



GASSHO

*"Hands together
in reverence & gratitude"*

September 2013

Issue No: 09-13



WE ARE ALL IMPERFECT HUMAN BEINGS!

by rev. roland k. tatsuguchi

Before and during the Depression Years of the 1930s, Kaheka Street was called Aloha Lane with a side lane called Ahana Lane forming an upside down "h" that ended at Rycroft Street. Aloha Lane then at its mauka end began at Young Street which now as Kaheka Street still does today. Crossing King Street, Aloha Lane then ended as a dead-end lane as did Ahana Lane approximately where Pagoda Hotel and Restaurant are. At that time, both Pagoda and Rycroft did not exist. The families along Aloha-Ahana Lane, Sheridan Street up to Pensacola Street formed a contiguous community of *Issei* immigrant families with family run *mama-san* and *papa-san* shops, stores and small businesses, especially along King Street between Kalakaua Boulevard and Pensacola Street.

Aloha Lane then did not connect to Kapiolani Boulevard because the Pawaa-Sheridan neighborhood was sandwiched between Kalakaua Boulevard and Sheridan Street and between Kapiolani Boulevard and Beretania Street. The areas between Rycroft Street and Kapiolani Boulevard, and especially down to Ala Moana Boulevard were full of marshes, tidal wetlands and inlets. Ala Moana Shopping Center then was a scrubland full of marshes.

The area between Rycroft Street, Kapiolani Boulevard between Kalakaua and Sheridan Street was fed by artesian wells and were being farmed on built up patches and called Pake Patches. Keeaumoku Street then ended at King Street and did not connect to Kapiolani Boulevard as it now does all the way up into the second level of Ala Moana Shopping Center. Ala Moana Park then also were tidal marshlands. More than a century and a

MONTH'S THOUGHT



That which is impenetrable to us really exists. Behind the secrets of nature remains something subtle, intangible, and inexplicable. Veneration for this force beyond anything that we can comprehend is my religion. —Albert Einstein (1879 – 1955)



half ago the offshore from Waikiki to Barbers Point was a sloping seamless reef with coral outcroppings and tidal pools. The beachfronts were merely thin patches of sand. All the present beaches are man-made with sand brought in from elsewhere.

In the pre-WWII years in the Pawaa-Sheridan neighborhood there were the Civic Auditorium, Sheridan Theater, the Dairymen's Drive-in Ice-cream Parlor, and the Pawaa Theater. The Sheridan Hardware Store and the Sheridan Shingon Temple and the Department of Agriculture offices are still there. There was a Banyan tree on the corner of King and Keeaumoku when streetcars were powered by overhead electrical lines. They ran on iron rails imbedded into the street. The intersection at King and Kalakaua was the nexus for streetcars running from Kalihi and Liliha to Kaimuki and Waikiki. The ones headed for Waikiki turned makai down on McCully Street, then crossed over Ala Wai Canal on a wooden bridge connected on the Diamond Head side to McCully Bridge that was built in 1927. It ended at the Waikiki Zoo. The Moana Surfride Hotel opened in 1901. The Royal Hawaiian opened in 1927. The Waikiki Natatorium was also built in 1927, a place for international swim competition

REMINDERS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SERVICES for SEPTEMBER 2013

1st SUN Sept 1st:

No Service

2nd SUN Sept 8th:

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

3rd SUN Sept 15th:

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

4th SUN Sept 22nd:

Autumn O'Higan service

9 A.M. English service
Speaker
Rev. Roland Tatsuguchi

5th SUN Sept 29th:

Please remember!

Chicken & Sushi Sale

Pick-up from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

No SKM Service

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

With Deepest Sympathy

Mr. Ernest Nishiki 77 yrs. July 31, 2013
Mrs. Ethel T. Kawaoka 95 yrs. July 16, 2013

Rev. Roland Tatsuguchi
will be off Island

Aug. 22 to Sept. 4, 2013
and Sept. 26 to Oct. 10, 2013

THANK YOU
for YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS !!

2013 Memorial Service Schedule

2012	1 Year	2011	3 Year	2007	7 Year
2001	13 Year	1997	17 Year	1989	25 Year
1981	33 Year	1964	50 Year	1914	100 Year

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where swimmers such as Duke Kahanamoku, Keo Nakama and Bill Smith. Others from all over the world came to compete. Queen's Surf was Queen Liliuokalani's favorite surfing spot.

