



GASSHO

July
2012

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"Hands together in reverence & gratitude"



THE JAPANESE-AMERICAN: YESTERDAY, TODAY, and TOMORROW

by rev. roland k. tatsuguchi

To understand today's Japanese Americans living in Hawaii, we need to go back when the *Nisei* as children were being raised during the Depression Years in the 1920s up to the 1940s. Then, we need to also understand the times when the *Nisei* as parents were raising their *Sansei* children during and the years right after World War II.

Before World War II, the traditional Japanese family was based on Confucian hierarchical relationships stressing reverence and gratitude for one's parents, elderly and deceased ancestors. A daughter was expected to be obedient to her father. A wife, faithful to her husband. As a mother, "a wise and devoted mentor" to her children. In old age, especially if she was a widow, a mother was expected to be obedient to her children, especially to her eldest son as the head of the family. Not blemishing the family name was even more important.

Generally this is true also for traditional families in the West. For example, in I Timothy 2, St. Paul says "women were created second (from Adam's rib), sinner first (in having seduced Adam) and should keep their silence." In I Corinthians 7:39, Paul says, "A wife is bound to her husband as long as she lives..." Then in I Corinthians 11:7-9, Paul says, "For man ought not to cover his head, since he is in the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. For man was not made from woman, but woman from man" (brackets and underlining mine).

Even in times well before Buddha (563-483 B.C.) as well as Jesus (7-2 B.C./30-36 A.D.), women were being dependent and were seen as inferior to men. This view, thereby, can also be seen to have influenced the Buddha's advice to women as follows:

MONTH'S THOUGHT



A people which takes no pride in the noble achievements of remote ancestors will never achieve anything worthy to be remembered with pride by remote descendants. Lord Macaulay



When a young woman marries, she should make the following resolutions: "I must honor and serve the parents of my husband. ... I must be respectful to my husband's teacher ... I must cultivate my mind so that I will be able to understand my husband and be able to help him in his work. I must never be indifferent to his interests, thinking they are only his affairs but not mine. BDK. *The Teaching of the Buddha.* [Eng./Japanese] p. 442.

This traditional view of women can be seen to have also influenced Sakyamuni's elaboration of Amida's 35th Vow as follows:

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REMINDERS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SERVICES for JULY 2012

1st SUN JUL 1st:

9 A.M. Eng. Service
Dharma Talk for
Children & Adults
Rev. Tatsuguchi

2nd SUN JUL 8th:

ANNUAL O'BON SERVICE

9 A.M. Eng. Service

Guest Speaker:

Rev. Ryoso Toshima

3rd SUN JUL 15th:

"Bon Dance Set-up"
Choba, Concession,
Please come "KOKUA"
8 A.M. to 12 P.M.

9 A.M.
Regular Eng. Service
Rev. Tatsuguchi

Bon Dance Practice

Tue. Jul 17th only

7:00 to 9:00 P.M.

"BON DANCE NIGHTS"

FRI- 20th & SAT- 21st

7:00 to 10:30 P.M.

Note: Short Bon Services

Temple sanctuary

At 6:30 p.m.

For all deceased

Stone Memorial

At 6:50 p.m.

In memory for all war dead

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

KARAOKE SINGERS CLUB Mon 7 - 9 p.m.

Mr. Nelson Yoshioka

KARATE CLASSES Tues & Fri 6 - 8 p.m.

Shihan - Walter Nishioka

FUJINKAI LADIES' FELLOWSHIP GROUP

Wed 9 a.m. - noon

4th SUN Jul 22nd:

Temple Service Cancelled

Waianae Members!!

If you wish to hold
O'Bon services for your
deceased family members,
call Rev. Tatsuguchi
(949-2801)

4th SUN Jul 29th:

No Service

With Deepest Sympathy

Mr. Ronald Nobuo Amioka 81 yrs May 25, 2012

2012 Memorial Service Schedule

2011	1 Year	2010	3 Year	2006	7 Year
2000	13 Year	1996	17 Year	1988	25 Year
1980	33 Year	1963	50 Year	1913	100 Year

Rev. Roland Tatsuguchi
will be off Island
from

July 28 to August 8 and
August 29 to Sept. 12, 2012

If, when I attain Buddhahood, women in the immeasurable and inconceivable Buddha-lands of the ten directions who, having heard my Name, rejoice in faith, awaken aspiration for Enlightenment and wishing to renounce womanhood, should after death be reborn again as women, may I not attain perfect enlightenment. Hisao Inagaki. *The Three Pure Land Sutras*. pp. 246, 247.

