



# GASSHO

## September

### 2011

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*"Hands together in reverence & gratitude"*



## HONOLULU'S CHINATOWN AND "HELL'S HALF ACRE"

by rev. roland k. tatsuguchi

The term *bonno* involves two *kanji* that depict primordial bio-genetic forces and physiological necessities found in all human beings regardless the pigmentation of their skin, lifestyle or personal beliefs. In various subtle ways, civilized man is even more barbaric than his aboriginal cousins. Because of man's ever expanding scientific knowledge and technology, what he is thinking, saying and doing continues to become even more far reaching. Whether they will be for the good or for the worse, only the passing of time will tell. For example, the hurling of sticks and stones has now become the launching of electronically controlled unmanned long-range Tomahawk and nuclear-tipped missiles at each other.

The *kanji bonno* is comprised of two pictograms. The first, a pictograph for "fire" on the left coupled with pictographs on the right for an "eye" on two "legs" pierced by a "dagger" the tip of which is full of "barbs." The meanings of these graphics are unmistakable. When one's eyes become "pierced" by what one "sees," one's thoughts, feelings, words and actions become "hooked" and "stuck" to "what one is looking at." The thing "seen" forms "images" that stubbornly persist in one's mind to then obsess the heart with burning desire or raging revulsion that become unquenchable. For what sticks in the mind and captures the heart is either alluring or repulsive.

The second *kanji* in *bonno* is also a combination of several pictographs. The left side is that of the "mind" and a "heart" depicted vertically. The right is a combination of pictographs for one's whole person stewing in a "cauldron" of boiling water over "burning firewood." Steam is rising above the "lid" on the cauldron. This pictographic combination represents one's whole being cooked in the waters of desire,

## MONTH'S THOUGHT



Instead of relating the relative ego to the transcendental ego and making the latter its starting point, the Western mind tenaciously clings to it. But since the relative ego is by nature defective, it is always found unsatisfactory and frustrating and leading to a series of disasters, and as the Western mind believes in the reality of this troublemaker, it wants to make short work of it. Here we can also see something characteristically Western, for they have crucified it.

In a way the Oriental mind is not inclined toward the corporeality of things. The relative ego is quietly and without much fuss absorbed into the body of the transcendental ego. .... As there is no ego-substance, there is no need for crucifixion. Daisetz T. Suzuki. *Mysticism: Christian and Buddhist.* p. 131,12.



passion and illusion. The "fire" below represents the flames of those desires and passions. The "vapors"

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# REMINDERS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## SERVICES FOR SEPTEMBER 2011

### 1st SUN Sep 4th:

NO Service

### 2nd SUN Sep 11th:

9 A.M. English Service  
Dharma Talk  
For Children & Adults  
Rev. Tatsuguchi

### 3rd SUN Sep 18th:

#### ANNUAL AUTUMN O'HIGAN SERVICES

9 A.M.  
English Service

**Guest Speaker:**  
**Rev. Tomo Hojo**  
**of Hawaii Betsuin**

### 4th SUN Sep 25th:

MONTHLY  
FAMILY WORSHIP  
9 A.M. English Service  
"Dharma Talk"  
Rev. Tatsuguchi

## WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

**KARAOKE CLASS** Mon 7 - 9 P.M.  
Mr. Nelson Yoshioka

**KARATE** Tues/Fri 6 - 9 P.M.  
Shihan - Walter Nishioka

**FUJINKAI SEWING CLUB** Wed 9 - 11 A.M.  
J. Kobuke/A. Murata

**HAWAII EISA CHIMUGUKURU DAIKO**  
Mr. Van Shimabukuro  
Wed/Thur 6.30-8.30

**THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!!**

*With Deepest Sympathy*

Mr. George T. Fukunaga 89 Aug. 8, 2011  
Mr. Tokiji Teramae Aug. 19, 2011

Rev. Tatsuguchi will be  
off island from  
August 26  
to September 6

above the lid stand for the moral turbulences and spiritual confusions constantly rising from one's conscience being bioled in the cauldron.

This psycho-physical Buddhist breakdown of a human being into the five basic components of personality characterizes the makeup of all human beings whether "primitive" or "civilized." For human beings are sentient beings driven by the same bio-genetic energies and physiological necessities governed by the uniform and orderly processes of causation, conditionality, interdependency, especially by their moral choices and ethical decisions they make that become their *karma*.

For it is as Carl Gustav Jung said: "man is no different from his mammalian cousins for he must eat, drink, sleep, be mobile, go to the toilet and procreate." The sexual urge that drives all of mankind, however, becomes the most compelling when fully aroused and raging. The need to obtain sexual gratification and release seems to underlie and taint all human aspirations, activity and goal-directed behaviors, regardless of the color of a person's skin.

Many symbols and objects of religious reverence, therefore, are sexual in origin, form and shape. Examples are the "circle" (vaginal) and the "staff," or "totem pole" (phallic). An equidistant "cross" encircled by a "circle" in ancient times symbolized the union of the female principle with the male principle, or what is "the perfect union of opposites" in terms of a singular, all-encompassing truth and reality. The Taoist "yin" and "yang" is such a symbol for the union of the forces of "Light" and "Darkness" (Day and Night) symbolized as a black and white spiral swirling one from and into the other.

