2024

## *BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING*

10:00 AM

SUNDAY, AUGUST 11, 2024

## *KOKUA DAY*

9:00 AM

SUNDAY, AUGUST 18, 2024

### FIRST SUNDAY OF AUGUST

The Family Service will be observed on August 4, 2024, at 10:00 am. Lunch will be served after the service. Please join us.

### MEMORIAL SERVICES FOR MONTH OF AUGUST

1 YEAR	NISHIYAMA, EVELYN AUG 29, 2023
3 <sup>rd</sup> YEAR	KAWANO, LOIS AUG 10, 2022
25 <sup>th</sup> YEAR	MUKAI, TOSHIAKI AUG 3, 2000
43 <sup>rd</sup> YEAR	KAWAMURA, HARU AUG 9, 1982
47 <sup>th</sup> YEAR	SHIRATORI, SHUNJO REV. AUG 10, 1978

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

#### MEMORIAL DONATIONS

Cecilia Okamoto (In memory of Takaichi Miyata)  
Douglas Kuniyuki  
(In memory of Toshiaki & Masae Mukai)

#### SPECIAL DONATIONS

Amy Iwamasa	Lester Iwamasa
Nathan Iwamasa	Raymond Fukuda

### O-BON HOUSE VISIT

Betty Hayashi  
Joshua Choi  
Nadine Matsukawa  
Shirley Kitamura  
Karen Inouye  
Lorelei Campbell

Keao/Otsuka Family  
Paul Murakami  
Karen Sonstegard  
Brian Kawano  
Dennis Nakamura  
Alan Okuda

### PATIO DONATIONS

Dennis Nakamura	David Au
Lucy Anna Jenkins	

### HALEIWA BON DANCE CLUB



Haleiwa Bon Dance Club demonstrates the dances during Haleiwa Shingon Mission's Bon Dance and Haleiwa Jodo Mission's Bon Dance. From left, David Koizumi, Todd Takahashi, Lynnette Fujiyoshi, Edna Yamada, Lynnette Hirota, Nadine Matsukawa, Miku Ezaki, Kyler Kokubun, Austen Andrade, and Riley Mishina.

SERMON AT THE OBON SERVICE AT JODO  
MISSION OF HAWAII ON JULY 19, 2024

Rev. Ezaki was invited to the Hatsu-bon Service at the Jodo Mission of Hawaii as a guest speaker. Below is his sermon.

I am Rev. Koji Ezaki, resident minister of the Haleiwa Jodo Mission. I was at this temple from 1996 to 1998 before transferring to Haleiwa Jodo Mission. Also, when Bishop Narashiba passed away, I was assigned as interim bishop for a year, until Bishop Ishikawa was elected. Some of you may know me by reading my past bishop's message in the Betsuin's bulletin in 2018. I am grateful Bishop Ishikawa asked me to speak today at the Hatsu-bon Service here at the Jodo Mission of Hawaii.

Today, I would like to talk about luck and how to incorporate it into Buddha's teaching. Skeptical people might think, "There is no such thing as luck," or "I don't believe in luck." Other people might say, "Do we attract luck by ourselves? How?" I say there is a thing as luck and we can attract luck by ourselves. First, it is essential to recognize the difference between "chance" and "luck" --- the words are closely related, and often used interchangeably, yet not the same. Please look at the handout. The definition of "chance" is:

"The likelihood of something happening; possibility or probability."

We come across a lot of chances in our lives but take no notice of them. We ignore most of the chances that happen around us because they are of no significance to us. But, now and then, a chance will touch the interests of an individual --- and then it becomes very personal and significant where we now view it as luck. Well, then, how does chance change into luck? Let me give you an example.

Imagine you are walking on the side of a road. The wind blows a piece of paper in front of you. You just ignore it, thinking about something else. It is a chance happening in your daily life: paper flies in the air. Is this something out of the ordinary? No, not really. Suppose, however, that same piece of paper flutters by, you follow it with your eyes, stop, and discover that it is money --- a ten-dollar or hundred-dollar bill. You grab it in the air. I say at that moment you got lucky. Luck, then, is the effect of chance on our lives. But chance is not the only element in luck. Another factor is needed. That is "You must go into action." The important element is "move your arm, open your palm, and grab the money." This means the person who made an action by reacting toward the chance around him got lucky.

"Making an action" or "taking action" is the important key for spending our life happily. However, it is very difficult to move, work, take action, or do something using our bodies because we, humans, have laziness in our minds. Laziness is one of the poisons

in our mind and it is a troublemaker. How many of you have been told that you must walk or exercise by your doctor? Someone says, "Sensei, I know I have to walk but I don't feel like doing anything today. I always say to myself that I will start walking from tomorrow." I understand this person because our life battles with laziness, don't you think so? We are not motivated to make an action because we have not made an action yet. Do you know what I mean? I will say it one more time. We are not motivated to make an action because we have not made an action yet. Tricky words, right? I will explain more about this. People believe because we don't have motivation, that is why we don't want to do anything. That is the opposite. If you force yourself to do something, motivation will increase later. Action leads to motivation. That is the mechanism of our brain system. I think many of you have had experiences when once you start reading, you cannot stop reading. In my case, when I start pulling weeds around the temple grounds, sometimes I forget the time and realize I worked for over an hour. Doing sudoku, crossword puzzles, working on crafts, cooking, surfing, cleaning the house, and using the Internet are the same thing. Our brain is organized in a way that once we start to do something, even though we are not willing to do it, our motivation will rise and improve.

St. Honen, the founder of Jodo Shu said the same thing about 800 years ago. His quote is on the handout so let us look.

"Reciting the Nembutsu and believing in Birth in the Pure Land naturally gives rise to the Three Minds and four modes of practice."

