From Pali to Hawaiian
An Inter-Buddhist Project
Translation of the Karaṇīya Metta Sutta into Hawaiian

The Beginning of the Project
In the later part of January this year, Buddhist Study Center (BSC) received a request from Jesse Maceo Vega Frey, Resident Teacher and General Manager of the Vipassana Hawaii about a Hawaiian translation of the Karaṇīya Metta Sutta (Sutra in Sanskrit or 经[kyō]) in Sino-Japanese. Earlier Jesse had received an inquiry from a Buddhist monk in New Zealand who is working on translating that Sutta into Maori and wanted to look at how a translation into Hawaiian was approached because Maori and Hawaiian are linguistically related. We were not aware of any previous translation, so this lead to a joint translation project jointly sponsored by Vipassana Hawaii and the BSC. Of course, we were honored to be a part of an inter-Buddhist endeavor to produce a new Buddhist work which also honors Hawaiian, the language of Buddhism’s new home: Hawai‘i.

In early March Dr. Puakea Nogelmeier, a scholar of the Hawaiian language and Dr. Jake H. Davis, a scholar of the Pali language and Teacher of Theravada Buddhism, teamed up to translate the Metta Sutta from Pali into Hawaiian. Although the two scholars spoke to each other in English, the translation effort was to transmit, as much as possible, the full meaning of the Pali into Hawaiian. They met once a week online and completed the project at the beginning of May.

About the Karaṇīya Metta Sutta
Quite few a Buddhist organizations, including several Hongwanji temples in the United States use an aspiration that is generally referred to as the Loving-Kindness Meditation. Loving kindness is one translation of the Pali word metta. It begins with words similar to this:

May all beings be happy and well,
May no harm or difficulties come to them,
May they live in peace and harmony.
(from a card originating from the Palo Alto Buddhist Temple)

It should be noted that although the concepts are based on the Karaṇīya Metta Sutta, most aspirations are not actually translations of the Sutta. Also of interest is that there are several Metta Sutta in the Pali Canon and since this Sutta begins with “Karaṇīya” meaning “ought to be, or worth doing,” this Metta Sutta is referred to as the Karaṇīya Metta Sutta to distinguish it from other Metta Sutta in same manner that songs are referred to by their first line.

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The current logo from all the documents I have found was designed in 1992 under the direction of Rev. Yoshiaki Fujitani, when he was director of the Buddhist Study Center. The background of the black circle with the white stripes images a scene of the calm ocean and symbolize serene and tranquil state of mind created by the Buddhist teachings which is represented by the white lotus flower in the center of the logo.

This also symbolizes the BSC, located in Hawaii on the crossroads of the Western cultures and the Oriental cultures, which shares the better understanding of different cultures and contributes towards the peace of human beings and the world.

The white lotus flower symbolizes a stage that is associated with the state of bodhi; that of becoming awakened to the wonders of it all. When one reaches this state it is said that one has mental purity and has reached a state of spiritual perfection.

The Translation Process

It was fascinating to witness the two scholars work with each other. Dr. Davis would not only describe the meaning of words and phrases of the Pali but also explain the grammar and communication strategies associated with the language. Then Dr. Nogelmeier would find the appropriate Hawaiian that would not only express meaning but feeling and, where ever possible match the communication strategy of the source language. And in several cases, as you will see in the translator’s notes, they discovered that Hawaiian was more resonant with Pali than English. Furthermore, the process of translating the Pali to Hawaiian actually helped to clarify how to express the meaning in English.

What resulted was a Hawaiian mele, a form that is appropriate for a religious work that will be then be chanted as an ‘ oli. Thus the name: Mele Lokomaika’i. In fact, a Hawaiian chanter, Kekuhi Keali’ikanaka’ole will give voice to the Mele Lokomaika’i as an ‘ oli.

How the Karaṇīya Metta Sutta (Mele Lokomaika’i) is Presented to You

The Sutta/Mele will be in the form of a tri-lingual presentation as a separate page that is inserted into this publication. In this way you will be able to easily read it together with the Notes From the Translators that will follow below. In this way you will be able to track the three versions along with the thoughts of the translators as they worked on both the Hawaiian and English.

Notes From the Translators

In offering this tri-lingual presentation of the Pali text known as the Karaṇīya Metta Sutta (KN 1.9), we note with pleasure a number of areas where moving between Pali and Hawaiian linguistic constructions allows us to bring across certain aspects of form and content with more fluency than is possible in English.