These words, as of consequence, have become troublesome because they have come to be misunderstood in the context of those ancient times when women had to rely on the men as hunters, providers, protectors and warriors. Women, being dependent on men, had to endure a life of being dominated and ruled over by the males because of men's overwhelming physical power and sexual appetites.

They were times when humanoids were nomadic and tribal, times when warring kings took the women of their conquered enemies as booty. The men in power and control often had more than one wife. They were times when women were treated more as sex objects, concubines, servants, or slaves. In terms of monarchy, the main purpose of a queen or consort was to give birth to a son to continue the royal family's bloodline.

However, Joseph Campbell, a Catholic by faith, in his studies of aboriginal peoples has shown that in the mythologies of primitive societies that were mainly pastoral and stationary, women enjoyed many freedoms, including love and marriage, equality and power. Such societies, as of consequence, tended to be more matriarchal than patriarchal.

Anthropologists and archaeologists have found figurines and drawings of women from very prehistoric times with exaggerated breasts and open vaginas. Such figurines and drawings were worshipped as being the very "womb of mother earth," the very source of life itself, and the breasts to be the very source of "milk and honey" nurturing and sustaining all life forms. These sentiments of gratitude and reverence for the earth as the "Great

WORDS OF SHINRAN

Whether one is left behind or goes before, it is surely a sorrowful thing to be parted by death. But the one who first attains nirvana vows without fail to save those who were close to him first and leads those with whom he has been karmically bound, his relatives and his friends. It should be so.... SBT-Series. *Letters of Shinran*. No. 14. p. 49. *Ren's reply to Kyoshin-bo* concerning those returning from the Pure Land to this world to enlighten those yet transmigrating.

Mother Earth," these sentiments of ancients are not to be confounded with pornographic matter designed to arouse the sexual passions in today's males aroused by naked women so photogenically presented to arouse their carnal appetites.

Buddhists, however, have expanded this analogy of a primitive's worship and revering of a mother's breasts and vagina as the very source of life and sustenance to the universe itself which is "visualized" as being the very primordial source from which celestial bodies, world systems and terrestrial life keep "appearing," "disappearing" to keep endlessly "reappearing" again and again in higher spiritual forms until Ultimate Enlightenment or Buddhahood is attained.

The boundless, unfathomable cosmos as of consequence, came to be worshipped and revered by Buddhists as being the very "Womb of Dharma" from whence endless *Tathagatas* keep appearing in the "six realms of transmigration," to then illuminate and grasp sentient beings therein with the Truth of Selflessness and its Reality of Togetherness, to then return with them to their respective Pure Lands brimming with the Dharma's All-permeating Light of Oneness and its Life of All-embracing Togetherness that pervades to permeate everywhere and in all things.

Sentient beings, therefore, in being so "illuminated" and permeated become Buddhas themselves full with its Light and Life. This can be thought of as all kinds of rivers flowing into the ocean to become finally the ocean's very waters and currents. The waters and currents of the ocean then once again vaporize, then condense to become the countless drops of dew that keep mysteriously reappearing again and again seemingly out of nowhere on this earth of ours to nourish and sustain all the flora and fauna on it. Rennyō says compassionate Buddhas are like such drops of dew seemingly appearing out of nowhere in this world

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of ours to save all sentient beings, no matter how deep and irreversible their karmic transgressions and desecrations."

Today, the *Sansei* and *Yonsei* in Hawaii are treated no different from their Caucasian peers. For they also have become "consummate American consumers." As consumers, they are enjoying all the freedoms and rights under the Constitution of the U.S as Americans. The *Sansei* and especially their *Yonsei*, however, are not aware that their comfortable lifestyles they take for granted are being obtained through the ruthless exploitation and devastation of countless innocent creatures, environments and through the exploitation of the labor of peoples of lesser nations through a global network of multinational corporations and industries dependent on the industries connected to the Industrial Military Congressional Complex/ (IMCC).

All the while, those in the stock exchange, banking, and loan industries "manipulating" what is the "boom-bust financial cycle" are the unseen players behind the scene controlling the "asset-inflation bubble" as they force the stock prices up, to then dump them. And, when they come back down again, they buy them back at huge discount prices. For this reason, those speculating and investing outside of the so-called "loop" are at a huge disadvantage because they lack "insider knowledge."

