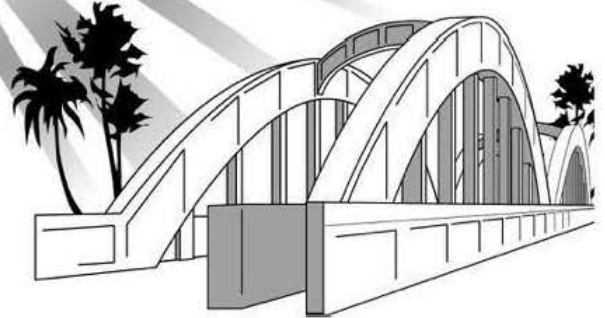
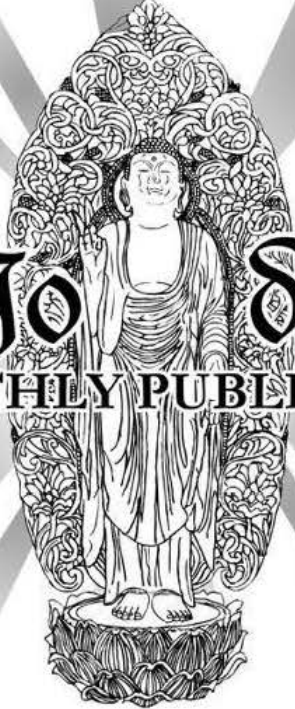


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Haleiwa Jodo Mission

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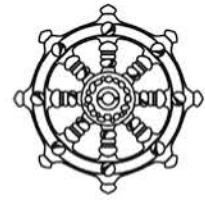
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HALEIWA JODO MISSION

FEBRUARY, 2024



NEHAN FAMILY SERVICE

10:00 AM

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2024

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

10:00 AM

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2024

NEW YEAR'S PARTY

11:30 AM

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2024

KOKUA DAY

9:00 AM

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2024

GYOKI-YE SERVICE

We would like to thank the following members for preparing refreshments at the Gyoki-ye service on January 7, 2024: Etsuko, Ama, & Lani Morikawa, and Patty Hirano.

NEHAN FAMILY SERVICE IN FEBRUARY

Nehan is a memorial service for Shakyamuni Buddha who founded Buddhism 2,500 years ago. The service starts at 10:00 am on February 4, 2024. Lunch will be served. Please join us.

THE MARIAN M. KAWAMURA SCHOLARSHIP

Applications for the Marian Masae Kawamura Scholarship are now available. To be considered for the scholarship, applications must be delivered to the Haleiwa Jodo Mission by March 9, 2024.

SERMON AT THE GYOKI SERVICE

Rev. Koji Jeff Ezaki
Minister of Haleiwa Jodo Mission

This is the first Sunday service for the year 2024 and we are observing a Gyoki Family Service. Gyoki

is a memorial service for St. Honen, founder of the Jodo Shu denomination. The statue that is enshrined on the left side of the altar is St. Honen.

I will briefly tell you about the life of St. Honen. He was born in 1133 in Okayama Prefecture, Japan, and passed away on January 25, 1212, in Kyoto. St. Honen was a person who lived 800 years ago. He was born the son of a samurai warrior. However, his father was assassinated by his enemy when St. Honen was only nine years old. He was still a little child and was shocked when he learned about his father's death. When he was 15 years old, he decided to study Buddhism instead of becoming a samurai. He left his mother's house and stayed at his uncle's temple. Later, St. Honen further studied Buddhism in Kyoto. He founded Jodo Shu in 1175 when he was 43 years old. Jodo Shu has grown and became a large denomination over the 800-year span. We have over 6,000 Jodo Shu temples in places around the world including Japan, Hawaii, Brazil, California, France, and Australia. St. Honen is not only a great teacher for us, Jodo Shu followers, but also a person who had great influences on the history of Japanese Buddhism and culture. By observing the Gyoki Service every year, we, Jodo Shu followers, honor and celebrate our

great teacher, St. Honen's achievements. That is the reason we gathered today.