In his *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space*, Joseph Campbell talks about the horrifying aspects concerning the primal bio-physiological forces that compel and obsess a person's thoughts, words and actions. According to Campbell, they are as follows:

## WORDS OF SHINRAN

... know that we are not good men, nor men of wisdom; that we have no diligence, but only indolence, and within, the heart is ever empty, deceptive, vainglorious, and flattering. We do not have a heart that is true and real. .... A person must understand this in accordance with the way things truly are. SBT-Series. *Notes on 'Essentials of Faith Alone.'* pp. 49, 50

The first, most elementary and horrifying of all, is the innocent voraciousness of life, which feeds on lives ... it is the common mark of all animal life that it can maintain itself only by destroying life. p. xv.

The second primal compulsion, like almost in identity with the first ..., is the sexual, generative urge, .... *ibid*.

A third ... is the apparently irresistible impulse to plunder. ... the bio-energetic command to feed upon and consume; ... an impulse launched from the eyes, not to consume, but to possess. ... *loc. cite.* p. xvi

These words of Campbell bring a clarity concerning the underlying significance of the pictograms for *bon-* and *-no* in *bonno* as explained that characterizes a *bon'bu*, or a human being is driven by such compelling desires and inclinations.

These proclivities in "human beings" in Shin Buddhism are phrased as *zai-aku jinju no bon'bu* (a mere mortal hopelessly riddled by raw desires, blinding passions, moral confusions and spiritual ignorance). The recognition of this condition and nature to one's person arises only when one "sees," and is "awakened" by the undeniable actuality that one's self, like that of any other living being, is "feeding on the lives of others," "compelled by sexual desire to continue one's own kind," and most undeniably, by the proclivity to "plunder and possess" what rightfully belongs to others. These implacable characteristics of being human are due to the consequences of *bonno* that are universally found in illiterate primitive peoples as well as in literate civilized peoples. This is why human beings are all sentient beings driven by desires and passions that delude them with the illusions of self importance.

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Though it is said that the New England missionaries were the first Christians who entered Mamala Bay in Honolulu Village in 1820, and that Captain James Cook was the first to discover the Sandwich Islands in 1778, present-day historians, anthropologists and archaeologists have discovered that the Spanish were already anchoring off the Hawaiian Islands for fresh water and provisions long before Cook discovered Hawaii. For Cook himself depended on the crude maps that the Spanish navigators made of the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans.

Indeed, this fact alone reveals that there were already foreign visitors, castaways, shipwrecks and crew who jumped ship to stay and live amongst the Hawaiians. Even before Capt. Cook's time, such forerunners set foot on the islands and had married Hawaiian women. They were assimilated by native Hawaiians. Early Eurocentric historians also ignored the Austro-Asian migration from mainland China out to Taiwan, then down through the Philippines all the way down into Australia, New Zealand, then up through the South Pacific islands, and finally to the Hawaiian Islands, then across to North America all the way down the western coasts of Central and South America.

When Captain Cook's *Resolution* on her first voyage anchored in Waimea Bay in Kauai on January 19, 1778, he noted in his journal that among the natives:

There was little difference in the cast of their colors, but some considerable variation in their features, some of their visages not being unlike Europeans.

Cook's ship physician also noted that several of the Hawaiians exhibited advanced cases of syphilis that were initiated several decades before. This means that the Hawaiians already had sexual contact with earlier Europeans and some Asians even before Cook's arrival. These earlier ships anchoring offshore sent their crew inland to obtain fresh water and provisions. They mingled with the native people and undeniably had sexual contact with the women.

Even before Columbus discovered Hispaniola in 1492, the Portuguese were already sailing up and down the west coast of Africa and passing around the Cape of Good Hope up into the Indian Ocean up to Arabia, India, then down to the Spice Islands that Marco Polo (1254-1324) had already reported back to Europeans informing them of the exotic spices and the possibilities of finding gold, precious metals and gemstones.

Therefore, Pope Alexander VI (1431-1503), by issue of a Papal Bull, generously decreed and arbitrarily bestowed one-half of the then known world to Spain and the remaining half to Portugal. However, in addition to getting the gold, an added stipulation was made that each nation "convert" the "heathens" and "claim" their lands in the name of Almighty God and the sovereign of their nations. Pope Alexander VI himself, according to Catholic historians, had two dominant passions. His greed for gold and love of women. He had sired several children by several mistresses. The Spanish who came to settle the Americas were basically soldiers, adventurers and mercenaries looking for quick fortunes.

Thus began what is called the "Iberian expansion" (Iberian Peninsula of Portugal and Spain). Thus the Portuguese and Spanish thus began their quest for fame and quick fortune. Soon, other European nations followed, like the Dutch, British, French and Germans. Thus began European expansionism, colonialism, mercantilism and imperialism based on Germanic presumptions of Anglo-Saxon supremacy based on biblical verses.

According to Hawaii's historians, the crew of these early mercantile schooners and warships of European nations were followed soon by the Americans. The crew of these ships were made up mostly of single men seeking personal fortunes. Many were kidnapped and forced into service. Not a few, therefore, were of unquestionable character. In fact, even some seamen and craftsmen from China had been recruited to serve on these ships. Therefore, even before Captain Cook, Chinese on previous ships had jumped ship to settle in the Hawaiian Islands. There were also mutineers as well as castaways of shipwrecks who also settled in the islands. Being seamen, they were men trained to fire muskets and cannon in defense of their ships. Many ships also were lost in wars between the European nations, to pirates or to ocean storms.

