

URGENT REQUEST

Kamikawa Yoko, Minister for Foreign Affairs

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RE: USA Veterans Boycott Shinnyo-en Floating Lantern Hawai'i

April 28, 2024

Aloha Minister Kamikawa ~

We represent the interests of some 53,000+ Americans who are interned at Punchbowl National Cemetery of the Pacific. Some unfortunately are Japanese Americans. All are honorable people and heroes of the United States of America.

At this time, the Buddhist organization from Japan, Shinnyo-en, is offending the honor of these distinguished men and women. Her Holiness Shinso Ito seeks to further hopes for peace with the 2024 Lantern Floating Hawai'i event. She tramples on a sacred American memorial, as the Order uses USA Memorial Day as an opportunity to raise money and promote their message. This behavior diminishes and cheapens our national observation. Her Holiness causes great sorry and pain. We have sought compromise for five years. Shinnyo-en ignores us.

Shinnyo-en states that Shinnyo is reality, or the true nature of all things. It is the innate goodness, wisdom, and compassion inherently at the core of every living being. Shinnyo is the light that exists in all, without exception. Lantern Floating Hawai'i 2024 occurs on Memorial Day. This observance has roots to Decoration Day. Organized civilian observances are inappropriate, and such practices are not welcomed in America.

On Decoration Day, later established as Memorial Day, civilians mourned the loss of the men and women, Black and White, who died fighting to free Black slaves from captivity. Memorial Day honors the brave men and women who have sacrificed their lives in service to our country. These courageous individuals have given everything they had to defend our freedoms and way of life.

Memorial Day is not for civilians. Memorial Day asks civilians to honor those who served. Memorial Day reminds us of the high price of freedom and the debt of gratitude we owe to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. It is a day to reflect on their sacrifice and to honor their memory with gratitude.

Purpose of Shinnyo training is to develop one's ability to act with unwavering loving kindness and compassion — or the heart of a buddha. Shinnyo-en fails to achieve Buddhist enlightenment. Hosting Floating Lantern Hawai'i on Memorial Day offends and causes conflict. Shinnyo-en's behavior is not loving, kind or compassionate — and certainly not the heart of a buddha.

For five years, we have proffered a compromise. Japanese and American culture, holding hands in peace and unity, turn Memorial Day into Memorial Weekend in Hawai'i. What an example for the world. Shinnyo-en will host the civilian Floating Lantern Hawai'i on Saturday or Sunday, whichever is best for the Order. Memorial Day will remain reserved for the brave men and women who have sacrificed their lives in service to our country.

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It is of deepest importance to Veterans that we continue this special observance to reflect on the service and sacrifice of these brave men and women, while expressing our deep gratitude for their dedication and devotion to duty. Shinnyo-en obstructs and overwhelms our day and mission.

As Shinnyo-en has been unwilling or unable to understand the significance of their indiscretion, we are forced to initiate a BOYCOTT of Floating Lantern Hawai'i 2024. We do not prefer such tension and negativity. Those of us who have served in violent conflict cherish every opportunity to negotiate peaceful, harmonious resolution of differences. We believe Shinnyo-en ultimately shares similar values.

We request an immediate audience with you to request assistance reaching compromise with Shinnyo-en, as preparation is ongoing. We fully support the objectives and teachings of the Order. Our only criticism is the appropriation of this sacred American observance for Shinnyo-en fund raising and organizational promotion. This behavior is morally reprehensible on the day that Americans honor our fallen heroes.

We thank you deeply for our anticipated cooperation with our request. Please contact us at your earliest opportunity. With respect and aloha.

どうもありがとうございます

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