The respective stylistic and grammatical patterns of Hawaiian, English, and Pali, sometimes allow - and sometimes re-
Zen Meditation for Stressful times

Meditation has been practiced for thousands of years and was originally meant to help deepen understanding of the sacred and mythical forces of life. These days, mediation is commonly used for relaxation and stress reduction. With all of the events going on in the world right now, spending even a few minutes in meditation can restore your calm.

Ways to meditate can include the practice of Qi gong, tai chi, or yoga. Another method is focused attention on relaxed breathing and correction of posture. By focusing your attention on deep, even-paced breathing using the diaphragm muscle, you can breathe more efficiently and free your mind from the many distractions that cause stress and worry.

Meditation takes practice. It is common for your mind to wander, but it’s after much training that you learn to focus on your breath to calm your mind that affects your overall health and well-being.

Zen Meditation classes are available at the Buddhist Study Center, 1436 University Avenue on Tuesdays from 6:00PM to 7:00PM. The instructor, Hideyuki Takahashi will lead the class through the proper method of breathing and correcting one’s posture in zazen. Meditation attire is loose long sweat pants & t-shirt, or if available, hakama. No shorts or tank tops, as well as no jewelry or fragrances please. Admission is free.
quire - us as translators to make explicit a thought that may have been only implicit or ambiguous in the original language. In the first verse, for instance, the grammar of English forces us to supply a subject “they” in translating “[they] should be capable...”. The Pāli does not require or supply a subject for the verb assa, “should”, here; instead, the way text is composed directs attention primarily toward the actions and qualities that are to be embodied, rather than towards who should do so (though see the note on attha below). In comparison with translation into English, the medium of the Hawaiian language allows us to bring across more of the ambiguity of meaning that is present in the Pāli here, since the term is used in the Hawaiian translation can refer either to the actions and qualities to be embodied or to the person who does these actions or bears these qualities.

In translating the paired Pāli terms ujū and suhujū, also in the first verse, Hawaiian offers an opportunity for mirroring more of the structure of the original phrasing than English does. Ujū means both “honest” and also “morally upright” generally. Adding the prefix su- intensifies both of these connotations – the single term suhujū meaning both “very honest” and also “very upright”. Whereas it is difficult to find a pair of English terms that mirrors the structure of ujū and suhujū, the Hawaiian terms pono and kūpono serve more ably in this regard. The term pono has a broad range of reference to “goodness”, “morality”, “virtue”, etc.; the prefix kū- in the word kūpono adds to this both an emphasis and a pertinence to a particular setting.

At the end of the first verse, the term atimānī is often translated “conceited”, with inwardly focused connotations. Yet it shares its linguistic roots with the verb atimaññeti, found in the sixth verse, often rendered as “despising” others. While there are important differences between the two Pāli constructions, what the standard English renderings fail to highlight is the strong linguistic commonality between the two: both constructions append a prefix ati-, meaning “up to”, “beyond”, “excessively”, to derivatives from the root -man, meaning “thinking”, “cognizing”. We are able to use the Hawaiian hoʻokano in both places, mirroring this linguistic connection between the two Pāli terms, because hoʻokano can serve as a description of character, meaning “conceited”, “arrogant”, “haughty”, and also as an action or perspective toward others, meaning “to be rude”, “to look down upon”, “to condescend”. The ease of reflecting in Hawaiian this connection between the two Pāli terms, moreover, has pushed us to find a way to mirror this connection also in English. This has led us to render atimānī in English as “not thinking themselves above [others]” and no atimaññetha... kaʻnci as “should not think themselves above... anyone”.

The text juxtaposes these admonishments, not to hoʻokano, “think oneself above” – in either of these two ways – with a description of what it is like instead to cultivate and perfect an attitude of goodwill. On the one hand, perfected goodwill has no limit (P: aparimāṇaṃ / H: palena ‘ole); in this way it is unobstructed. Secondly, the heart filled with goodwill has no place for enmity and hatred. Here we translate in the eighth verse the Pāli asambādhaṃ averam asa-pattaṃ with the Hawaiian e kōī maʻemaʻe, meaning “to flow unfettered and pure without the taint of enmity and hatred, which have been left behind”.