Such Europeans were mistaken for gods. They became assimilated and married native women and produced *hapa-haole* offspring. One legend says the Hawaiian *ali'i* emerged from the progeny of such unions to become the blood-line of ruling chiefs because of their lighter colored skin. They came to rule over the darker skinned people. Wherever a ship harbored for safe haven and fresh water and provisions, the crew invariably left a legacy of venereal and other diseases that the natives were not immune to, like syphilis, measles and smallpox. This fact attests to the implacable nature of the sexual urge in the male species

of all humankind whose brains are wired to seek sexual gratification whenever aroused by the "sight" of desirable, alluring and willing females. Thus, to this day, wherever ships anchor to harbor, there are invariably "red light districts" with brothels and prostitutes in the seamier districts of a harbor town.

Another fact indicating that Native Hawaiians already had contact with Europeans were the implements they had made from salvaged pieces of iron such as broken sword blades and other iron fragments. For when Cook set foot on Kauai, he and his crew noted that the natives asked for *hamaite* which in Spanish is *hamatitas* or iron. The Native Hawaiians were already in possession of "long iron skewers," "nails," and other items such as an "iron dagger" besides trinkets made of iron. They were playing a board game with black and white pebbles much like checkers.

Cook's crew also found a "cross" far inland that had been set up next to a *heiau*. This indicated that Jesuit priests on prior Spanish ships that anchored in Kauai had exposed them to Christianity. Native Hawaiians, therefore, long before Cook had been introduced Christianity. They also had sexual contact with the crew of prior European ships. So, have you ever looked closely at the faces of Kamehameha I's descendants? A legend describes foreigners wearing steel helmets and bearing double-edged swords accompanied by men in robes and beards. It also says that some of the crew chose to stay and married women of high chiefs and that it was, as mentioned, from their mixed blood lighter-skinned descendants that the ali'i emerged to rule over the darker skinned commoners. This could be the reason as to why Cook noticed that many of the Hawaiians he saw displayed features that were "not unlike Europeans." However, there is no doubt that many of Kamehameha I's descendants look and in fact were *hapa-haole*.

Well before Kamehameha I invaded O'ahu, he had been preparing for it. By 1795, Kamehameha I had amassed some 960 war canoes and some 20 foreign armed warships (20 to 40 tons). His warriors had been trained by Europeans in musketry and hand held cannons. A Welshman named Isaac Davis (*Aikake* – 1758-1810) was inadvertently left behind by the captain of his ship and another, a Briton, John Young I (*Olohana* – 1747-1835), a survivor of a shipwreck were both befriended and adopted by Kamehameha I into his royal *ohana*. Both, as of consequence, then married women of his royal extended *ohana*. As of consequence, they were given vast tracts of land and had become technical and military advisors to him.

## SHINRAN'S WASAN

Though assuming our times  
to be times of Dharma Truth,  
Because of afflictions and  
passions deep within us,  
None of us have hearts that are  
pure, real and true.  
How is it possible then for us  
to seek for enlightenment?

*Shozomatsu Wasan 15*  
rkt trans.

There were also some 16 other foreigners under his command.

These facts alone point out that other foreigners like the Portuguese and Spanish were already anchoring in Mamala Bay at Honolulu Village well before Cook in order to obtain potable water and fresh provisions as well as for rest, recreation and female companionship. Kamehameha I invaded and conquered Oahu in 1795. In 1810, the chief of Kauai surrendered. Kamehameha I then declared himself the absolute monarch of the eight islands.

The ship *Maro* was the first whaling ship to enter Honolulu Harbor in 1820. This was only a year after Kamehameha I's death. American whalers then began discovering the rich whaling waters off the coasts of Japan. Then, in 1821, the first New England missionaries with a Calvinist fundamentalist's mindset arrived on the *Thaddeus* from Boston, Massachusetts. In that very year, they built a Christian meeting House, the Hale Pule, the site where the Kawaihao Church is located today with its Mission Houses now a tourist attraction.

By 1828, Honolulu harbor had become the commercial seaport center for the Pacific Rim's fur and sandalwood trade between China and the U.S. This indicates that the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch and others were already crossing the vast Pacific over to China and back to the Americas and were stopping over in the Hawaiian Islands well before Cook and before the New England missionaries. By this time, around 30 to 40 Chinese entrepreneurs were already living in Honolulu Village fronting what was once the natural harbor area just below Nuuanu Valley that was then a natural tidal reef flat zone with several coral outcroppings and mudflats. In 1828, the first Catholic Chapel and Boys School was built on College Walk next to Nuuanu

Stream just above Aala Park. By 1850, there were some 6,000 Native Hawaiians in Honolulu Village with only 300 European and American foreigners. By 1841, Punahou School for missionary and chiefs' children was established. By 1843, Punahou School was designated Oahu College. Punahou originally was known as *Kapuna-hou* meaning "the new spring," named after an artesian spring still bubbling there in a lily pond.

By 1851, a total of 90 whaling ships were anchoring in Honolulu. Because of the missionaries' strict Calvinist condemnations of sexual license, alcoholism, lewdness, gambling, rowdy behavior and even being simply idle, some 103 whaling ships instead chose to anchor in Lahaina and other lesser island ports to pass the harsh winter months at sea. The peak was in 1852 when some 519 whaling ships, 235 merchant ships and four warships had anchored and passed through the Sandwich Islands. So one can only imagine the number of sailors and crew rooming and boarding in Honolulu Village during the four to five wintry months.