As of consequence, *Sansei* and *Yonsei*, like any other American today, therefore, are living on credit cards and constantly paying off their debts because of a lifestyle necessitating making all kinds of loans that strap the major portion of their productive work lives in paying off their monthly debts and mortgage payments.

Now, unfortunately, because human beings are sensitive to a person's physical features, anatomical parts and skin pigmentation, the color "white" has been historically associated with what is "light," "purity," "innocence," "justice" and "goodness." The color "black," on the other hand, has been invariably associated with what is "darkness," "evil," "sinister," and "sinful" things to be deplored, abhorred, if not eliminated or destroyed.

Today, we need to keep in mind that the *Issei* who were contracted as plantation laborers clearly are not the *Issei* of today who come to Hawaii of their own choice and free will. They are not the *Issei* of plantation days who encouraged their *Nisei* children to obtain an education and improve themselves by being successful in American society

influenced and dominated by Judeo-Christian values and its attitudes of White Supremacy.

We must keep in mind that the various first sugar plantation workers who first came to Hawaii as "contract laborers" lived in ethnically segregated housing. The descendants of New England missionaries who had become business-minded were of Pilgrim sentiments and Puritan convictions, were Protestants who had rebelled against the Roman Catholic Papacy. The descendants of New England missionaries working in tandem with European and American businessmen saw the Hawaiians as people inferior and incapable of running things in the European manner of civilized government. The initial New England missionaries' goal, therefore, was to make Hawaii and Hawaiians Protestant Christians. The first wave of missionaries had already arrived in 1820 with such Calvinist perceptions, beliefs and objectives. The whalers already had arrived and were defying many Hawaiian kapu systems often by desecrating the heiau.

By 1893, the coalition of European-American entrepreneurs and business-minded missionary descendants finally overthrew the Hawaiian Monarchy to set themselves up as a provisional government that basically exercised control indirectly through what became the "Big Five" with their interrelated families who, by then, had seized hold of Hawaii's economy, judiciary, politics, and social life from the 1850s all the way up to World War II and up to Statehood (August 21, 1959).

Therefore, to fully appreciate and understand these impacts on the Japanese-American *Nisei* psyche, it is necessary for us to understand the times when the first *Issei* were working as contract laborers from dawn to dusk much like the slaves on the plantations in the Southern colonies. Other *Issei* who came to Honolulu were employed as live-in houseboys, maids, yard boys, or as menials like janitors because they were excluded from higher, better paying jobs and residential districts. The *Issei* on plantations then were being paid even lower wages than their Caucasian counterparts and were assigned to harder back-breaking tasks like hauling cane on their backs.

Furthermore, by becoming aware of the plight of the first Native Hawaiians who were forced to work on the plantations, we get even a better idea of what the *Issei* had to endure. Like the Native American Indians who were forced to work the cotton fields, sugar plantations of the South, the early Native Hawaiians also were forced to work in the cane fields. That is, until their numbers became further drastically reduced by the diseases

to which they had no immunity. Until then, many commoner Hawaiians were forced to do back-breaking work, such as clearing the land, digging irrigation ditches, planting, fertilizing, weeding and harvesting cane on a daily ten- and even a twelve-hour work day. They were also forced to denude the land of sandalwood trees, such as in Waimea Valley on the North Shore as well on the other islands, to the neglect of their fishponds and taro patches.

The Native Hawaiian, like the Native American Indian, was not suited to such long hours of constant physical toll. He was then paid 25 cents a day. As the native population succumbed to diseases like tuberculosis, smallpox, syphilis, etc., the plantation owners had to look elsewhere for sources of cheap labor. Thus began the search for contract workers from Asia. The Chinese were the first. The Japanese followed, and then others like the Koreans came. Then the Portuguese from the Azores were recruited as well as other Europeans.

When Japanese women were permitted to come as picture brides (1907-1923), they had to work as part of a "women's field gang." These Japanese women also had to work a 10-hour work day as did their husbands and were paid merely 50 cents a day. They worked six days a week. Their monthly pay was just thirteen dollars. This was just 66 percent of what their husbands were paid monthly. Women typically weeded the fields (*hoe hana*), irrigated (*hanawai*), stripped the cane of dry leaves (*holehole*) or cut seed cane (*pula pula*). These Hawaiian terms that *Issei* plantation workers came to learn clearly indicate that Native Hawaiians were the first to be used as plantation laborers.