The Pāli text switches somewhat abruptly, in the third verse, from admonishing us not to do the slightest wrong to describing how one wishes well in a limitless way. For clarity and flow in English we have supplemented here “[Wishing] May all have ease and safety”. Similarly, we give the Hawaiian e ʻolu, “may it be”, as a direct translation of Pāli hontu in the third verse, but not only there. In the fourth and fifth verses, which elucidate in further detail how one wishes well in a limitless way, for the sake of flow in Hawaiian we repeat e ʻolu at the beginning of each of these verses also, the repetition calling our attention back repeatedly to the wish of goodwill (P: mettā).

Cultivating and perfecting this beautiful quality of mind (P: mānasa) in fact requires just such repeated calling of attention back to the thought of goodwill. As in the ninth verse, the noun sati in Pāli refers to this repeated calling of attention back to an object. Just as one might say ‘mind your livestock’ or ‘mind your head’, the term sati can be used with many different kinds of objects of attention: in certain kinds of meditation one repeatedly calls attention back to present experience; in other types of meditation one repeatedly calls attention back to the thought of good will. The term adhiṭṭheyya adds the meaning that one should have a steadfast commitment to keeping the thought of goodwill in mind. Here we have translated E kūpaʻa mau kêia kau ‘ana o nā maka, literally “this placement of the eyes” (kēia kau

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Both the minding of an object, and also specifically the mind of goodwill, are considered mental states, in the Pāli thought-world. In certain places we have translated this notion of mental state using the Hawaiian ‘ano, “nature”, “character”, “manner”, “style”. The seventh verse, for instance, exhorts us to cultivate, towards all beings, a mind (P: mānasa) like that of a mother towards her child. Here we have used ‘ano e mālama mau ai to mean ‘always cultivate a mind-state’, specifically a mind-state like that of a mother towards her child, one disposed towards care and protection. Yet ‘ano has also proven useful in contexts other than describing mental states. The first verse sets out by announcing “This is what should be done” (karaṇiyam), or “what is worthy of being done” (karaṇa-araha – as the Pāli commentary explains karaṇiyam). We have rendered this in Hawaiian Eia nā ‘ano e pono ai ke hana, meaning “Here is the manner or nature that makes action worthy or necessary” (e pono ai), and also “the manner or nature by which things should be done” (e pono ai ke hana). We might translate in a more colloquial English idiom “Here is what is worth doing”, and also “Here are worthy ways of acting”. Elsewhere, in the ninth verse, we have also employed ‘ano lani to render brahma vihāra, a divine or heavenly (H: lani, P: brahma) way of abiding, in the here and now.

The fifth verse draws a contrast between beings that are seen (diṭṭhā) and also those that are unseen, (adiṭṭhā). While the Pāli adiṭṭhā means very literally “un-seen”, nonetheless in the context of the thought world that these Pāli texts inhabit, one of the primary categories this refers to is spirits (devas) and divine beings (brahmas) that are not visible to the eye. We have chosen to render this kīhēhē, which means “to be deified”, “to pass into the air and be present there”. On the other hand, the Hawaiian ‘ike lihi brings across both of these possible meanings – of the Pāli term (and Sanskrit artha) are derived from a root meaning of “what is going toward”. This is why attha is used to refer both to the dictionary meaning of a word – the meaning that the term aims at – and also to the goals of life – notably to wealth, a worldly goal, but also to what makes a life truly meaningful, spiritual goodness. While the term parama-attha is used in the sense of “the ultimate aim” in early Pāli texts, in the later tradition paramattha comes also to mean “what is ultimately real”. We have rendered the Pāli term attha-kusala in English as “one skilled in what is [truly] meaningful”, and in Hawaiian as hialoa i ka ‘ike ‘i’o “an expert in what is real”, where ‘ike means both “seeing” and “knowing”, and ‘i’o means “truly seeing”, and “seeing what is true”.

The first verse also speaks of one having understood (abhisameccha) the place or state of peace (santaṁ padaṁ), which is taken in this tradition as meaning that one has either glimpsed experientially the final spiritual goal of nibbāna or, some say, understood intellectually what that is fully enough to be inspired to work toward it. The traditional commentary offers both of these readings as possibilities. The Hawaiian ‘ike lihi brings across both of these possible meanings of the Pāli here with remarkable facility, meaning either “an experiential glimpse”, “to see or know the edges and fringes”, or “a touch of knowledge” - as in knowing that something exists even when one has yet to see it for oneself.