There were already a few enterprising Chinese catering to the needs of the transient seafaring whalers and merchant seamen. They were running boarding houses, eateries and were retailers of much needed items in what was rapidly becoming a harbor town with the notorious "red light" district in nearby Iwilei. So, needless to ask if there were willing women when the males outnumbered the females in Honolulu Village. The non-literate Hawaiian commoner believed that the fair-skinned European seafarers before Cook were sent by the gods. They were especially thrilled and eager to trade and barter with them for the fabrics, clothing, trinkets, liquor, iron, and unimaginable tools that they had. The ali'i themselves also were especially eager to take on the trappings of European royalty, especially that of the royal court of Queen Victoria. The high feathered crown of chieftans is said to have been modeled after the helmets of Spanish conquistadors.

Records also show that "Native Hawaiian women plunged into the ocean to offer their bodies to the foreign sailors, craving the luxuries as much as potential pregnancies, hoping to bear one of their children." Incest, adultery, marrying within one's own family and having multiple wives was then common practice. After King Kamehameha's death, women began dining with men and to eat pork and coconuts that were once forbidden them, or *kapu*. "Everyone, chiefs and commoners alike, slept with whoever they fancied whenever they wanted. It was as if the feared gods

no longer existed." (from Betty Fullard-Leo, *The Woman Who Changed A Kingdom*.)

Honolulu means "safe shelter." At the turn of the 20th century, this bay with its natural harbor and channel came to be dredged, deepened and widened. Then the remaining surrounding tidal reef flats were built up with dredged coral and landfill to become what is today's many piers in Honolulu Harbor and Sand Island. The acreages of Honolulu International Airport, Hickam Air Force Base, Reef Runway and Pearl Harbor with its Naval Air Base and coaling station were also built up with dredged coral and landfill. Sand Island itself was once only one-fifth its present size, a mere outcropping of a tidal reef island. Next to it was Quarantine Island, another tidal reef island. The tidal reef flats at that time came up right to about King or Hotel street. So the Honolulu harbor area itself just below today's King and Hotel streets were once a contiguous tidal reef zone with several coral island outcroppings that began at the mouth of Nuuanu Stream between present day Aala Park and Chinatown. The reef flats then went all the way out beyond Sand Island to the breaking surf. Nothing at that time had yet been dredged or built up with coral material or landfill.

Kamehameha I (1758-1819) is said to have united the Hawaiian Islands and established the absolute Hawaiian Monarchy in 1810. Before Kamehameha I's passing, the Mamala Bay area from Barber's Point all the way down to Diamond Head, therefore, was once a seamless tidal reef with natural inlets, lagoons, estuaries, mud flats, reef outcroppings and riparian areas full of native flora and fauna. The Honolulu Harbor area below Punchbowl all the way down to King Street was then just a village town with grass huts, wooden houses and a few limestone buildings. Beginning at the mouth of Nuuanu Stream all the way up to the Pali Cliffs and all the way out over the tidal reefs to the breaking surf, Nuuanu Valley then was full of native marine and terrestrial flora and fauna. Many now are extinct.

The Native Hawaiians then were tending to their freshwater and saltwater fish ponds and working their terraced taro patches and garden plots fed by the descending waters of Nuuanu Stream, the flow of which was controlled and regulated by irrigation channels. Nuuanu Stream then provided all the freshwater needs of the native people living in and off the bounties of their *ahupua'a* or sacred land all the way from the Pali Cliffs down Nuuanu valley and all the way out to the breaking surf. All this drastically changed in the span

of less than half a century between 1890 and 1940. The Hawaiian monarchy was toppled in 1893. The safe anchorage that was once a natural harbor in the tidal reef flats of Mamala Bay was dredged and contoured architecturally to become the many rigid linear and angular piers that have become today's Honolulu Harbor district. The Honolulu International Airport and Hickam Airforce Base and its surrounding areas were once also natural tidal reef flats that were built up out of dredged coral and other landfill materials.

The first sugar plantation on a commercial scale was begun on Kauai in 1834 by the Ladd & Co. which leased 980 acres of land from King Liholiho, Kamehameha III (1813-1854), the boy monarch. During his reign, Queen Kaahumanu, the favorite wife of Kamehameha I, as mentioned, was baptized as a Protestant Christian. She exercised equal power with Liholiho by claiming that it was Kamehameha I's dying wish that she do so. She then changed the absolute monarchy into a Christian constitutional monarchy in 1852. She introduced a set of judicial laws based on the 10 Commandments rooted in some 613 ancient Rabbinic laws. The missionaries then influenced her further to remove Catholicism from Hawaii by evicting their priests. This decree, however, was later rescinded based on the democratic principle of "religious freedom."

Even before 1900, a capitalistic conglomerate was already being formed by Benjamin F. Dillingham (1844-1918) that later came under the control of his son Walter Francis Dillingham (1875-1963). The Oahu Sugar Planters' Association (or HSPA) was founded in 1895. This hegemonic conglomerate was in its heyday during the 1920s. The politics, economy and judiciary was controlled by the interlocking families of missionary descendants and businessmen belonging to the "Big Five" (Castle & Cooke, Alexander & Baldwin, C. Brewer & Co., Theo. Davies & Co., and American Factors). These corporations were under the full control of Walter F. Dillingham, who was dubbed the "Baron of Hawaii's Industry."

Thus, with the establishing of self-contained sugar plantation communities also began the recruitment of contract laborers. The Chinese field workers came in 1852 followed by the Japanese in 1868. The Portuguese came in 1878 and then the Germans in 1881. The Okinawans and Puerto Ricans arrived in 1900. The Koreans began arriving in 1903 and the Filipinos in 1906. The Spanish arrived in 1907.