So after working a 10- or 12-hour work day, it is a wonder to me as to how such mothers found yet the extra time, strength and energy to care for their infant children, do housework, laundry and sew things for the family by hand. They also had to prepare breakfast, and sack lunches for their children, as well as bento lunches for themselves and their husbands before setting out for another full day's work in the cane fields.

Oral historical accounts tell of how such plantation mothers got up before their families to prepare breakfasts and bento lunches, and after returning from the cane fields, prepared supper to feed the family, then caught up on their unfinished household chores. They worked into the wee hours of the night while the rest of the family was fast asleep. Then, they were up again by 4 a.m. preparing breakfast, sack and bento lunches even as the rest of the family was yet fast asleep.

SHINRAN'S WASAN

Beings born in the past,
present and future,
are not only of this world!

Countless, incalculable beings
from the Buddhlands
in the "ten endless directions"
also are born in this world!

JODO WASAN No. 28.
rkt trans.

So, for me, it is, therefore, yet even more startling as to how they were able yet to find the extra time they did to earn extra income for the family by preparing bento lunches for other bachelor men, laundering and ironing their clothes and so on just for a few pennies per item. Indeed, for the *Sansei* and *Yonsei* living in today's times of affluence full of labor-saving devices such as automatic rice cookers, washers, dryers, refrigerators, microwave ovens, vacuum cleaners and so forth, for them to truly understand what *Issei* mothers on the plantations endured for the sake of their children (*kodomo no tame ni*), this, indeed, would be a most difficult thing for them to do.

Therefore, the *Issei* woman who arrived as a "picture bride," who then became a plantation worker and mother of her husband's children, she had little time for herself. She had no leisure time to lounge in an "air conditioned" room munching on her favorite snacks or sipping on a cold beverage while watching her favorite television show as many of us do today. Neither did she have the luxury of a cell phone to idly pass away her time in chit chat or gossip. Nor did she have the extra cash to wile away the hours on a cruise ship or in some tourist resort. Nor did she have the time or extra cash to escape to Las Vegas in the hopes of striking it rich.

The *Issei* of yesteryear who settled in Honolulu Village were also raising their *Nisei* children in ethnic neighborhoods of Japanese families, such as in Pawaa, McCully, Kakaako, Palama and so on. The *Issei* as parents were not as sophisticated, doctrinaire or its exclusive as were immigrant Christian parents who were more indoctrinating, traditional and controlling of their children's behaviors, beliefs and loyalty to their family's faith and religion. Protestant and Catholic parents who were fundamentalists tended to hold their children to their strict, sectarian convictions,

rites of passage and religious celebrations. Whereas *Issei* parents, by comparison, tended to be non-sectarian, for they were not only tolerant and permissive but were also accepting of their folk deities as well as the teachings of other religions because of their simplistic view that all religions basically teach the same principles of being a "good and honest person" and to avoid evils and violence.

This simplistic tolerance and acceptance could be seen back in those days when in a traditional *Issei's* home where you would often see a Shinto Shrine, a Shrine of Kobo Daishi and an Amida Shrine side by side right next to each other, usually in the "living room." In their daily prayers and offerings, *Issei* parents also instilled the Confucian ideals of filial piety, responsibility, loyalty and honesty, as well as the need to uphold the minimal Five Buddhist Precepts. Children were taught not to bring shame or disgrace to their family, race and country, especially as American citizens not to dishonor the land of their birth.

The *Issei* of pre-WW II days were also heavily influenced by the ethics of the Meiji Restoration Era (1868-1911). Much of Meiji ethics because of European influences, therefore, is similar to Victorian ethics stressing such virtues as 'honor, truthfulness, industry, decency, and so forth. Sadly, today, the television set and other electronic musical and entertainment centers have displaced these traditional home shrines that were once in the very center of the homes.

Nisei children in attending English public schools were also attending Japanese language schools that emphasized moral education (*shuu-shin kyoiku*). Their primary language, however, was rapidly becoming English. They were interacting more and more with children of other ethnicities in a multiracial public school environment characterized by the "Aloha Spirit" that bonded them more as "local born" kids in a multi-ethnic culture who understood each other.

