



# Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

## HEADQUARTERS UPDATE

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**JULY 2026**

*Please note that the Headquarters Update is an official monthly communication from the HHMH Headquarters to the temples, ministers, lay leaders, and affiliates of the Hawaii Kyodan. The Headquarters encourages you to share the news in this update with your temple or community members.*

### MESSAGE FROM BISHOP TOSHIYUKI UMITANI

As July draws to a close, another Obon season is also nearing its end. Since June, temples throughout Hawaii have been busy preparing for and hosting Bon services and Bon Dances. Some temples have already completed their events and are enjoying a well-deserved moment of rest, while others are still working tirelessly to prepare for the events ahead.

My wife and I have tried to attend as many Bon Dances as possible this summer, although unfortunately we are not always able to visit some temples, including the ones on neighboring islands. Please forgive us for that. At every temple we visit, we are deeply inspired by the dedication of the resident ministers, members, and countless volunteers. Seeing you working so hard—while still smiling, laughing, and enjoying one another's company—is truly moving. Your joyful spirit of service is a beautiful expression of the Dharma in everyday life.

The summer heat can be exhausting, so I hope everyone will take good care of themselves. Please remember to stay hydrated, rest when you can, and avoid overexerting yourselves.

On a personal note, this past July 1 marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of my ministry as a Kaikyoshi in Hawaii. Looking back, those twenty-five years seem to have passed in the blink of an eye. When I first arrived, I knew very little about life and ministry in Hawaii. Whatever I have been able to accomplish has only been possible because of the guidance, encouragement, and kindness I have received from so many people over the years.

Many of those who nurtured and supported me have since passed away and returned to the Pure Land. Yet their examples, their words, and the way they lived continue to shape who I am today. They left behind precious examples of how to live with humility, compassion, and gratitude. I hope that by following in their footsteps, I too may become someone who brings a little more joy, comfort, and peace to those around me, while continually reflecting upon and improving myself.

One of my favorite poems says:

「別れても おなじみ親の慈悲のなか み名称えれば 呼びつ 呼ばれつ」

**“Though we may be separated, we remain within the compassionate embrace of our True Parent. As we recite the Name (*Namo Amida Butsu*), we discover ourselves calling—and being called.”**

Shinran Shonin taught that when we recite *Namo Amida Butsu*, the voice we utter is, at the very same time, the compassionate call of Amida Buddha reaching us and embracing us tirelessly. Within the compassionate calling of the Nembutsu, we discover that we ourselves, those beside us, and even our loved ones who have passed away are all embraced together by Amida Buddha's boundless Wisdom and Compassion. In the Nembutsu, we encounter a world where separation is transformed into connection, where we continue to call to one another and hear one another's voices through the working of the Buddha's Compassion.

Obon is a special season to remember those who have gone before us and the working of the Great Compassion that unites us. May we take this opportunity to visit our temples, quietly place our hands together in *gassho*, recite the Nembutsu, and spend a few peaceful moments in the company of those who continue to live in our hearts.

Namo Amida Butsu.

Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani

## CONDOLENCE

It is with deep sadness that we inform you of the passing of Reverend Hiromi Kawaji. Rev. Kawaji passed away and returned to the Pure Land on Thursday, July 16, 2026.

Rev. Hiromi Kawaji faithfully served as a Kaikyoshi Minister of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii from 1961 until his retirement in 2004. During his 43 years of dedicated ministry in Hawaii, he served the following temples and positions:

|                                      |                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| August 3, 1961 – March 31, 1964      | Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin                                          |
| April 1, 1964 – September 30, 1966   | HMMH Headquarters (Executive Secretary)                                 |
| October 1, 1966 – January 31, 1968   | Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin                                          |
| February 1, 1968 – August 15, 1974   | Kapaa Hongwanji Mission<br>(Also in charge of Kealia Hongwanji Mission) |
| August 16, 1974 – November 31, 1986  | Pearl City Hongwanji Mission                                            |
| August 1, 1984 – March 31, 1985      | (Oversaw Mililani Hongwanji Mission)                                    |
| December 1, 1986 – December 20, 1994 | Wailuku Hongwanji Mission                                               |
| December 21, 1994 – July 31, 2002    | Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin (Rimban)                                 |
| August 1, 2002 – July 31, 2004       | Aiea Hongwanji Mission                                                  |
| August 1, 2004                       | Retired from Active Ministry                                            |

The HMMH Headquarters is currently coordinating the Hawaii Kyodan Funeral Service with Rev. Kawaji's family. Additional information will be shared as it becomes available.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to the family of the late Rev. Hiromi Kawaji. We also express our deepest appreciation and gratitude for his more than four decades of faithful and compassionate service in sharing the Nembutsu teaching throughout Hawaii.