Today, I have been talking about a lot of numbers; 1133, 1175, 800 years ago, and so on. I think some of you may be confused because we are not familiar with history, especially the time when St. Honen was alive. I often use the words "800 years ago" or "850 years ago" when I talk about Jodo Shu's history because our denomination was founded around that time. But it is actually hard to imagine how life was like at that time. We just accept it as loooooong ago, right? Let's go over some familiar historical facts and compare them with the time of St. Honen. Do you know when Christopher Columbus discovered North America? It was in 1492. It was 532 years ago. Do you know what happened in 1776? It was the United States Declaration of Independence, 248 years ago. When did Hawaii become a state? It was in 1959, only 65 years ago. I studied these facts when I became a US citizen. I had a test. Okay, think about it, our knowledge of history is just about 500 years at most. If we focus mainly on the country of America, its history spans only about 200. The Jodo Shu has 800 years of history, four times the history of the United States.

In the beginning, I said St. Honen was born as the son of a samurai warrior. However, he became a monk instead of becoming a samurai after his father was killed. History says St. Honen's father's occupation was a police officer. At that time, the samurai maintained public order as police officers and security guards of today. However, he was assassinated by his enemy. If we heard only that part, we would hate the enemy. We would feel pity for St. Honen because his father, the police officer, was killed by the bad guy. But let's re-think about the life back then (800 years ago) and now, which is a big difference. Today we call public safety officers, police, they catch murderers, thieves, swindlers, and so-called bad guys. That is our understanding of police officers in this present day. They protect us. The police, 800 years ago, were easily controlled by money. If St. Honen's father received under-the-table money from rich people or politicians and was controlled by them, he might have oppressed the citizens by unjustly using his power. For example, making unreasonable demands of the general public, such as raising and collecting taxes illegally, especially from the farmers and fishermen. Pushing terrible policies would naturally have people think of him in a bad light. Naturally, he was hated by people. Many people may have wanted to kill St. Honen's father because he was a notorious police officer. This is a fact that St. Honen's father's job was called Oryoshi, which means a person who embezzles. I am sure St. Honen knew that. His father was killed because he pressed down villagers with unfair laws or illegal regulations controlled by the government. The villagers' frustration

exploded. It was the trigger that led to the assassination of St. Honen's father.

This is the reason why St. Honen studied Buddhism deeply instead of becoming a warrior. After he became a monk at 15 years old, he never again saw his mother. He completely absorbed himself in finding out the way to happiness. I am sure his mind fought with sadness, guilt, regret, worry of his mother, and anger toward his father. He spent his life with a negative mind. Various ideas were spinning in St. Honen's mind and they became an energetic motivation to study Buddhism. He kept searching and read a bunch of sutras. He tried to find out how to become happy. Then, he found when we recite Amida Buddha's Sacred Name, "Namu Amida Butsu" everybody will be saved and become happy. Just recite it. St. Honen preached to us that we do not need to study Buddhism or read Buddhist texts or sutras to achieve enlightenment. It is unusual for a religion to tell us that we do not need to study its teaching. Nowadays, we have many temples that have sutra and holy text reading to understand the teachings. But St. Honen totally refused to study the teaching but just recited the name of Buddha to get enlightened. Why?

I have to go back to the story of 800 years ago. As I said, life now is very different than it was 800 years ago. How many people could read words or letters 800 years ago, not only in Japan but worldwide? How many people could read the Buddhist sutras 800 or 1,000 years ago? It is way beyond our imagination. If the people who could read the Buddhist sutras were the only people who could understand it, then how many people knew the teachings at that time? St. Honen understood the literacy level of the people. Farmers, fishermen, carpenters, and other physical laborers who earned their money in everyday life, could not associate with the religious teachings because they were not educated. St. Honen searched for a way for these non-educated people, who could not read or write, to develop a stronger connection to Buddhism. Then, he found the teaching of Amida from the sutra. The sutra on the Buddha of Infinite Life says, "Call Amida's Name. If we call His Name, He will surely save us." When St. Honen found this sentence, it strengthened his belief. This is it! No need to read the sutra, no need to read or write, one just needs to call Buddha's name. This is the ultimate salvation of the Buddha. Then, he founded Jodo Shu, the Pure Land Buddhism, in Kyoto, 850 years ago.