The *Nisei* in Hawaii, in the assimilative process, were being exposed to peoples of different races, languages, customs, beliefs and lifestyles. As of consequence, they rapidly were becoming Americanized more in the sense of being a "local born person" adept in "Pidgin English," a mixture of words put together from various racial groups in Hawaii. A "*kotonk*" (a mainland Japanese American) therefore, would not understand such "local" expressions as: "*oso-mara you*," "*me go kau kau now*," "*you pakiki head*," "*you hap'pai?*," "*you pupule or what*," "*you no moh' hila hila?*" and so forth.

In being exposed to dominant American "middle class" thinking and speech, the issues of being too "Japanese" or too "local," especially being too "haole," began to emerge. Because of the *Nisei's* lack of an in-depth understanding of his or her Confucian, Buddhist and Japanese heritage, *Nisei* were unable to clarify, explain and pass them on to their *Sansei* children as "core values" to live by. They were also unable to rectify the misconceptions and aspersions often cast on them whenever fundamentalist Calvinist zealots bent on "baptizing" and "converting" them accused them of being heathens and worshippers of idols and graven images. Such overbearing zealots still see images of Buddha in terms of the first commandment forbidding the Israelites to bow in worship of graven images except to the one and only God of Israel (Exodus 20:2-3 / Deut. 5:6-7).

Furthermore, because most *Issei* did not speak, much less, read and write English, they were unable to explain the deeper significations of their ancestral religions to their children who were being assimilated to American ways. *Nisei*, in the meanwhile, were becoming enchanted and addicted to the material things and the useful gadgets that they encountered that then became a necessity, especially such as owning their own home and cars that were status symbols. Their mother tongue became English, and Japanese a foreign language.

Furthermore, learning Japanese involved hundreds of complex Chinese ideograms with many subtle nuances based on the matters of the "heart" rather than on one's "logic of one's head." Many became adept in "Pidgin English" as well as "Broken Japanese." So began the undermining and compromising of what Robert N. Bellah, a sociologist, refers to as the "matters of the heart," or what Japanese refer to as the world of "*kokoro*," which is a pictogram of a "heart." The kanji "*omo-u*" is a pictogram of the "heart" connected to the spinal column, the top of which is the brain stem, connected to the complexities of one's "brain." But, most significantly, the "heart" is also inexplicably connected to each and every vital organ as well as the five senses in our body, even to the extremities of one's anatomy covered by one's "bag of skin," the entire surface full of sensitive tactile endings reactive and responsive to painful and pleasurable stimuli.

Now, by 1865, the first immigrant Chinese laborers were leaving the plantations for other jobs especially in and around what was then Honolulu Village's fledgling Chinatown. This is how the Chinese began successfully establishing their small businesses and farming enterprises. Way back then there were no available Chinese women to marry.

So they began marrying Hawaiian women and later women of other ethnicities as they became available, like the Japanese, Koreans, Portuguese and so forth. So many names like Akaka, Apana, Akana, Ahana, Awana, Ah Loy, Afook and so on are of Chinese and Hawaiian ancestry.

Chinese who settled in Honolulu Village began to build their ancestral shrines, such as Buddhist, Confucian and Taoist temples. Those that were "converted" to Catholicism and Protestantism began building their churches. In hoping to preserve their ancestral ways and traditions, these first Chinese began building their "halls" (called "tongs," based on their village and prefectural origins in China). They built Chinese language schools. Such "facilities" became gathering places for Chinese dramas, movies, poetry readings, potluck dinners and special occasion parties.

The Japanese *Issei* who came after the Chinese also began leaving the plantations to establish their schools, shrines and temples as did the Chinese before them. They likewise began prefectural associations to preserve their traditions and customs. It is my personal view that despite the fact that Asian men were in positions of control and authority, if it were not for the *Issei* women's resiliency, frugality and resourcefulness as wives to their husbands and especially as devoted mothers to their children, *Issei* families way back then would not have become the closely knit families that they were as attested to in many of the oral histories gathered by people of Ethnic Studies Department at the U.H.

Because of racial discrimination and legal restrictions, Japanese immigrants as aliens, as mentioned, faced racial prejudice and political discrimination. They often were denied proper access to the legal system to redress wrongs done to them. They, as mentioned, were excluded from certain occupations, could not own land, were barred from American citizenship, and could not vote. These barriers to personal improvement, advancement and achievement could not have been endured nor overcome, as mentioned, without the sacrifices and forbearance of *Issei* parents, especially the mothers.