In the 1850s the bulk of Chinese contract laborers began arriving. When their contracts ended,

many left the plantations to pursue other livelihoods such as in carpentry, taro farming, rice farming and retailing. They built temples and language schools, published newspapers and maintained cemeteries to preserve their ancestral traditions and cultural heritage. Many returned to China. Those who chose to stay had no intention of returning to China. This was also the case with the Japanese who came later, especially after WWII.

Because the first Chinese laborers were single men they began marrying Hawaiian women for there were no Chinese women then. Some of them had wives back in China. Those who became too old or unable to do the physically demanding field work were dismissed. As bachelors without money, they were unable to return to China. So they came to Honolulu's Chinatown. Others who finished their contracts also came to Chinatown. Many assumed Chinese-Hawaiian names like Ahina, Akana and Akaka. In fact, the fictional movie character Charlie Chan, the Chinese Sherlock Holmes, was based on the life of a real Chinese-Hawaiian detective, Chang Apana (1871-1933) of the Honolulu Police Department. Despite his very short stature, he was legendary in his dedication, daring and detective work.

The Japanese and Korean contract laborers who came after the Chinese, instead of marrying Hawaiian women, began sending for "picture brides." So too then did the Chinese. In the 1860s, Japanese plantation women were making 55 cents a day while their male counterparts were earning 78 cents. However, Caucasians like the Portuguese were given higher-paying overseer jobs (*luna* or foremen positions) while Europeans and Americans were given even higher positions like plantation managers, with plush Victorian-styled homes with its many amenities on a hill overlooking the camps below. These camps were sectioned off by ethnicity.

The relationship of the field worker to the manager was like an "overlord" over his "subjects." The plantation community was virtually run like a fiefdom. There was a doctor in residence and the plantation's general store controlled and provided for all the daily needs of the worker. In the 1920s, 80% of the 18% female plantation workers throughout the islands were Japanese women. A plantation village was run much like a feudal estate of a "baron." Hence the term "indentured servant" for a "contract laborer," who for much of the time was in debt to the plantation village system that operated its own general store, medical facilities, financial transactions and so forth.

"At the turn of the 1900s the average wage for a male plantation field worker was \$15 per month, for a salaried clerk position about \$18 per month. For laundry work 5¢ for each piece, or \$1 per customer per month. A maid earned \$8-\$10 per month. By contrast, a prostitute earned 50¢-\$1 per customer, and at least \$4-\$5 in an evening. A popular one with a pretty face made as much as \$20 per night. Even after subtracting the cost of renting the shop, and buying clothes and food, a busy prostitute could have about \$200 left at the end of the month." (from United Japanese Society of Hawaii, *History of Japanese in Hawaii*, p. 154).

In 1900 a fire was deliberately set to Chinatown by the fire department in a botched attempt by the Board of Health to get rid of the bubonic plague. The fire got out of control and leveled some 30 acres of Chinatown that was part of Honolulu's central business district at that time. As of consequence, many Chinese were forced to move elsewhere for they were unable to prove ownership of their former properties because the fire had destroyed their ownership papers. For the Chinese in Chinatown this fire, therefore, was of tremendous social and economic impact with political and racial overtones. For many displaced Chinese believed that the white elite business community were fearful and envious of their successes and the growing number of successful Chinese businessmen. Nevertheless, the Chinese, undaunted, began to rebuild their Chinatown and to re-establish themselves once again.

Honolulu's Chinatown then reached its zenith in the 1920s. In that very year the Japanese plantation workers were accused of conspiracy by the HSPA (controlled by the "Big Five"). They were accused of instigating and inciting the Filipino workers to go on a strike with them to procure better wages, working conditions and housing accommodations. In California at this time an anti-Japanese movement had resulted in the passage of anti-immigration laws against Asians. Now, in 1920, 52.3% of Honolulu's Chinatown's population was comprised of single elderly Filipino men. The Oahu Railway and Transit Terminal Station owned by the Dillinghams had opened on May of 1925 directly across Aala Park. Aala Park well before then was already a gathering place for single Filipino plantation workers who came in on the weekends by rail from the various plantation communities. These single men as well as other locals sought recreation and female companionship in and around the Aala Park, Iwilei and especially in the second-floor brothels of Chinatown.

The Liliha, Palama, Kapalama and Kalihi areas were by then full of multi-ethnic neighborhoods.

The Great Depression hit Hawai'i hard. Employment in the sugar and pineapple industries had declined in the early 1930s. By December of 1936, about 15% of Hawai'i's labor force was unemployed. Documents reveal that President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, during his 1934 visit to Honolulu, secretly met with Walter F. Dillingham in his La Pietra Home at the base of Diamond Head overlooking Kapiolani Park. The two were classmates at Harvard and were interestingly fellow Masons. So the intriguing question emerges as to why a military build up began so soon after this secret meeting between Roosevelt and Dillingham. For by November of 1941, military personnel on Oahu increased by some 48,000 enlisted military personnel. This build up of military continued up to December 7, 1941. The question also arises as to why, in 1944, when Martial Law had already been long lifted in the full knowledge that Japan's defeat was certain and imminent, President Roosevelt met with General Douglas MacArthur and Admiral Chester F. Nimitz in the Waikiki home of another wealthy businessman named Christian Holmes.