In fact, the beachfront areas from Diamond Head all the way to Sand Island and Barbers Point also were wetlands and mudflats with coral outcroppings subject to the tides. Waikiki, Kapahulu, Moiliili, Pawaa, Kakaako, Honolulu Harbor and Keehi Lagoon areas were full of artesian wells with several mountain-fed small streams flowing down from the valleys into the sea. The Ala Wai Canal and Ala Wai Yacht Harbor were constructed in 1929. This dredging and other dredging alterations along the beach fronts especially from Kakaako and Diamond Head have caused changes in wave and ocean current action. The Waikiki shoreline itself originally was a shoreline with only thin patches of carbonate sand. Sand, as mentioned, was brought in from other areas to cover the offshore coral reef areas to create the beaches all along the Waikiki to Ala Moana shoreline as they are today.

Way before the Ala Wai Canal was dredged in the 1800s, much of the inland areas from Kapahulu all the way to the Honolulu Harbor area up to Chinatown were tidal wetlands and mudflats subject to the incoming and outgoing tides full of estuaries with native flora and fauna. There were also several other natural streams flowing into the sea. The inland areas of Waikiki then especially were full of artesian wells. Much of it has been destroyed by construction of landfills, streets and now tall highrise buildings. In fact, the *wai* in Waikiki means "water" and *kiki* means "bubbling waters." I remember well the times when artesian wells fed the taro patches, fish ponds, duck ponds and rice fields that once flourished between the area bordered by Rycroft Street, Keeaumoku Street, Kapiolani Boulevard and Sheridan Street that were full of built up garden patches, Pahke Patches.

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WORDS OF SHINRAN

... the Buddha's work is assuredly accomplished in hearing the name of that land; how can this be conceivable?* Know, then, that although he neither seeks nor knows the indescribable, inexplicable, and inconceivable virtues of the Pure Land of happiness, the person who entrusts himself to the Primal Vow is made to acquire them.

SBT-Series. *Notes on Once-calling and Many-calling*
p. 36. * "How can this be conceivable": beyond thought and measure, beyond understanding and words; this should be known (Shinran's note).

During those Depression Years before WWII the *Nisei* children went to Japanese Language Schools (*Nihon-go gakko*). I remember well those days of yesteryear when *Issei* parents instilled core family values and ethical principles of working hard, especially of being a responsible and good citizen by obeying "the laws of the land." These core values were reinforced through class periods on "moral education" or *shushin* (*shu-* = discipline / *-shin* = the body, subsequently one's mind and spirit).

I remember well the poem in one of the textbooks:

"Do your best your very best and do it every day. For little boys and little girls it is the wisest way."

The teachers would often talk about exemplars such as Ninomiya Kinjiro (1787-1856) and other folk heroes in Japanese history who rose from the ranks of poverty to accomplish great things for the people of their times. We were told to uphold the laws of the land and not to bring dishonor or shame on the family's name. Especially were we told, "Honesty is the best policy." Then they would tell us about American heroes such as George Washington (1731-1799) "who could not tell a lie," and Abraham Lincoln, or "honest Abe" (1808-1865), who "read by the light of a fireplace in a modest log cabin home" and especially Benjamin Franklin's inventiveness.

In Japan there are statues of Kinjiro showing him as a young lad reading a book and carrying a

load of firewood. Folklore tells of how Kinjiro, like Lincoln, spent every moment he could diligently studying and constantly reading. Like the myths and folklore about Lincoln reading by the light of a fireplace in a humble log cabin home, Kinjiro also is fabled to have read even by the light of fireflies at night.

Then there also is the story about folk hero Ishikawa Goemon (1558-1559), a semi-legendary outlaw much like Robin Hood. He stole gold and valuables from the rich and gave them to the poor. He was publically executed in front of the main gate of Nanzen-ji, a Buddhist temple of all places. He was boiled to death in a metal cauldron of scalding hot water because he had attempted to assassinate Toyotomi Hideyoshi!

Before his execution Goemon wrote a farewell poem. It has been etched on his tombstone as follows: *"No matter what, there will always be thieves."* These words remind me of Shinran Shonin's words that human beings, as long as they are mortal beings, the mortal beings they are, are constantly assailed by passions and vanities. This is why they commit transgressions and desecrations of things that are sacred and spiritual.

Now, if you are of my generation, surely you also can recall those log cabin shaped tin can containers of real maple syrup that were sold in mama-san or papa-san grocery stores during the Depression Years of the 1930s. Such log cabin shaped tin cans brought images of Lincoln growing up in a log cabin reading by the light of a fireplace. But is this true?