850 Years have passed since St. Honen founded our denomination and we are still following his teaching. We call Amida Buddha's Sacred Name, "Namu Amida Butsu," as they recited 800 years ago. Calling Buddha's Name to accept His Love and Compassion is very easy and simple. We can recite

“Namu Amida Butsu” anywhere, anytime, and with anybody, educated or not, Japanese or Americans, men or women, and young or old. Recitation is the easiest practice in Buddhism which is why Jodo Shu became a big denomination over the past 800 years. We honor St. Honen’s achievement by observing the Gyoki Service, a memorial service for St. Honen.

PATIO RESERVATIONS

If you want to use the patio for your party in 2024, please make your plans quickly and make a reservation as early as possible. The season from May to August is especially popular for parties. Because Haleiwa Jodo Mission will observe the Obon Festival in July this year, there will be limited time to use the patio this summer.

Only members who are currently active (participate in the Sunday Services, Kokua Day, Toro Making, Bon Festival, and so on) or have paid dues for at least the last three years can reserve the patio.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

MEMBERSHIP DUES (2024)

Julie Sakai	Herbert Nakagawa Jr.
Jon Shigemura	Carl Sato
Robert McLean	Luka McLean
James McLean	Jess Kawachi
Melanie Matsui	Mariane Ono
Glen Kazama	Edwin Nakahara
Betty Hayashi	Barbara Koga
Frances Hirakawa	Earl Nakahara
Lester Iwamasa	Amy Iwamasa
Thelma Tsuchida	Karen Inouye
Karen Sonstegard	Nadine Matsukawa
Mae Yorimoto	Keith Yamauchi
Sheri Yamauchi	
Howard Nonaka (new member)	

BIRTHDAY DONATIONS

Barbara Koga	Thelma Tsuchida
Jane Sakai	

NEW YEAR’S EVE & NEW YEAR’S DAY SERVICES

Donald Koga	Calvin Kuniyama
Joan Yamamoto	Myra Shiratori
Sheri Yamauchi	Marianne Ono
Barbara Koga	

GYOKI SERVICE

Grace Iwane	Sheri Yamauchi
Keith Yamauchi	Melanie Matsui
Marianne Ono	Dennis Nakamura
Kenneth Masatsugu	Nadine Matsukawa
David Koizumi	Mae Yorimoto

MEMORIAL DONATIONS

Erline Furuichi
(In memory of Peter Furuichi)
Stephen Gonsalves
(In memory of Marian Nakagawa)
Warren Sugimura
(In memory of Takaichi & Misayo Miyata)
Nadine Matsukawa
(In memory of Masakazu Matsukawa)
Mae Sakai
(In memory of Yukuyo Tanaka)
Kyle Muranaka
(In memory of Lorraine Muranaka)
Yamamoto Family
(In memory of Gunichi Yamamoto)

OMAMORI DONATIONS

Betty Hayashi	Inez Koga
Edwin Nakahara	David Koizumi
Myra Shiratori	Thelma Tsuchida
Karen Sonstegard	Nadine Matsukawa
Lester Iwamasa	Amy Iwamasa
Jane Sakai	Mae Yorimoto

GOBUTSUZEN & SPECIAL DONATIONS

Clayton Plemer	Myles Murakami
Gilbert Kawamata	Amy Iwamasa
Lester Iwamasa	Jane Sakai
Glenn Takahashi	Akiko Nishiyama
Matsumoto Store	Carrie Aoki
Janice Fukunaga	Mae Kishimoto
Robert McLean	Joshua Choi
Darcy Takushi	Lillian Miyasaki
Sandy Endo	Herbert Nakagawa Jr.

PATIO DONATIONS

Yamamoto Family

SUNDAY SCHOOL DONATIONS

Clayton Plemer

MEMORIAL SERVICES FOR MONTH OF FEBRUARY

25 th YEAR	YAMAGUCHI, FUKUMI FEB. 15, 2000
27 th YEAR	UYEHARA, TOSHIKO FEB. 17, 1998
37 th YEAR	MORINAKA, MINORU FEB. 29, 1988
47 th YEAR	MASATSUGU, KURA FEB. 10, 1978 KUWABARA, SOKAKU FEB. 15, 1978 TSUCHIDA, GENZAEMON FEB. 26, 1978