In the 1920s, the upper Ewa one-third of the triangular shaped Aala Park was split in two from its lower two-thirds by an Aala Street. Aala Street is no longer there. Right across Beretania from Aala Street then was the Aala Lane. Aala Lane is now Aala Street connecting straight up to Vineyard Street. Way back then, Aala lane did not connect to Vineyard. It was just a gravel covered narrow lane winding to the left to connect to Kukui more towards Liliha Street. There was also a Hall Street on the Ewa side running parallel to Aala Lane also winding to the left to connect with Kukui St. Aala and Hall then connected Beretania with Kukui.

The remaining bottom two-thirds of the triangular park next to College Walk was right next to Nuuanu Stream. Chinatown then was bordered by River Street, Nuuanu Avenue, Kukui Street and Nimitz Highway. Chinatown in the 1920s was once the Ewa-side half of the downtown Honolulu business district. The Kaumakapili Church with its tall twin steeples once stood tall on Smith and Beretania until the 1900 Chinatown fire razed it to the ground. This church was rebuilt in Palama right across Princess Kaiulani Elementary School on King Street. Tamashiro Fish Market is on the Ewa side across Palama Street. This church today has only one tall central steeple with four smaller ones on the four cornered roof around it.

Right across Iwilei Street from the Oahu Railway Terminal Station was a fish market with several open fish stalls like the Otani's and Okada's fish stalls. This fish market was once between King and Nimitz bordered by Nuuanu Stream and Iwilei Street. When their plantation contracts expired, many Japanese who had been skilled commercial fishermen back in Japan turned to the sea for a living. On the makai side of this fish market facing King Street was a stone building with several stores and shops. Senator Inouye's wife's parents, the Awamuras ran a jewelry shop called Heiwado way back then. As a kid I remember my dad taking me to buy fish at this marketplace. We would shop around until he found what he wanted. When he couldn't, he would then go over Nuuanu Stream to the Aala Fish Market that was below and part of Chinatown. This was in the mid 1930s up to December 1941. Way back then Aala Park was also the center of Japanese cinemas. I remember well the *Nippon Gekijo* right in the very center of the lower two-thirds of the triangular Aala Park.

There was then a narrow concrete walkway from King to Beretania at the center that split this lower two-thirds of Aala Park from its upper one-third. There were several ironwood and other trees here and there along the walkway. From the very center of this walkway there was a narrow alley connected to Aala Street that split the uppermost third from the lower two-thirds. In this narrow alleyway and all around the upper half of this lower two-thirds of Aala Park were several mom-and-pop shops as well as pool halls. *Nippon Gekijo* was a corrugated wall and roof theater. There was also the Aala Theater on Aala Street (not Aala Lane). The Toyo Theater that was built later was further up on College Walk between Beretania and Kukui streets right on College Walk next to Nuuanu Stream. The Kokusai Theater was built after Toyo in a vacant lot to the rear of Toyo. This lot is now the Federal Credit Union.

As I recall, before WWII there were several theaters in Chinatown. In fact the Iida Store was once on the Waikiki mauka corner of Nuuanu and Beretania. The Hawaii Theater is still there on Bethel Street. The Princess was once on Fort Street just above the Oahu Central Fire Station on Beretania Street. A Roosevelt Theater was on Maunakea. There was also the Liberty Theater on Nuuanu. And of course, the Beretania Follies was in Tin Can Alley between Beretania and Kukui. Research data of deviant behaviors in and around Chinatown of these times reveals that Iwilei, Aala Park and its immediate vicinities involved such vices as gambling, drugs, extortion and especially prostitution.

During the early 1920s, 1930s and especially during WWII, "houses of ill-repute" were accepted and tolerated as a necessary evil. Once again, the truth of the sociological axiom: "the more things change, the more things remain the same." This seems to be especially the case as far as prostitution goes.

In the 1920s up to December 7, 1941, and during WWII and the immediate post-war years, Chinatown at dusk turned into a different place than what it was during the day. For the place became alive with soldiers and sailors and even "respectable citizens" seeking excitement. Police and vice squads regularly converged on tattoo parlors, pornography shops, movies, dance halls, bars and pool halls. And surprisingly, Chinatown was, just before and at the turn of the 20th century, also dominated by Japanese criminal elements who terrorized and extorted their fellow immigrants operating businesses there. They were also involved in gambling, prostitution and other vices.

Way back in the days of whaling ships, merchant ships and man-of-war ships, Iwilei itself was a notorious red light district. Iwilei today is home to retail giants like Walmart, Costco, Home Depot and charming shops, restaurants and movie theaters. However, what was not being noticed by the general populace was the fact that since the late 1800s (note the Spanish-American War led to the annexation of Hawaii in 1898), all the way up to the 1940s, the Honolulu Harbor area was being encircled by military establishments and fortifications such as in Diamond Head, Fort Ruger, Fort DeRussy, Fort Armstrong, Kapalama Military Reservation, Fort Weaver, Fort Shafter, Hickam Air Force Base, Red Hill Naval Reservation, Camp Smith, as well as the Kaneohe U.S. Air Force, Marine Corps reservations and Naval fortifications and other low-cost military housing.

In the 1920s-1930s right up to 1941, the Filipinos on the plantations were not too well known. However, they became highly visible because their numbers began concentrating in the communities in Palama, Kalihi, and Kapalama. Their presence created a "feeling of unease" among other racial minorities in Honolulu due to the concentration of single Filipino men in the Aala and Chinatown areas. In addition, on the weekends, as mentioned, the Oahu Railway Terminal right across Aala Park was bringing in other single Filipino laborers from the eight major plantations on Oahu such as in Aiea, Pearl City, Waipahu, Ewa and beyond. They were, however, not the only single, lonely men seeking recreation and female companionship.