According to Dale Carnegie, in his *Lincoln the Unknown*, the answer is No. According to him,

"Lincoln did not live in a log cabin. He lived in a "three-faced camp" — better known today as a shed. It had no floor (dirt), no door, no windows, nothing but three sides and a roof of poles and brush. They lived chiefly on wild game and nuts. Abraham had a sister named Sarah. Sarah did the cooking, while Abraham kept the fire going and carried water from the spring a mile away. They did not have any forks, spoon, plates, knives — so they ate with their fingers. The shed smelled and was infested with fleas, crawling with vermin."

Folktales about Abraham Lincoln and George Washington are full of hearsay and later embellishments. Nevertheless, I remember well those log cabin shaped tin containers. Just seeing the log cabin shaped containers would evoke images of Lincoln reading by the fireside. But such images are just the images. They are "imaginary" and mostly "imagined."

Carnegie informs us that "Lincoln's grandmother's name was Lucy Hanks." Lucy reared eight children,

"and one of her grandsons, **the son of her illegitimate daughter Nancy**, became President of the United States. His name was Abraham Lincoln. Abraham's mother Nancy married at age 22." Bold for emphasis.

Furthermore, said Carnegie, Lincoln believed that his abilities all came from his mother's side of the family who were of gentry and not from his father's side, for his father was a "dull, ignorant day laborer, illiterate rover and drifter."

Then, on another occasion, said Carnegie, Lincoln came to see the true horrors of slavery for the first time in his life when

"He saw 'Negroes in chains, whipped and scourged.' The very next day Abe saw a mulatto being auctioned into slavery. The whole thing was so revolting that Lincoln moved away from the scene with a deep feeling of 'unconquerable hate.'"

However, wrote Carnegie, "Mrs. Lincoln was an extreme racist and — not just with blacks. She didn't like any foreigner — especially Catholics."

So this tells us something about the psychosocial climate of those times of conflict between so-called White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (Martin Luther), and their disdain of Catholics (the Papacy) and Jews (anti-Semitism) of the times. This dislike of Catholics also is recorded in Hawaiian history where New England Puritan missionaries, upon converting Queen Kaahumanu, then influenced her to evict the Catholic missionaries who had come later, but were later allowed to return.

Then Carnegie confirms the fact that slave owners were impregnating their female slaves as follows:

"The favorite and most flaming indictment of the Abolitionist was miscegenation. Southern men were accused of cherishing Negro slavery because of their love of 'unbridled licentiousness.' Slave owners were accused of violating their own mulatto daughters and selling them to be the mistresses of other men."

So, it was most surprising to know that:

"Robert E. Lee believed that slavery was wrong, and had freed his own Negroes long before the conflict came; but Grant's wife owned slaves at the very time that her husband was leading the armies of the North to destroy slavery."

Now, Washington himself owned slaves, as did Jefferson and others who used them as field hands or household domestics.

Lincoln was not only deeply pained about the Civil War between 1861-1865, but also hated the United States when it became involved in the Mexican War of 1844. He saw it as "a war of rapine and murder, a war of robbery and dishonor." Therefore, Carnegie wrote of Lincoln declaring:

"the God of heaven had forgotten to defend the weak and innocent, and permitted the strong band of murderers and demons from hell to kill men, women, and children and lay waste and pillage the land of the just."

Like Washington,

"Lincoln did not belong to any church, and avoided religious discussion even with his best friends. 'When I do good, I feel good, when I do bad I feel bad, and that's my religion.'"

These words of Lincoln quoted by Carnegie echoes the words of Shinran Shonin, who said: "when we think good thoughts, we think we are good. And when we think evil thoughts we think we are evil ..." (Tannisho XIII).

Now let us turn to the phenomenon of *apotheosis* which means to immortalize a person by attributing qualities of deity and divinity on him. In erecting monuments such as the Lincoln Memorial (on a godly throne) and the Washington

SHINRAN'S WASAN

To have taken refuge
in Amida's Pure Land
Is to have taken refuge
in the Lands of
all other Buddhas!
For praising one Buddha
with a singular mind
is to be extolling all
the unhindered Ones!

Jodo Wasan No. 48
rkt trans.

Monument (symbol of male energy prowess and supremacy, therefore, creativity), Carnegie says that such symbols have immortalized our nation's heroes by "apotheosizing" them. Therefore, the *Apotheosis of Washington* painted above under the dome of the Capitol Rotunda not only immortalizes George Washington but also deifies him as ascending into the heavens as a divinity to celestial immortality.

