



WAIPAHU HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE  
(A Shin Buddhist Temple)

## GOLDEN CHAIN

Monthly Newsletter

**JANUARY 2024**

Building Healthy Sanghas: Sharing Nembutsu Moments



### 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 the last year, innumerable people worldwide have been affected by natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, and forest fires. I was particularly shocked by the wild fires that devastated the island of Maui in the state of Hawaii. This disaster completely destroyed the temple hall of Lahaina Hongwanji Mission and one temple member was reported to have lost his life. I would like to offer my deepest condolences to all who have perished in those calamities. I would also like to express my sympathies to those who are still coping with the dire situations. It is my sincere hope that all who have been affected will soon be able to return to a normal daily life.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine that began in February 2022 is still continuing. Not only that, conflict between Israel and Palestine has once again flared up from October 2023, embroiling nations concerned with victimizing a large number of people many of whom are civilians. Looking at the appalling state of the world, the following words of Sakyamuni Buddha come to mind. "Everyone fears violence and is scared of death. In consideration of all life, do not kill and do not make others kill."

Every one of us who has received life as a human being, no matter the reason, must be ensured equally of human rights, and no one's life should be threatened. In reality, however, conflicts and terrorist attacks have occurred everywhere in the world and for many people, their right to live and exist has been threatened. As Buddhists who aspire for peace, we must keep Sakyamuni Buddha's words seriously in our hearts and pursue our endeavor of contributing toward world peace and security.

During the last year, we observed the Joint Celebration of the 850th Anniversary of Shinran Shonin's Birth and the 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Jodo Shinshu Teaching at Hongwanji, Kyoto for a total of 30 days, divided into 5 sessions during the period from March 29 to May 21. On this occasion, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to those who came to Japan to attend, as well as those who supported it in various ways. This celebratory event could be realized only because our predecessors have cherished the Jodo Shinshu teaching as their spiritual foundation for many years no matter when or where they were, and carefully transmitted it to us today.

Let us, too, continue listening to the teaching as the center of our life while cherishing each day.

January 1, 2024

OHTANI Kojun, Monshu  
Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha

## Bishop's Message



To welcome the New Year, I would like to extend my heartfelt greetings to you all. On behalf of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to all of you for your support, dedication, and participation in our services and activities.

Since I took the Headquarters Office as the new Bishop last July, I have been able to visit some of your temples. I bow my head to the ministers, temple leaders, and temple members for their tireless effort in protecting their temples and sharing with others the joy of Namo Amida Butsu. Each temple has its challenges and opportunities. As a community of people joined together revering the teaching of Shinran Shonin, let us work toward the realization of a society in which everyone can live a life of spiritual fulfillment.

This year, the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii will observe the Triple Celebration at Ala Moana Hotel on September 7-8, 2024. The Triple Celebration commemorates the 850<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Birth of Shinran Shonin, the 800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Establishment of the Jodo Shinshu Teachings, and the 135<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii. The Steering Committee is working hard towards the two-day celebration event and its related programs. I would like to invite you all to attend this auspicious anniversary.

(Continued to Page 3)

## President's New Year's Message for 2024 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, 2024. The year 2023 was an eventful one. Many of our Sangha were able to attend the Joint Celebration (Commemoration of the 850<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Shinran Shonin's Birth and the 800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Establishment of the Jodo Shinshu Teaching) at our Honzan in Kyoto on May 10, 2023. The Joint Celebration program was well organized and meaningful. The 17th World Buddhist Women's Convention (WBWC) followed on May 11 and 12 at the modern (although 50 years old) Kyoto International Conference Center. These two events were a highlight of the year for those who were able to attend. I will always remember the warm welcome that we received from our hosts at the Honzan and at the World Buddhist Women's Convention.

Soon after our return from Japan, we said "Mahalo and Aloha" to outgoing Bishop, Rev. Eric Matsumoto, Mrs. Tamayo Matsumoto, Chika and Caden at a luncheon in July. In August we warmly greeted incoming Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani, Mrs. Yoshiko Umitani, and daughters Naho and Riho at a luncheon.

(Continued to Page 3)

(Bishop's Message from Page 2)

Our Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Theme and Slogan for 2024 is **“Building Healthy Sanghas: Sharing Nembutsu Moments.”** What are the “Nembutsu Moments”? These are the moments when the voice of the Nembutsu, “Namo Amida Butsu,” spontaneously flows from our lips.