Unknown to the general populace, as mentioned, the U.S. was building up its military presence in preparation for another war. The numbers of soldiers and sailors on furloughs began increasing. This increase in military personnel was due to as mentioned by the improvements and upgrading of fortifications, especially at Pearl Harbor and Ford Island into a Naval coaling and Air Station, and the improvements of Hickam Air Force Base, Schofield Barracks' Wheeler field, Kaneohe Marine Air Station and Bellows Airfield in Waimanalo. By the end of 1941, if you look closely at the map of Oahu of those times, the entire island had become a military fortification full of forts, airfields and so forth.

In other words, it was not only single Filipino men but also soldiers and sailors on furloughs longing for female companionship that became a problem for local and military authorities. The sexual drive, as mentioned, is one of the most compelling of biophysiological forces in all male animals whether two or four legged. As of consequence, what once began as a thriving, respectable Chinese community of multi-ethnic family operated stores, shops and eateries became full of seamy pool halls, bars, taxi dance halls and second-story brothels. The Caucasian prostitutes from the mainland during WWII especially serviced the long lines of sailors after several months at sea. Even as early as 1898 there already were several registered prostitutes of various nationalities, and their numbers were increasing. WWII was especially a time when the service men outnumbered the available prostitutes so they began spilling out into the Honolulu neighborhoods especially into the Waikiki areas. Such service personnel often got into altercations with local men trying to protect their women and sisters from being enticed and seduced.

Before, during and right after WWII, Honolulu's Chinatown boasted that it had the best "red-light district" in the entire nation (Read Jean O'Hara's *My Life as a Honolulu Prostitute*). It must be kept in mind, however, that the Great Depression had already set in. Harvesting cane and canning pineapple during the Depression had become seasonal. Many Filipinos, as well as other immigrants, had to look for other jobs like dockworkers, domestics, janitors and yard boys.

Many Filipinos, like other impoverished immigrants, had to live a "hand to mouth existence during the Great Depression. As of consequence, many Filipinos were forced to reside in the cheaper neighborhoods in and around Iwilei, Palama, Liliha, Aala Park and Kalihi districts. Single Filipino men lived together in a house sharing expenses, household chores and

looking after each other's welfare and needs like a family. I remember the tenements in and around *Kanamanuwai* Lane (dubbed Tin-Can Alley) with their community toilets, baths and kitchens where several *issei* families were living amicably with other ethnic families in those Depression years.

During the Great Depression, many single Filipino men also were living in overcrowded airless basement rooms in Chinatown as were other single Chinese men. Like any other immigrant group of the times, there were also educated Filipinos with money. Among the Chinese, Sun Yat-sen, and for the Koreans, Syngman Rhee, come to mind. Some of the Filipino elite, however, were secretly working for the HSPA as informants and spies. The HSPA all along had been keeping tabs on potential trouble-makers, dissenters and especially those who had taken part in the 1920 strike against the Oahu Sugar Plantation Association (or HSPA). They, like others who were a problem had been placed on a blacklist. Such Filipinos were fired outright or shipped right back to the Philippines. Those who remained were not hired by other plantations or businesses controlled by the "Big Five."

Now, to get a small "peek" of multi-ethnic immigrants in the 1920s up to December 7, 1941, I quote the words of a Ted Chernin (died 2009) who was an electrical engineer stationed at Pearl Harbor. He luckily was shipped back to the mainland just before Pearl Harbor was bombed. Then, like many who had become enamored with Hawaii, he returned to stay. Read carefully what he wrote in his *My Experiences in the Honolulu Chinatown Red Light District*.

In the late 1930s up to December 7, 1941, the U.S. military as mentioned, was building up its presence on Oahu. As an unmarried enlisted man, Chernin was staying at the Army-Navy YMCA on the corner of Richard and Hotel streets. The facility was originally a plush, stately hotel purchased by the military interestingly in 1917 (Note: WWI, 1914-1918). The hotel then was in the very heart of downtown Honolulu next to Iolani Palace, with its Palace Square right below and the Kawaihau Church and Honolulu Hale nearby. The hotel then rivaled the Moana and Royal Hawaiian that were in Waikiki.

Chernin wrote about those years just before December 7, 1941, as follows:

... I would walk a few blocks from the Nu'uuanu Y to the downtown and Chinatown areas, and I would see local women who had come in from

the countryside, the Japanese women dressed in colorful and beautiful kimono and obi, wearing ornate *zori* (Japanese slippers). Hawaiian women with their holoku gowns and wearing lei around their necks and haku lei on their heads, some of the younger ones with a flower on one ear or the other to indicate whether they were available or spoken for, Korean women in colorfully embroidered silk blouses, some reminiscent of nun's habits, only white in color; and Chinese women in colorfully embroidered silk blouses and black silk slacks, some hobbling because their feet had been bound when they were infants, in accordance with ancient Chinese customs.

I had heard from them that Honolulu had an open red-light district in its China town. When I asked about this upon my arrival at the Army-Navy Y, I was quickly shown these "houses of ill-repute." A localism for them was "boogie houses," the women were "heads." A euphemism used when suggesting a visit to one was "let's go climb the stairs," because almost all were in upstairs locations. I knew of ten that were crammed into the very few streets and square blocks of Chinatown, bounded by Beretania, River, Kukui and Nu'uaniu streets, and five more on the outskirts.

Although they were illegal, their existence, says Chernin, was accepted as a necessary evil in order to protect the local girls and women, as mentioned, from being solicited or seduced.

