



WAIPAHU HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE  
(A Shin Buddhist Temple)

## GOLDEN CHAIN

Monthly Newsletter

**JANUARY 2022**

Building Healthy Sanghas: Connecting with Others.



### New Year's Greeting

Happy New Year, everyone! At the beginning of this New Year, I would like to extend my best regards to you all.

Over these past couple of years, we have had to adjust our lives in accordance with the scale of the spread of COVID-19. I would like to offer my deepest condolences to those who fell victim to the disease and express my sympathies to those who are undergoing treatment. I would also like to express my respect and sincere gratitude to the doctors, nurses, and frontline medical professionals who have been engaging in the treatment of infected people, as well as all essential workers who have made it possible for us to continue with our lives.

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### 2022 Bishop's New Year Message

The New Year has always been a time of hope, renewal and new beginnings. I am hopeful that the year 2022 will be brighter and happier for you and your Ohana of family and friends, and all of us! Needless to say, the Pandemic has adversely affected all of our lives in various ways including the feeling of isolation and disconnect. However, let us not despair. Please always fully understand that Amida Buddha as Namo Amida Butsu is always with us embracing us as Great Compassion. There is a Jodo Shinshu expression "Ki-Hou-Ittai no Namo Amida Butsu" or "Namo Amida Butsu of the oneness of Amida Buddha and those to be saved." For this reason, we are able to be born in the Pure Land to attain Enlightenment and, even in the here and now, we are never truly all alone!

Further, there is another dynamic in which we can appreciate the truth that we are always supported by others and thus never alone. I recall the life of an Oahu Hongwanji member who was always so grateful for the food she ate every day. She couldn't help, but place her hands together in gassho/anjali to express her appreciation and gratitude to the plants

(Continued to Page 4)



## **President's New Year's Message Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii**

**Happy New Year! Akemashite Omedetou Gozaimasu! Hauoli  
Makahiki Hou!**

I hope that you and your loved ones are healthy and in good spirits as we enter the New Year, 2022. Last year, as I wrote my message, we had reason to hope that the year 2021 would be one in which we would have control of the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, millions of people in our country (and more around the world) are still unvaccinated and therefore susceptible to SARS-CoV-2 infection. Also, the natural world is unpredictable - with new variants of the coronavirus appearing in different areas of the world. We do not know what effect the new variants will have on the COVID-19 pandemic. The good news is that the vaccines have proven to be very effective at preventing or reducing the chance of developing severe COVID-19 disease. They are also proven to be very safe in all of the trials and young children starting at the age of 5 can now be safely vaccinated. The COVID-19 situation is much better than a year ago at this time and it is very likely that it will continue to get better.

(Continued to Page 5 )



## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Evan Watarida, President of Waipahu Hongwanji**

**Akimashite Omedetou Gozaimasu!!**  
It's the start of a new year and a chance for new beginnings.

This past year has taught me hard lessons about change. It's human nature to avoid change and it's much more comfortable to want things to stay the same. But something that COVID has woke us up to, like a slap in the face, is that change is inevitable, it's constant, and to deny it just adds more suffering and stress.

Rev. Soga often mentions Shinran Shonin's lesson on the downfalls of blind passions. To me, this correlates directly with the pandemic.

We go through life running around hectic and busy but not ever feeling fulfilled. Happiness and satisfaction seem to be something outside ourselves that we are striving for. We tend to believe our happiness will be attained on achieving certain goals or attaining certain things and we chart out a path for ourselves on how it's going to happen. But how many times has it happened when the best things in our lives occurred when we least expected it and nothing like how we planned?

When we are so set and focused on a desired outcome it's like we have blinders on. We only allow things that align to our preconceptions to filter into our awareness. At the same time, we unconsciously (Continued to Page 6 )

(Monshu's Message from Page 1)

This infectious disease has not only greatly affected the life of each one of us, but also revealed many issues that had been contained in our society. Sakyamuni Buddha, who passed on the Dharma to us, made clear of the fact that we cannot see the truth because we are too attached to our own thought. Therefore, it is only natural that conflicts and divisions come about in a society in which those who, like us, fundamentally self-centered beings, act in accordance based on one's own thought.

