



BUDDHIST CHURCH OF MARYSVILLE

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Hiking the Path, with Team Castle Hiking at home, Number 15.

Rev. Tim's theme for 2021 is simply: BE YOURSELF!

In the last Hiking article, I wrote about Hanamatsuri, a day we set aside to remember and celebrate the birth of the historical Buddha, Prince Siddhartha.

Prince Siddhartha's life and journey to enlightenment is such an important story. As he realized his enlightenment to the ultimate truths of impermanence (change) and interdependence (oneness), due to his willingness to ease the pain of others, Prince Siddhartha decided to share and teach what he had attained to anyone who was willing to learn and listen.

This month I am sharing with you all about a recent trip I was fortunate to take. The last week of April I was very fortunate to travel to Kona. While Hawaii is always a nice place to visit for vacation, this trip was a little different. A good friend of mine was going to Hawaii to visit an ill aunt. They asked if I wanted to tag along and I was really glad I did as I was able to meet and spend time with my friend, the Aunt, and her family. It was a very special family time and I was honored to be allowed into such a time.

While in Kona, we visited the Kona Hongwanji for Sunday service. As I looked around the temple before service, I notice a display case of nenju/ojuzu. For a fund raiser, the temple was selling kukui nut nenju's, so this was my major purchase of the trip!! Something new and a special reminder of our trip.

During this stay, we visited two of the local National Parks. These parks are sacred special places for the native Hawaiians and I learned a lot about the Hawaiian culture and practices. While I don't think there is a specific Hawaiian religion so to speak, their entire outlook on life is very spiritual.

At one of the parks, they were handing out cards entitled, Pono Pledge. Now Pono is interpreted as Righteous. It is a pledge to take while on the islands and it makes you think about living in harmony with the islands and also to live with common sense in mind.

Island of Hawai'i Pono Pledge:

I pledge to be pono (righteous/have right view) on the island.

I will mindfully seek wonder, but not wander beyond safety.

I will not defy death for breathtaking photos, trespass or venture beyond safety.

I will care for the land and sea, and admire wildlife only from afar.

Molten lava will mesmerize me, but I will not disrupt its flow.

I will not take what is not mine, leaving lava rocks and sand as originally found.

I will heed ocean conditions, never turning my back on the Pacific.

When rain falls inland, I will remain high above ground, out of rivers and streams.

I will embrace the island's aloha spirit, as it embraces me.

As I read the nine short sentences, it really reminded me of our Jodo Shinshu Eight-fold Path. Having Right View will allow me to act with wisdom and compassion in the moment. Following the Eight-fold Path will allow me to live with my Dharma Eyes wide open, much like living with awareness as in the Pono Pledge.

When I read things like this pledge from other practices, I am happy to hear that the basics of our practice are really very similar to others. While language and culture and practice are sometimes so very different than our Jodo Shinshu practice, the basic principles, core values per say, are often so similar to our own that I feel that we are on the same page with so many people.

Let us all remember those around us who care and support us each and every day. Even if our practices differ a bit, we are all connected. Together let's take a hike as fellow travelers!!!

In Gratitude,

Namo Amida Butsu

Keep on Hiking!!

Team Castle