As of consequence, *Nisei* entered the Territorial Public Schools and graduated from high school. Many continued on to college to obtain advanced graduate degrees to become specialists, professionals, doctors, especially teachers. In going through the American public school system, they got to know children of other races. In doing so they, as mentioned, became aware of and were

influenced very much by American middle-class ideals and values, such as freedom of speech, press, and religion, and to pursue their dreams and ambitions based on their rights as an American to pursue one's freedoms, liberties and personal happiness.

McKinley High School during the Great Depression became the alma mater of many local-born successful Asians such as Hung Wo Chin, Daniel Inouye, Hiram Fong and others. Back in those days it was dubbed "Tokyo High" because of the many *Nisei* in attendance.

Way back then "Tokyo High" stood in contrast to Punahou which was established in 1841 exclusively for children of Congregational missionaries. The missionaries in 1834 already had established the Chief's Children School especially for the children of Ali'i (Hawaiian royalty and high chiefs). This school later was renamed the Royal School located just below Punchbowl Crater right above and adjacent to the Pacific Club. This Club originally was "The British Club" established in 1851 exclusively for British nationals who were then residing in Honolulu. In 1892 it was renamed the "Pacific Club." In 1926, it was purchased by Archibald Scott Cleghorn for his private residence. Cleghorn who had married Princess Likelike fathered Princess Ka'iulani. Therefore, Princess Ka'iulani is of Scottish-Hawaiian ancestry.

McKinley High School has its origins in the Fort Street Day School which began in the basement of the old Fort Street Church in 1865. Then in 1869, the Day School was relocated to a new stone building on the corner of School and Fort Streets. Then, in 1895, the school was relocated to Princess Ruth's Palace and renamed Honolulu High School (now called Central Middle School). President McKinley was assassinated by Leon Czolgosz on September 6, 1901. He was shot twice.

An interesting side note is that former Mayor John "Johnny" Henry Wilson (1871-1956) attended the Fort Street School and that his father was Scottish-Tahitian and his mother Evelyn was Caucasian and one-quarter Hawaiian and the granddaughter of Captain Henry Blanchard of *Thaddesus*, the ship that had brought the first missionaries. Such facts indicate that that wealthy, educated, monied Europeans and Americans with financial and technological knowledge and political influence were already marrying Hawaiian women of royal descent, while the first Chinese immigrant contract laborers and businessmen were marrying commoner Hawaiian women and women of other immigrants as they became available. Another

factor is that Kamehameha III, in his Constitution of 1840, had established that to qualify as a monarch required that a Kamehameha descendant had to be a baptized Christian whose birth rights were so legitimated and certified. Hence, the Christian names of Kamehameha's descendants. So, does this relate to the birther's questioning as to why someone with the name Barak "Hussein" Obama became the president of the U.S.?

The last Kamehameha, King Kamehameha V (born Lot Kapuaiwa, 1830-1872), was in love with Bernice Pauahi Bishop who, instead, fell in love with Charles Reed Bishop (Bishop Estates – Kamehameha Schools). Kamehameha V died on December 11, 1872. Though he married, he had no children. Many of the Hawaiian royalty by this time were *hapa-haole*. Many Euro-Americans and missionary descendants then were serving on the Privy Council with other high chiefs and royalty. Several non-Hawaiians, as mentioned, had married into royalty such as John Owen Dominis who married Queen Lydia Liliuokalani, the last of the Hawaiian monarchs, who was forced to abdicate her throne under threat of gun and cannon fire.

The Hawaiian Islands, it is speculated, were first discovered by a fisherman named Hawaii Loa about 500 A.D. Soon thereafter followed subsequent waves of Polynesian voyagers who came to settle each of the eight islands. In 1492, the Spanish were the first Europeans to sail across the Atlantic to colonize the three Americas. It is also speculated that Juan Gaetano, a Spanish navigator, was the first European to discover Hawaii in 1550. Spanish trading schooners and warships by then were already sailing across the Pacific to Hong Kong and down to Manila and to the Spice Islands until the Mexican War of Independence (1810-1821). By then the United States had already started its territorial expansionism and empire building, and had declared war on Spain on April 25, 1898, to then lay claim to much of what Spain had colonized, such as the Philippines, Haiti, Puerto Rico and Cuba. In 1889, President McKinley already had approved declaring war on Spain. However, it was Spain that first declared war on the U.S. Then the U.S. declared war on Spain. Doesn't this sequence of events appear similar to that which led to the Gulf Wars?