In the following *wasan* poem, Shinran Shonin deeply reflected on himself and described what we humans are like,

Although I take refuge in the true Pure Land way,  
It is hard to have a true and sincere mind.  
This self is false and insincere;  
I completely lack a pure mind.    (*Hymns of the Dharma-ages*)

As the *wasan* shows, we are basically incapable of accepting the reality of this world, such as, dependent origination, impermanence, and no-self. And because of this we constantly suffer. Only through being aware of and appreciating Amida Buddha's compassionate and salvific working, are we enabled to accept our true self. Shinran Shonin clarified that such ignorance is the very reason why Amida Buddha's salvific working has reached every one of us. Keeping in mind that we are always embraced in Amida's compassionate Light, let us live each day to the fullest, even though we have yet to see the end of the tunnel.

I feel truly assured hearing that many of you have been making efforts to share the Jodo Shinshu teaching within the greater society through various and innovative ways despite the current situation. It is my hope that your temples will continue serving as your spiritual home, and therefore, I humbly ask for your understanding and cooperation in support of your temples. I would like to conclude my new year's greeting with my heartfelt appreciation to you all.

January 1, 2022

OHTANI Kojun  
Monshu  
Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha

Your Participation is requested for  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**  
January 16, Sunday, After the HOON KO SERVICE

(Bishop Matsumoto's Message from Page 1 )

and animals for their gift of life and all others who played a role in her receiving the precious gift of the meals she ate each day. She was aware of the so many other lives which surrounded and supported her. She had to try to live her life as best she could out of appreciation and gratitude.

However, on the plane of human social interaction, yes, COVID has severely impacted our ability to interact with each other even among family members and as a Sangha at temple. I know many of you miss so dearly being able to come to the temple, the physical symbolic home of Amida Buddha. As the situation with the Pandemic slowly improves, please consider gathering, once again, at your temple. We must still be cautious especially with the discovery of the Omicron Variant, but when the time is right, please join us at the temple both current members and newcomers. Let us reconnect and connect with each other! The Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii including your temple needs you! Please remember, there are three treasures not only two.

As we begin a new year, this would be the opportune time for us to reconnect with family and friends. Depending on the situation with the Pandemic, it might not be physically just yet, but there are other ways to connect such as writing down (or video recording) your most precious thoughts, wishes and aspirations as in a journal or as letters as did Lady Eshinni and Lady Kakushinni, and even Shinran Shonin. What is that which is most precious to you? What are the best memories you have? Why is the Teachings of the Buddha and the temple so important to you? Would it make you happy if your family becomes part of the Hongwanji Sangha?

Let us make manifest our Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Theme & Slogan for 2022 which is "Building Healthy Sanghas: Connecting with Others." Of course, this "Connecting with Others" is not limited to our close circle of family and friends, but with others around the world too. This year's Hawaii Kyodan Calendar highlights His Eminence Kojun Ohtani's "Our Pledge" which more concretely shares why and how we may connect with others. In this New Year, let me encourage you to begin reciting Gomonshu-sama's "Our Pledge" on a daily basis.

To conclude, please join me to recite Namu Amida Butsu or The Buddha's Name Which I Call (in gratitude) in response to Namu Amida Butsu or The Buddha's Name That Calls Me (to entrust). Namu Amida Butsu. Thank you and Happy New Year from Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii and the Office of the Bishop.

In gassho/anjali,

Rev. Eric Matsumoto, Bishop

**Please pick up.**

HONGWANJI CALENDAR 2022 is available at Waipahu Hongwanji.  
Please call Waipahu Hongwanji at 808677-4221 when you pick up.

(President Tamamoto's Message, from Page 2)

Our theme and slogan for 2022, **“Building Healthy Sanghas: Connecting with Others”** is particularly appropriate for 2022. Buddhism teaches that everything is interconnected. No one is completely independent of other people or the environment surrounding them. We are connected with and dependent on everything around us, for example the the air that we breathe. As we carefully re-open our temples, let's all make an extra effort to connect with our Sangha, especially those we have not seen for a year or two.

The past two years have been difficult for all of our temples. At least one temple (Papaaloa Hongwanji) will close its temple doors permanently in 2022 and consolidate with Honohina Hongwanji. The COVID-19 pandemic was not the only factor in Papaaloa Hongwanji's closure, but it certainly hastened the process. Buddhism teaches us that all things are impermanent, everything changes, and that “the root of suffering is attachment”. However, Shinran reminded us that we are all “bonbu” - foolish beings. We still have attachments. So it is still difficult for us to have many fond memories of a place and time in our past and not feel sadness that it will not be there the next time we visit. We can still be grateful that Papaaloa Hongwanji shared Buddhist values with the Hamakua community for over 100 years and during that time planted the seeds of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in many people, including this writer. Namo Amida Butsu.