Despite the story about George Washington "cutting down his father's Cherry Tree," much like Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny that are well-intentioned fables, generations of Americans, continue to be conditioned by such fabricated myths. The actuality is that human beings constantly are being "brainwashed by historical embellishments and ethnocentric fabrications designed to make a given people perceive and believe in things about their race, culture and religion that have no factual or historical basis. What they have been "conditioned" to believe are full of fiction and falsehoods. This is the basic point of Sakyamuni Buddha's parable concerning the four blind men and the elephant or the 99 blind men.

This tendency to glorify and deify a nation's heroes, therefore, is clearly seen in Constantino Brumidi's *Apotheosis of Washington*, a magnificent piece of art high up in the dome of the Capitol Rotunda. According to Carnegie, this fresco has Washington ascending toward the heavens flanked by two goddesses and "thirteen maidens," and Washington is:

"allegorically represented, surrounded by figures from classical mythology.

Washington is draped in purple, a royal color, with a rainbow arch at his feet, flanked by the goddess Victoria (draped in green, using a horn) to his left and the goddess Liberty to his right. Liberty wears a red Phrygian cap, symbolizing emancipation, from a Roman tradition where sons leaving the home and/or slaves being emancipated would be given a red cap. She holds a fasces in her right hand and an open book in the other."

Carnegie continues:

"Surrounding Washington, the two goddesses and the 13 maidens are six scenes lining the perimeter, each to represent a national concept allegorically, from directly below Washington in the center and moving clockwise, 'War,' 'Science,' 'Marine,' 'Commerce,' 'Mechanics,' and 'Agriculture.' The perimeter scenes are not fully visible from the floor of the Capitol."

The seven scenes not only "immortalize" George Washington as our country's first President, but symbolically they also are telling of the birth of a New World Order (*Novus Ordo Seclurum*) as depicted by the "all-seeing eye" atop a thirteen-layer pyramid (13 colonies) on the back of the dollar bill. The Roman numerals (MDCCLXXVI) add up 1776, which is the year when America declared its independence.

In his *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space*, Joseph Campbell interprets these Roman numerals MDCCLXXVI as inscribed on the base layer of the "thirteen layered pyramid" with the "eye of wisdom" (or God) hovering above it as follows:

"... 1776: 1 + 7 + 7 + 6 = 21. Mankind, that is to say, has herewith come of age and taken to itself responsibility and authority for the shaping of human lives according to Reason." p. 97.

Campbell interprets the sum of 21 as being the age when a young person comes of age. Therefore, 1776 is when mankind came of age when America established a New World Order. However, Arnold Toynbee in his *A Study of History* has documented that civilizations over man's history have risen to then decline and fall, to echo the Buddha's words: "all things are transient."

The United States as a nation is only 237 years of age and yet presently is regarded as the most powerful nation because of its dominance in global geopolitics, especially as backed by its military dominance and presence in the seven major regions of the world. This is especially true in the Middle and Near East regions. China and India have risen again as superpower nations. And specialists in geopolitics even now are predicting that should the countries of Africa become united as a Federation of United African Nations, the power of dominance will begin shifting to Africa. As superpower nations continue to compete for control and access to the world's dwindling renewable and unrenewable resources, especially coal, crude oil and precious mineral deposits, what man's future will be is anyone's guess.

War, therefore, is the first scene right under Washington sitting on a throne. War is personified as Columbia battling for freedom ("Columbia the Gem of the Ocean"). According to Carnegie, this scene:

"depicts a woman fighting for liberty with a raised sword [see also Matt. 10:34], and a helmet and shield (in the colors of the American flag trampling figures for Tyranny and Despotism Kingly Power) [see Ephesians 6:10-18]. To Freedom's left assisting her is a fierce bald eagle (the bald eagle is the national bird of the United States) carrying arrows and thunderbolts (reminiscent of the arrows carried by the eagle in the Great Seal of the United States)." See also Joseph Campbell. *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space*. pp. 98-100. [] mine.

Therefore, it is to be noted that the bald eagle on the back of the dollar bill is holding an olive branch in its right talons and arrows in its left. This stance depicts our nation as first offering peace, and if rejected, then making war as justified by "divine providence" from above. This authorization from above is depicted by the "Star of David" right above the eagle. Therefore, the stance of the eagle poised to strike down the enemy if initial offers of peace are rejected, this stance clearly is based on such biblical verses as are found in Deuteronomy 20:10-18. That is why the bald eagle as a symbol of American sovereignty is poised under the six-pointed Star of David, or Seal of Solomon. This depiction also shows how American Puritan heritage has been, is and continues to be inseparably rooted in Judaic Christian heritage.