On July 4, 1776, the United States had made its Declaration of Independence from England. In competing with other European naval powers like France, Germany and Britain, the U.S. had already begun displacing Native Americans in North America. The devastating Civil War (1861-1865) between the Confederate forces of the slave states of the South and the Federal forces of the North,

therefore, clearly harbingered the strategic military importance of Oahu in the center of the Pacific above the equator in America's expansionism down to the lower Western Pacific regions into the Spice Islands.

Therefore, the events that historically began with the Iberian expansion that began engulfing the peoples of the Near, Middle and Far East, later to engulf the Americas across the Atlantic, and then the Pacific regions down to the Spice Islands were based on a superior culture of science and technology based on steel implements, machines and especially as backed by "guns" and "cannons." The Hawaiian armada that Kamehameha the Great had built and amassed between 1795-1810 became no more when the Monarchy was toppled in 1893. The so-called "Bayonet Constitution" stripped all voting rights from all Asians and disenfranchised the commoner Hawaiian who had been already reduced in numbers by White man's diseases, food habits and alcohol.

William Charles Lunalilo (1835-1874) succeeded Kamehameha V. King David Kalakaua (1836-1891) succeeded Lunalilo. Kalakaua was succeeded by Lydia Liliuokalani (1838-1917) whose consort, as mentioned, was John Owen Dominis. The annexationists comprised of Euro-American businessmen and ambitious descendants of New England missionaries, as mentioned, considered the Native Hawaiians incapable of self-government. And because they themselves were numerically in the minority, they feared that the Monarchy would not protect and promote their recently acquired economic interests and great tracts of land through the Great Mahele ("1848 great land division and grab") and the Kuleana Act (1850) that followed.

As of consequence, the coalition of White businessmen and descendants of missionaries formed a Committee of Safety to protect their economic interests and vast tracts of land by finally overthrowing the Hawaiian Monarchy with the backing and support of marines and sailors from the USS Boston. Queen Liliuokalani, as of consequence, was forced to abdicate on January 17, 1893. Then, on July 7, 1898, President McKinley signed the resolution to annex the Hawaiian Islands. As mentioned, he already had approved of declaring war on Spain even before this time, indicating that the U.S. already had its sights on more than just the annexation of the Hawaiian Islands.

As all these sequence of events were concurrently taking place throughout the 19th century and into the first four decades of the 20th century, Honolulu High School was moved to Beretania and Victoria Streets in 1907 and renamed

President McKinley High School. The reason was because McKinley had played an influential role in bringing about the annexation of the Hawaiian Islands. An eight-ton bronze statue of McKinley was cast in New York and shipped all the way to Honolulu. It was dedicated on February 23, 1911.

Back in those days, enterprising Japanese *Issei*, as did the early Chinese, began establishing their own hotels, restaurants, bars, and billiard parlors, especially in the vicinity of Aala Park and environs of Honolulu's Chinatown. Many were family operated "mama-san" and "papa-san" stores featuring Japanese foods and goods that catered to the needs and tastes of the *Issei* raising their *Nisei* children. Way back then there were no mega shopping malls with department stores operating on a multinational scale as they are today through electronic and surveillance systems. Everyone then lived in a friendly neighborhood community where everyone knew each other.

By stark contrast, today's *Sansei* and their children and grandchildren, the *Yonsei* and *Gosei*, are confronted by problems that trouble peoples the world over due to "faceless multi-national corporations" that are depleting the natural resources and polluting the environments. Ever since the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the family of man has come to live under the ominous dark clouds of possible "nuclear self-extinction." All the while, human beings the world over are breathing air and ingesting foods and beverages that are not only detrimental to their health and longevity, but also experiencing situations of anonymity that are unsettling to their psychological and spiritual well-being as well as their personal psyches and public personas.

As of this O'Bon season 2012, all the immigrant *Issei* of yesteryear have passed on into the Great Unknown Beyond. The *Nisei*, once their children, are now are grand or great grandparents in their twilight years. The *Sansei*, once children of *Nisei*, are now grandparents of their children, the *Yonsei*. Many *Sansei* through intermarriages have biracial and often multiracial children. The *Yonsei*, because of biracial parents, are often multi-hyphenated Americans. Many *Yonsei*, like their ethnic peers, are, therefore, oblivious as to a person's religious beliefs and multi-racial ancestry. A person's race, ethnicity and religion, as mentioned, are of of secondary if not of no significance in the "Eight-island Aloha State."