As I reflect on our theme, **“Building Healthy Sanghas: Connecting with Others”**, I start with being grateful that Amida Buddha, through his Teachings, is with me and wants me to be happy. I am grateful that I was introduced to Buddhism by the good fortune of being born to a wonderful family in a little plantation town on the Hamakua Coast of the Big Island of Hawaii. Grateful that Papaaloa Hongwanji was built by the issei and nisei in spite of severe financial hardship. Grateful that Aiea Hongwanji was there for us when Claire and I were looking for a temple for our family. Grateful that I have made a connection with so many of you through our involvement in the Hawaii Sangha. Let's continue to nurture these connections.

With Gassho,

Warren Tamamoto MD  
President, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

REMINDER

**2022 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES \$300**

Please send your check PAYABLE TO :  
**Waipahu Hongwanji Mission**  
And state: membership dues for 2022

(President Watarida's Message, from Page 2)

time, we unconsciously ignore anything that doesn't relate. It's like how I don't notice how many new blue Nissan SUV's there are on the road until I own one. Now suddenly it seems they're everywhere. Where were all these Nissans before? If I begin to fathom how this happens in all situations, how much have I been missing out on life? What precious memories and relationships have I allowed to slip by without acknowledging or truly experiencing them?

To me, the blind passions that Shinran spoke of are when we are "blind" to all the wonderful things around us that we miss because we're only concerned about our ego and our own desires.

It's not to say we shouldn't strive for betterment or improvement. But we should take time to reflect and be mindful of the present moment and all the things in our life we can be grateful for.

Now with a new year upon us, let's take our "blinders" off and truly "see" all the wonderful experiences surrounding us and truly "be" with the people in our lives.

In Gassho,

## **Waipahu Hongwanji January and February Schedule Hi-lites**

**Saturday, January 1, 2022,**

**9 a.m. New Year's Day Service**

**10:30 a.m. Waianae Hongwanji New Year's Day Service**

**January 11, Tuesday, 10 a.m. Culture Class: KO (Incense)**

**Sunday, January 16, 9 a.m.**

**Shinran Shonin's Memorial Service,  
HOON KO Service**

**Sunday, January 16 After the HOON KO Service**

**GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

No Holo Holo Tour in January



## MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR 2022

**1<sup>st</sup> (2021)**  
January 22 Walter Kazunori Matsumoto

**3<sup>rd</sup> (2020)**

**7<sup>th</sup> (2016)**  
January 18 Shinji Yogi  
January 20 Denise Misae Hiraoka

**13<sup>th</sup> (2010)**

**17<sup>th</sup> (2006)**  
January 4 Sutama Shigeta  
January 18 Miyano Kono

**25<sup>th</sup> (1998)**  
January 3 Naoto Uyeno  
January 26 Takumi Kono

**33<sup>rd</sup> (1990)**  
January 26 Katsumi Fujiwara  
January 30 Yoshiyuki Tony Fukeda

**50<sup>th</sup> (1973)**  
January 11 Jingoro Tanaka  
January 12 Sumie Nakahara  
January 12 Wesley Teruo Fujioka

**1<sup>st</sup> (2021)**  
February 9 Asako Miki  
February 28 Nobuo Ishimaru

**3<sup>rd</sup> (2020)**

**7<sup>th</sup> (2016)**  
February 8 Fujie Shimizu

**13<sup>th</sup> (2010)**  
February 25 James Takeo Uyeno  
February 22 Gordon Soichi Serikaku

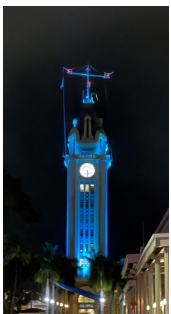
**17<sup>th</sup> (2006)**  
February 24 Thomas Toyomi Tatsutani