According to him, therefore, these places of ill repute"

... had long been accepted as a matter of course, part of normal living, and they did not have the tawdry, secretive, back-alley atmosphere that might be expected by someone not accustomed to operating openly in a business district. ...

Such then was the broader Honolulu business district that included Chinatown bordered by Richards and River, Beretania streets and Nimitz Highway. On the Diamond Head side of Richards Street were the Iolani Palace grounds.

The Roman Catholic Diocese on Fort Street was built in 1843. The Friends Building on Bethel Street was originally the Seaman's Bethel building and was

destroyed by the 1886 Chinatown fire. It was rebuilt as the Oahu Bethel Church and again lost to the 1900 Chinatown fire. The Episcopalian St. Andrew's Cathedral right above the Army-Navy YMCA was built in 1865. Iolani Palace itself was built in 1879, and most interestingly with full Masonic ceremonial rites, which implies that the New England missionaries, the European and American entrepreneurs such as Charles Reed Bishop (1822-1915), John Owen Dominis (1832-1891) and Archibald Scott Cleghorn (1835-1910), who married with women of royalty, had Masonic ties. The membership of the Pacific Club below Punchbowl, in fact was once restricted to families of Hawaiian royalty and the "Big Five," comprised of descendants of missionaries and landed gentry from Europe and the U.S.

To the local people living in and around Chinatown before and after the 1920s, through WWII and shortly thereafter when U.S. occupational forces were passing through Honolulu between Japan and the U.S., the many "upstairs brothels" were accepted as a "necessary evil." Chernin as one of its regular patrons noted that:

The Pearl Harbor naval base was not far away, and when a number of ships docked after long trips at sea, the sailors flocked to these places and formed long lines outside the doors to wait their turn, blocking entrances to the many adjacent restaurants and shops of all kinds. The restaurant-goers and local shoppers, mostly housewives, would thread their way through the lines, unconcerned, to get to the entrances of their destinations.

Furthermore, the fact that even

... some fathers took their university-age sons to these places so as to relieve their urges for female companionship and allow them to keep their mind on their studies, undistracted by the women students. ...

These words of Chernin confirm that the natural biophysiological forces in the male species driving them to "sexual release," such as self masturbation (clitoral or phallic) and by nocturnal emissions is a reality rather than a "vice."

Chernin noted that many of the prostitutes also:

... had as steady customers older married men who for some reason or another were not getting

along with their wives. Some would think this was terrible, but I think that it served to keep families intact. This arrangement was acceptable to the wives; the "other woman" was not someone the husband would leave home for or lavish money on and thereby break up the home.

Jean O'Hara, in her days as a professional prostitute, a brothel madam and an astute businesswoman, reveals in her book that even prominent Honolulu citizens were serviced by her and her Caucasian girls from the mainland and that even some lower-ranked law enforcement officers were on the take. Such then were the reasons for tolerance and acceptance exhibited by the locals residing in and around the Aala Park and Chinatown neighborhoods.

Indeed, one of the underlying significance and meanings of *bonno* is the fact that a human being, or *bon'bu*, is driven by physiological necessities and compelled by bio-genetic forces that are beyond his or her control. This is especially true of males captivated by their own animus and aroused by the anima wiles and entilements of the opposite sex. The only thing that can be concluded with any degree of certainty is that as long as there are attractive women who are desirable, there will be men aroused and motivated to win or buy their affections in order to consummate their sexual urges and need for sexual release to affirm to their sense of maleness and masculinity.

However, if a man and woman are to truly humanize and spiritualize their relationship, he or she needs to transcend these primitive levels of mere sexual gratification and sensual aggrandizement by making the sexual act itself a human as well as a spiritual one. This is basically why so much of religion is full of sexual symbolism, some in brazen and in degenerate forms, while others are in spiritual forms to ennoble and make sacred the sexual act.

If a man and a woman are to truly bond together, they need to trust and take refuge in the Truth and Reality of Amida's Wisdom and Compassion

that has never or will ever exclude, condemn or reject them as sentient beings by bonding them not only physically, but more importantly in spiritual Selflessness and Togetherness!

## **BUDDHIST STORY OR PASSAGE**

... There is the lack of a clear demarcation as to the behavior between men and women. Everyone at times has impure and lascivious thoughts and desires that lead them into questionable acts and often into disputes, fighting, injustice and wickedness. *The Teaching of Buddha*. (Numata. English/Japanese) p. 192.

## **QUESTION & ANSWER KORNER**

**QUESTION:** What is meant to trust and take refuge in Amida's Sacred Name?

**ANSWER:** To answer, I quote the words of Hiruyuki Itsuki in his *Tariki: Embracing Despair, Discovering Peace* as follows:

What does it mean to worship these written words and what relationship do these words bear to our own suffering? Shinran's Buddha was the concept "Namu Amida Butsu: and the idea is not like a concrete Buddha that can be seen with the eye. The state of Pure Land is, like faith itself, invisible. A world on an infinite scale. It is eternal time – something that has transcended all concepts of time. This is what Shinran expressed in the words "Amida Buddha. *Namu* means to take refuge in. Taking refuge in something means to kneel before it, bow our heads, give ourselves to it completely, and vow to unite ourselves with it. ... pp. 72, 73.

To do so, in my mind, is to have trusted and taken refuge in the Truth of Selflessness and to to have completely given ourselves up to the Reality of Togetherness.

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## **Donations**

*continued from p. 2*