He insisted that reciting "Namu Amida Butsu" develops faith. The next several sentences simply explain the "Three Minds" and "four modes of practice." I will read them so please follow with your eyes.

Three Minds:

1. perfect sincere mind
2. deeply believing mind
3. aspiring mind to transfer one's merit to be receiving into Amida Buddha's Pure Land to return to this earthly world to save those who are suffering.

Four modes of Practices:

1. to exercise Nembutsu in reverence
2. to exercise Nembutsu in purity
3. to exercise Nembutsu in continuity
4. to exercise Nembutsu in infinity

Many people misunderstand that the person who has a strong faith toward Buddhism or is a sincere member of the Jodo Mission recites, "Namu Amida Butsu." But St. Honen's teaching is the opposite. His doctrine is faith led by reaction. That is why we must recite as many times as you can. That is, action is first, then, motivation and emotion follow it. Our action forms our mental attitude.

St. Honen also explained the importance of

recitation of Buddha's Sacred Name in his short poem, using metaphors. I listed them on the handout. Please look at "Tsukikage."

"Though the moon so bright whitens world's expanse,  
Only they who earnest gaze,  
Touched throughout, within,  
Are embraced by serenity."

In this metaphor, the moon is Amida Buddha's compassionate light. Moonlight or sunlight is always pouring upon us equally. But a person never sees it, never realizes its importance. When we look up into the sky and say, "How beautiful today's moon is." This person may then be thankful for the beautiful moonlight. St. Honen emphasized the importance of "action." Because you make an action by looking up and gazing at the moon, you realize the thankfulness and beauty of the moon. Gazing here is equivalent to reciting. Reciting is an "action." Because we call out Amida Buddha's name, we can realize Amida Buddha and our ancestors' blessings. The more you recite it, your ability to receive his compassion increases. St. Honen insisted the importance of reciting and uttering, not thinking "Namu Amida Butsu" in our mind.

I am sure you understand the importance of recitation. Even though you may not have a strong belief in your mind toward Jodo Mission's teaching, that's okay. Recite "Namu Amida Butsu" with sensei, gradually your faith will grow in your mind. I often bring up in my sermon about people who always complain and grumble about the people around them. Many say they are not satisfied, that is why they complain about something. It is the opposite. They complain, complain, and complain about whatever they see, hear, or touch all the time, that is why their attention focuses on only the dissatisfaction. We, by ourselves, find ungrateful things around us by our complaints. This is our bad habit. To break this bad habit, we must focus ourselves to speak on the appreciative things around us. Even though it is something common or just a small thing happens to you, try to show appreciation or kindness, by saying "Namu Amida Butsu." For example, when you see a rainbow, say, "It's beautiful. Namu Amida Butsu." It's okay if you really feel it or not. Simply say, "Namu Amida Butsu." When you wake up, get up from your bed, say, "Today will be the best day in my life! Namu Amida Butsu." Just force yourself to say that. Or when you see a stray cat walking along the street, tell her to watch for the cars. Namu Amida Butsu." Even though you don't like cats, it doesn't matter. This practice is not to become a cat lover, but to enhance our mind and to give compassion. If you continue to do this practice, just say "Namu Amida Butsu," the sense of warmth, tenderness, and kindness arises in your mind. You will feel more calmness and happiness. Your action changes the chance to luck.

Today we are observing O-bon Hatsu-bon Service. You spontaneously recited "Namu Amida Butsu" vocally using your mouth. You made a lot of actions so you are on the right track. Buddhism is a teaching of Buddha and also a teaching to become a Buddha. In order to get enlightenment and happiness, we must use our actions by practicing the teaching in our daily life. If you continue to recite "Namu Amida Butsu" with Bishop Ishikawa and Takano sensei, your faith blossoms, your sincerity is enhanced, and more luck will fall on you. Obtain much luck by reciting Amida's Name: that is the ideal life as Jodo-Shu followers.

#### MAHALO FROM REV. EZAKI AND HIS FAMILY

Rev. Ezaki and his family deeply appreciate the support and understanding of the members and friends of Haleiwa Jodo Mission. Sensei's wife, Tomomi, and his daughters, Miku and Sae, visited Japan from June 4 to July 3. They visited Okayama where Tomomi's mother's house is located and Sensei's parents in Osaka. During this period, Rev. Ezaki stayed in Hawaii and managed the temple by himself for one month. Thankfully, many members of HJM supported Sensei and brought bento and okazu to support him.

Even during the house visit or tanagyo in June, many members gave him bento, fruits, and snacks when he visited their houses. The members of Haleiwa Bon Dance Club also brought food to the bon dance practices. Surprisingly, the Bon Dance Club celebrated Rev. Ezaki's birthday (because he was alone on his birthday on July 1), bringing a birthday cake and many ono foods after the Bon dance practice. Many people helped Ezaki Sensei, especially, during the Obon season. During this busy time, Sensei and its members have an opportunity to be close to each other working side by side. Obon is a time when families, the temple, and Sensei become one to accomplish the Obon Festival.

Haleiwa Jodo Mission survives because of your support. Rev. Ezaki will continue to ask everyone to help with Haleiwa Jodo Mission's activities. Please help us. Mahalo.

#### THE 850<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF JODO SHU & THE 130<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF HAWAII JODO SHU

This year marks the 850<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Founding of Jodo Shu by St. Honen (1133-1212) and the 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Jodo Shu ministry in Hawaii. With deep gratitude to our predecessors, the Hawaii Council of Jodo Missions will hold a commemoration service and event on Sunday, October 20 at the Jodo Mission of Hawaii in Makiki. Please save the date. Members are encouraged to attend this auspicious occasion.