Proclamation

In Recognition of

150th Anniversary of the Gannenmono

WHEREAS, the first group of Japanese immigrants to Hawai‘i were referred to as gannenmono, “people of the first year,” because they came to Hawai‘i in Meiji Gannen, the first year in the reign of Emperor Meiji of Japan; and

WHEREAS, the gannenmono left Yokohama, Japan on May 17, 1868, on the Scioto with courage, determination, dreams and hopes of a better life, and their perseverance, sacrifice and hard work helped shape Hawai‘i’s diverse landscape today; and

WHEREAS, the gannenmono, which included tailors, barbers, cooks, potters, even a former samurai, were recruited to work on sugarcane plantations; and

WHEREAS, 148 gannenmono arrived in Hawai‘i on June 19, 1868, among whom were six women and two children; and

WHEREAS, the gannenmono were hired by various employers or plantation owners and dispersed throughout the Hawaiian Islands - 71 sent to Maui, 51 to Oahu, and 22 to Kaua‘i; and

WHEREAS, some gannenmono moved to the mainland after contracts ended; some returned home to Japan; and about 50 remained in the islands, choosing to start a new life, marrying Hawaiian women, learning the native language, and laying the foundation for Japanese immigrants in later years; and

WHEREAS, in 1968, many memorials were placed in the Hawaiian Islands to commemorate the centennial of the gannenmono - memorial plaques at the Honolulu International Airport, a Buddha statue at Foster Botanical Garden, a five-storied stone pagoda in Honolulu, a stone Buddha in Lahaina, stone lanterns at the Lili‘uokalani Gardens in Hilo, and the Byodo-In Temple was built in Kāne‘ohe; and

WHEREAS, the 150th commemoration is organized by Kizuna Hawai‘i, a consortium of 20 organizations, along with the Association of Nikkei & Japanese Abroad and the Consulate General of Japan in Honolulu, to celebrate and perpetuate the history of Japanese-Americans in Hawai‘i and foster friendship between Hawai‘i and Japan; and

WHEREAS, 150th commemoration events include the 59th Convention of Nikkei & Japanese Abroad, symposium, exhibits at Bishop Museum and the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai‘i, and a visit by Prince Fumihito and Princess Kiko of Japan;

THEREFORE I, DAVID Y. IGE, Governor, and I, DOUGLAS S. CHIN, Lieutenant Governor of the State of Hawai‘i, do hereby recognize 2018 as the

“150th Anniversary of the Gannenmono”

In Hawai‘i and ask the people of the Aloha State to join us in celebrating this auspicious occasion and recognizing the cultural legacy of the gannenmono, a true and compelling story of inspiration.

Done at the State Capitol, in Executive Chambers, Honolulu, State of Hawai‘i, this thirtieth day of May 2018.

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor, State of Hawai‘i

DOUGLAS S. CHIN
Lt. Governor, State of Hawai‘i