Namo Amida Butsu.

## INGO (POSTHUMOUS TITLE)

Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani conferred the following Posthumous Title (Ingo) on those who recently passed away, in recognition and appreciation of their significant contributions to the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii and its efforts to share the Nembutsu teaching.

### **Mr. Yoshiaki Kakazu**

Temple: Mililani Hongwanji Mission

Ingo: Sho-Bo-In 勝法院

Meaning: "The one who heard the rare and excellent dharma"

### **Ms. Colleen Wakako Hanabusa**

Temple: Waianae/Waipahu Hongwanji Mission

Ingo: Ji-Sei-In 慈施院

Meaning: "The one who lived a life of compassionate giving"

## 2026 BSC SUMMER SESSION

The 2026 Buddhist Study Center Summer Session with guest speaker Rev. Dr. Aaron Proffitt begins July 26. The overall theme is "Rethinking Buddhist Education."

### **Core Offering in Honolulu July 26-29**

- On Sunday, July 26, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at **Jikoen Hongwanji**, Rev. Proffitt will speak at the Sunday Service and then lead a seminar on "Buddhism and Family Culture." The seminar will be followed by a light lunch. **Zoom available** for attending online; register to receive the link.
- Then, three evenings at **Buddhist Study Center** at 1436 University Ave and *also livestreaming to the BSC Hawaii YouTube channel*.  
July 27 (Monday), 6-8 p.m.: "Entering the Mahayana Multiverse"  
July 28 (Tuesday), 6-8 p.m.: "Shin Buddhism as Basic Buddhism"  
July 29 (Wednesday), 6-8 p.m.: "Buddhism is Simple, Buddhist Studies is Complicated"



Rev. Dr. Aaron Proffitt

### **District-Level Offerings July 30 – August 9**

- Kauai** — July 30 (Thursday), 6:30 p.m.–8 p.m., **Zoom only**, "Show, Don't Tell"
- Hawaii Island**  
August 2 (Sunday), 10 a.m. Holualoa Obon service  
August 2 (Sunday), 3 p.m. event at Honoka'a Hongwanji, **Zoom available** with registration
- Oahu District** — August 4 (Tuesday), 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m., Waipahu Hongwanji, "A Special Place"
- Maui** — August 9, 9:00 a.m., Kahului Hongwanji (Rev. Proffitt as Sunday Service guest speaker)

***For links to more information, flyers, and registration, see [bschawaii.org/summer-session](https://bschawaii.org/summer-session) or the [related news item](#) the HHMH home page.***

## MAKING NEW FRIENDS THROUGH YBICSE 2026

Meeting new friends from near and far—that's what the Youth Buddhist International Cultural Study Exchange (YBICSE) is all about. This year, I had the pleasure of accompanying two students from Hawaii to Japan, where we joined 12 other participants from around the world. Our group included six participants from the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA), three from the Buddhist Churches of Canada (BCC), and three from the South America Hongwanji Mission, bringing the total to 14 participants for the 2026 program.

The day before the program officially began, we explored Kyoto by visiting famous temples and shrines, shopping, and getting to know one another before meeting our new Dharma friends. Over the next week, we enjoyed a meaningful blend of cultural experiences, Buddhist learning, and fellowship.

We began by learning proper temple etiquette, including how to handle service books, offer incense, and make our own *onenju* (Buddhist nenju), followed by a tour of the Honzan and an opportunity to meet young adult Buddhists from Japan.

A trip to Hiroshima gave us the chance to visit the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and hear firsthand accounts from atomic bomb survivors. After a group reflection at Hiroshima Betsuin the following morning, we visited Miyajima Island and Itsukushima Shrine before returning to Kyoto.

Back in Kyoto, we learned about the ten denominations of Jodo Shinshu and visited several head temples, including Higashi Hongwanji, Koshoji, and Bukkoji. A highlight of the week was our audience with Gomonshusama, who encouraged us to continue walking the Nembutsu path. Several participants also received their Buddhist names during the Confirmation Rites Ceremony.

Our journey continued with a visit to Ryukoku University, where we met and shared lunch with students, followed by visits to Otani Hongbyo, the resting place of Shinran Shonin, and Mount Hiei, an important site in the history of Japanese Buddhism.

We concluded the week with a farewell dinner featuring Kyoto-style *sukiyaki*, and on our final day, we shared reflections, exchanged contact information, and said our goodbyes, grateful for the friendships and memories we had made together.

YBICSE is much more than a cultural exchange. It is an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the Dharma, experience Japan's rich Buddhist heritage, and build meaningful friendships that extend across countries and continents. I am grateful for the experiences we shared and look forward to seeing how these connections continue to grow in the years ahead. (Rev. Blayne Nakasone Sakata, Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin)