Like other Americans of today, many are abandoning traditional religions and looking for a new sense of identity, community and connection with things "sacred" and "spiritual." It is estimated that 48 percent of Americans presently are looking

for a "cosmic religion" and are turning away from self-serving, inflexible traditional religions that preach and insist that their religion is the only way. Clearly, Buddhism is not a teaching or belief system that sets people in opposition to each other such as separating "saints" from "sinners," or those to be "saved" from those "to be cast into an inferno of fire, or a "hell."

Allow me now then to end with some brief comments on the words of Sakyamuni Buddha that should be understood in the contexts of Selflessness and Togetherness of Amida's Light of All-permeating Wisdom and Life of All-embracing Compassion that never rejects, forsakes or abandons any sentient being, especially those hopelessly riddled by transgressions and desecrations.

In the *Ullambana Sutra*, Sakyamuni tells Maudgalyayana of the monks with great power and virtues gathering together from the "ten-directions" on the "fifteenth day" of the "seventh month" of each year to combine their powers of selfless Compassion to "liberate" such as his mother who have fallen into the "three lower realms" of existence.

Sakyamuni further then explains to Maudgalyana that if he:

... makes offerings to these Pravarana Sanghans, one's present father and mother, parents of seven generations past, as well as the six kinds of close relatives will escape from the three paths of suffering, and at that time attain release. Their clothing and food will spontaneously appear. If the parents are still alive, they will have wealth and blessings for a hundred years. Parents of seven generations past will be born in the heavens. Transformationally born, they will independently enter the celestial flower light, and experience limitless bliss. *Ibid.*

The Buddha then explains that the combined spiritual powers of these virtuous monks is required if his mother is to be freed of suffering as a hungry ghost!

Therefore, the Buddha instructed Maudgalyana as follows:

you should prepare an offering of clean basins [bowls and trays] full of hundreds of flavors and the five fruits, and other offerings of incense, oil, lamps, candles, beds, and bedding, all the best of the world, to the greatly virtuous assembled Sangha of the ten directions. *Ibid.*

Thus in providing for the needs of these virtuous monks who come together every July 15th to combine their powers and virtues to liberate sentient beings, Maudgalyana, it is said, was able to free his mother from the realm of "hungry ghosts."

In this Ullambana Sutta as translated by Chinese Buddhists we can see how they have been heavily influenced by Confucian filial piety and Taoist views of Cosmic Harmony and Togetherness.

These words of Sakyamuni Buddha, however, are not to be taken literally but are to be understood in terms of the Dharma's Truth of Selflessness and its Reality of Togetherness that have, are and will always be embracing all things and forms of life.

As Jodoshinshu Buddhists, therefore, we should ponder even more deeply and take to heart the words of Buddha translated as follows:

"Even if one were to carry one's father on one's right shoulder and one's mother on one's left shoulder for the rest of our lives, we would not be able to repay them for their kindness and devotion for us." *Ibid.*

Let us then, during this year's O'Bon season, continue to think, feel, reflect, remember and recall to fond memory the number of ancestral fathers and mothers who have passed on.

BUDDHIST STORIES & PASSAGES

To be sure, when viewed from one angle, the world with all its greed and injustice and bloodshed appears as a devil's world, but as people come to believe in the Buddha's enlightenment, blood will be turned into milk and greed into compassion, and then, the devil's land becomes a Buddha Land of Purity. BDK. *The Teaching of the Buddha.* (Eng./Jpnese) p. 498.

QUESTION & ANSWER KORNER

QUESTION: I have heard that people at death become Buddhas. Is this true?

ANSWER: Not necessarily does everyone become a Buddha upon death. Becoming a Buddha is to become mentally, emotionally, bodily and spiritually perfectly "aware," "awake" and "enlightened." To be an "enlightened being" is to have become a

person constantly working to save others drowning in their moral transgressions and spiritual desecrations. To have become a Buddha is to lead such beings into the Dharma's Light of Selflessness and its Life of Togetherness that embraces all things and life without condemnation, rejections or exclusions. Selflessness means to have no discriminations, Togetherness means not playing favorites.

According to Shinran, when a person trusts and takes refuge in Amida with a mind that is true and a heart that is sincere, such a person as a consequence will be born in the Pure Land at the moment of her or his death.