According to Grace Holswell in her *“What Christians Don’t Know About Israel*, “American Jews sympathetic to Israel dominate key positions in all areas of our government where decisions are made regarding the Middle East.”

Going clockwise, the next scene is that of Science and Technology:

“Minerva, the Roman goddess of crafts and wisdom, is portrayed with helmet and spear pointing to an electrical generator creating power stored in batteries next to a printing press, representing great American inventions. American scientists and inventors Benjamin Franklin, Samuel F.B. More and Robert Fulton are watching. In the left part of the scene a teacher demonstrates the use of dividers.”

Then comes the Marine scene.

“This scene shows Neptune, the Roman sea-god, with trident and crown of seaweed riding in a shell chariot drawn by sea horse. Venus, goddess of love born from the sea, is depicted helping to lay the transatlantic telegraph cable which ran from American to the Telegraph Field in Ireland. In the background is an ironclad warship with smokestacks.”

In the next Commerce scene,

“Mercury, the Roman god of commerce, with his winged petasos and sandals and a caduceus, is depicted giving a bag of gold to American Revolutionary War financier Robert Morris. To the left men move a box on a dolly; on the right, the anchor and sailors lead into ‘Marine.’”

Then comes the scene on Mechanics.

“Vulcan, the Roman god of fire and forge, is depicted standing at an anvil with his foot on a cannon next to a pile of cannonballs [Does this imply the MICC (military, industrial, congressional complex)?]. A steam engine is in the background. The man at the forge is thought to represent Charles Thomas, the supervisor of ironwork during the construction of the capitol dome.”
[] mine.

And, finally the Agriculture scene completes the circle.

“Ceres, the Roman goddess of agriculture, is shown with a wreath of wheat and a cornucopia, symbol of plenty, while sitting

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continued from p. 2

Donations

to be continued in the next Gassho

on a McCormick mechanical reaper. The personification of Young America in a liberty cap holds the reins of the horses, which the goddess Flora fathers flowers in the foreground."

A person visiting the Capitol cannot help but be inundated by the artworks of Brumidi especially in the West Corridor of the Capitol called "the Brumidi Corridor."

The most bizarre aspect of deifying a nation's heroes is that they are rarely based on facts or whether the claims are true or false. For they are never to be questioned. In fact, much of it is imagined and imaginary. Such then is the nature of a person blinded by ethnocentric folklore often based on falsehoods, fabrications and embellishments to fuel the passions of "my country, right or wrong!"

Buddhism refers to this state of mistaking what is imaginary for reality as **avidya**, a state of being deluded by one's imaginations that are illusions, or "blind belief" in which a person persists in believing in the fabrications even when presented with facts to the contrary. Then such a belief becomes a "blind faith," a compelling conviction, if not a dogmatism!

I close with the following quote:

... you are a simple human being without a label, without a country. ... you must strip yourself of all those things and allow truth to come into being; and it can only come when the mind is empty, when the mind ceases to create. Then it will come without your invitation. ... It comes obscurely, not when you are watching, wanting. It is there as sudden as sunlight, as pure as the night; but to receive it, the heart must be full and the mind empty. J. Krishnamurti (1895 - 1986).
Source: The Collected Works Volume V.

This is exactly what Shinran Shonin meant when he said: "in the nembutsu no self working is true working; it is beyond description, explanation, and conceivability" (T. Unno, Tannisho, X). To be a person of O-nembutsu is to become a person of gratitude, reverence, humility, especially a person of penitence brimming with joy, not with fears, uncertainties, doubts or guilt, which is to be "suddenly" illumined

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by the Truth of Selflessness and permeated by its Reality of Togetherness. To do so, one must empty one's mind and one's heart, must trust and take refuge in Amida Buddha.

BUDDHIST VERSES – STORIES

In the sky, there is no distinction of east and west; people create distinctions out of their own minds and then believe them to be true. —Buddha (563 - 483 BC)

QUESTION & ANSWER KORNER:

QUESTION: What is *avidya*?

ANSWER: Commonly translated "ignorance" characterized by passions, vanities, illusions and delusions. More specifically, to be transgression of the orderly and uniform laws of causality, conditionality, interdependency, inseparability and karma. Or failing to understand the fundamental nature of reality as being sacred and spiritual.