The Pāli compound santindriyo brings the same term for peace as above, santa, together with the term indriya, which refers to the faculties of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and also thinking. To say that one is santindriyo means that they are not constantly and greedily seeking out new sights and sounds and so on, rather their movements and manner are peaceful because they are contented with their experience as it is. It is very difficult to capture this idea in a single English term; the standard translation of “tranquil in their sense faculties” may prove more confusing than illuminating to many readers. We have chosen to translate in Hawaiian ka ‘ike me ka lono, which uses the two terms ‘ike and lono to fill out a richer range of connotations “seeing”, “sensing”, “knowing”, “hearing”, and “receiving”, and to echo the flow of the Hawaiian structure with the English rendering of “seeing and sensing”.

The Hawaiian term ‘ike also features in the translations of two related Pāli terms in the final verse. The first is diṭṭhi, “a
Pandemic Dharma

The times, they have a-changed,  
Master Shinran knew it well  
When plague and pestilence fell  
And over the land they rampaged.

We now have a new pandemic,  
A treacherous insidious virus:  
What wisdom is there to inspire us,  
At a loss under this epidemic?

Just know that Amida is caring,  
Whatever the burden, our karma;  
Revealed in the Pure Land Dharma  
Is courage we all can be sharing.

The doctors advise us, "wear face masks"  
To keep the pandemic from spreading;  
And though words of calm we are reading,  
Social distancing and masks remain our tasks.

The Buddha exhorts to show reason,  
To care for our fellow bombu;  
We must cling to what we know is true  
At the height of the pandemic season.

Remember to say His Holy Name,  
Take refuge in His Primal Vow;  
The Pure Land beckons us now -  
To teach this to us the Buddha came.

So board Amitabha's Great Ship,  
Sail across the sea of birth-and-death;  
Entrusting in Him with each breath,  
Let us chant with gratitude on every lip.

Namu Amida Butsu  
Thank You, Amida Buddha

Gassho,  
Richard St. Clair (Shaku Egen)
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(Continued from page 6)

some pithy teachings – such as is contained in this text – and often much, much more in the way of guidance, support, and mentoring over the course of many years. In Hawaiian, to noho lae‘ula is to learn from a mentor in this way. In giving voice to this Pāli text in Hawaiian and in English, we have attempted to draw on and to echo some of the cadence, the tone, and the wisdom of our own mentors.

- Puakea Nogelmeier & Jake Davis

May 2020

**M. Puakea Nogelmeier** is a Professor Emeritus at U.H. Mānoa, where he taught Hawaiian language, history, and culture for 35 years. He is also the Executive Director of Awaiaulu, training translators in the arts of accessing the historical repository of Hawaiian language.

**Jake H. Davis** has spent much of the past three decades training as a meditation practitioner, scholar, monastic, and teacher in the Theravāda Buddhist tradition of Burma, and holds a doctorate in philosophy and cognitive science.

The translators would like to express our gratitude for support from Vipassana Hawai‘i, Buddhist Study Center, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawai‘i, and Awaiaulu.
Classes that have Restarted

We are happy to announce the resumption of classes:

**ZEN MEDITATION: TUESDAYS 6:30PM**

**YOGA: WEDNESDAY 5:00 PM**

PLEASE OBSERVE SANITARY PRECAUTIONS AND PROPER SOCIAL DISTANCING AS INSTRUCTED BY YOUR INSTRUCTORS.

FACE MASKS/COVERINGS ARE REQUIRED

**CANCELED**
Here is what is worth doing
By one skilled in what is [truly] meaningful:
Having glimpsed the place of peace,
[They] should be capable, honest, and very upright,
Easy to speak to, gentle, and not thinking themselves above [others].

Contented, and easy to support,
Not too busy, and living lightly,
Tranquil in seeing and sensing, and wise,
Not too forward, nor greedy for patrons.

Whatever living creatures there are
– without exception
– trembling or steady,
Long, huge, or middle-sized,
Short, tiny, or massive,

Whether seen or unseen,
And whether living far or near,
Whether in existence or coming into being,
May all beings be in a state of ease.

Let no one deceive another,
Or think themselves above anyone anywhere;
Let no one wish suffering for any other,
out of resentment or hateful thoughts.

Just as a mother would protect her own child - her only child
- with her life,
One should cultivate such a state of mind
toward all beings without limit.

As a mother would protect her own child - her only child
- with her life,
One should cultivate such a state of mind
toward all beings without limit.

Not fixed on a view, with virtuous conduct,
Perfected through clarity of vision,
Training away the greed for pleasures,
One goes no more towards being conceived and born.

Not fixed on a view, with virtuous conduct,
Perfected through clarity of vision,
Training away the greed for pleasures,
One goes no more towards being conceived and born.