**25<sup>th</sup> (1998)**  
February 2 Clarence Seibin Kishaba  
February 26 Benjamin Umeo Nakamoto

**33<sup>rd</sup> (1990)**  
February 8 Kame Kamisato  
February 15 Namie Tanaka

**50<sup>th</sup> (1973)**  
February 1 Tsuru Tasato

## HAPPY NEW YEAR from Soga Family

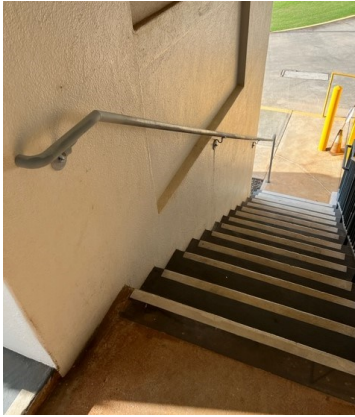


Reverend Jeff finished  
the Honolulu Marathon.





**A New Hand Rail  
is donated and installed  
by Mr. Duane Leong**



**Culture Day - O ZONI Tuesday, 12/14/2021  
Nine members attended and enjoyed OZONI**



Caren Iwata talked about her life story of her days in Honolulu at the Family Service on December 12.

**GENERAL CLEANUP on 12/19/2021, Sunday,  
Thank you for your Kokua.**





## 年頭の辞

新しい年のはじめにあたり、ご挨拶申し上げます。

昨年一昨年に引き続き、私たちの生活は新型コロナウイルス感染症（COVID-19）の流行に対応したものとなりました。ここに、新型コロナウイルス感染症によりお亡くなりになられた方々に謹んで哀悼の意を表しますとともに、罹患されている皆さまに心よりお見舞い申し上げます。また、治療・対策にあたられている医師、看護師をはじめとする医療従事者の方々、ライフラインの維持に努めておられる方々に深く敬意と感謝を表します。

この新型コロナウイルス感染症は、私たち一人一人の生活に大きな影響を与えました。それは、同時に社会の問題も浮き彫りにしています。仏教を説かれたお釈迦様は、自分自身の考えにとらわれ、真実をみることのできない私たちの姿を指摘されています。私たちが自分の思い通りに行動したら、社会の中に対立や分断を生むことになります。

親鸞聖人は、ご和讃に「浄土真宗に帰すれども 真実の心はありがたし 虚仮不実のわが身にて 清浄の心もさらになし」とうたわれました。阿弥陀さまのおはたらきによって知らされる私たちの本当の姿は、縁起や無常、無我というこの世界の真実をそのままに受け入れることができずに悩み苦しむ姿です。親鸞聖人は、そのような私たちに阿弥陀さまのおはたらきが届いていると明らかにされました。いまだに新型コロナウイルス感染症の収束が見通せない世界ですが、阿弥陀さまのおはたらきを聞き、それを依りどころとして日々の生活を過ごしてまいりましょう。

現在の厳しい状況の中でさまざまな試みを重ねながら、今までとは違った方法で浄土真宗のみ教えを広く社会へ伝える取り組みもなされていると聞き、たいへん心強く思います。これからもお寺が皆さまの心の支えとなりますよう、お寺の活動にご理解とご協力を頂きますことをお願い申し上げ、年頭のご挨拶といたします。

2022年1月1日

浄土真宗本願寺派

門主 大谷光淳

**Waipahu Hongwanji Mission**

94-821 Kuhaulua Street

Waipahu, HI 96797

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Resident Minister: Reverend Jeffrey D. Soga

Non Profit Organization

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Permit No. 5

Waipahu, Hawaii

**Address Correction Requested****CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

(with face mask)

**Every Sunday: 9 a.m. Family Service**  
All are welcome.

**Every Thursday: 8 a.m. Kokua Day**  
Your participation requested

**1st and 3rd Thursday: 12:30 p.m.**  
Karaoke Club    Everyone welcome

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**2022**  
**Happy**  
**New**  
**Year!**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

(all activities require Face mask)

**Yew Year's Day Service**  
**Saturday, January 1, 2022,**  
**9 a.m. Waipahu Hongwanji**  
**10:30 a.m. Waianae Hongwanji**

**Culture Class**  
January 11, Tuesday, 10 a.m.  
KO (Incense)

**Shinran Shonin's Memorial Service**  
**HOON KO Service**  
Sunday, January 16, 9 a.m.

**GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**  
Sunday, January 16,  
After the HOON KO Service

No Holo Holo Tour in January