The main body of *the Sutra on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life* explains the Forty-eight Vows of Amida Buddha, who undertook to establish a Pure Land for the enlightenment of all sentient beings. Shinran Shonin regarded that our act of saying “Namo Amida Butsu” is derived wholly from the working of Amida’s Vow. It means that the sound of “Namo Amida Butsu,” the promise Amida Buddha made to embrace and never abandon all beings, is already fulfilled and extended to all beings. It is the calling voice from the Buddha of Immeasurable Light and Life that holds the Buddha’s boundless empathy, concern, and compassion toward all beings. Such a message of universal compassion reaches into our hearts and minds, and flows from our lips spontaneously as “Namo Amida Butsu.”

What we experience in our daily lives could be the opportunities to ascertain and appreciate the truth of Boundless Wisdom and Compassion that embraces our lives. Let us experience, savor, appreciate, and share the Nembutsu moments with our families and friends in our daily lives.

May the sound of the Nembutsu flow from our lips. May the Wisdom and Compassion of Amida Buddha inspire and guide us always. Namo Amida Butsu.

Rev. Toshiyuki Umitani, Bishop  
Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

(President's Message, from Page 2)

Then, the disastrous Maui Wildfires of August 8, 2023 destroyed the historic town of Lahaina. Our Lahaina Hongwanji Mission, located near the center of the town was not spared. The temple, social hall, and minister’s residence burned to the ground. Only the columbarium appears to have survived the fire. Fortunately, Rev. Ai Hironaka and family along with many other temple members evacuated in time. However, we have learned that one temple member lost his life in that fire. It appears that 2023 will be remembered as the year of the Maui Wildfires and the year that Lahaina Hongwanji was lost to the fire. This was a great loss for Lahaina town and the entire Hawaii Sangha.

However, this was not the end of the story. Community, state and federal agencies rushed into action and are still on the ground in Maui, planning for the future of Lahaina town and helping those displaced by the fire. Maui temple ministers and Sangha have warmly supported Lahaina members displaced by the fire. The Hongwanji community statewide, nationally and internationally has responded with compassionate action in the form of postcards, letters, gifts and generous monetary donations. Like the recent “disaster” that affected us, the COVID-19 pandemic, we learned that we are adaptable and we are resilient. The Lahaina community, and Lahaina Hongwanji Sangha in particular, I believe will respond with grit and determination.

Our theme and slogan for 2024 is ***“Building Healthy Sanghas: Sharing Nembutsu Moments”***. We live with joy and gratitude for Amida’s universal and unconditional compassion for us. Since we are connected with and care for the people around us, we *share our Nembutsu moments*, so that others may awaken to, and appreciate the Buddha’s limitless Compassion. In this way, we can each contribute to *building healthy Sanghas*.

With Gassho,

Warren Tamamoto  
President, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

## 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。

昨年も世界各地で地震・洪水・山火事など様々な災害が起こり、多くの方が被災されました。特にハワイ・マウイ島における山火事ではラハイナ本願寺の本堂が全焼し、メンバーの方々の被害も報告されています。ここに災害によってお亡くなりになられたすべての方々に謹んで哀悼の意を表しますとともに、被災された皆さまに心よりお見舞い申し上げます。皆さまが一日も早く、日常の生活を取り戻されますことを願っております。

また、2022年2月に始まったロシア連邦によるウクライナ侵攻はいまだに続いており、2023年10月以来、イスラエルとパレスチナの武力衝突では関係国を巻き込んで、民間人を含む多くの犠牲者が出ています。私がいま思い起こしますのは、「すべての者は暴力におびえ、すべての者は死をおそれる。己が身にひきくらべて、殺してはならぬ。殺さしめてはならぬ。」（『ダンマパダ』第129偈）というお釈迦様のお言葉です。

この世に生を受けた私たちは、いかなる理由があろうとも等しく人権が保障され、命が脅かされるようなことがあってはなりません。しかし、現実には世界各地で紛争やテロが勃発し、生存の権利が脅かされている人々が数多くおられます。平和主義を掲げる仏教徒である私たちは、お釈迦様のお言葉を深く心に刻み、国際社会の平和と安全に大きく貢献することが求められています。

さて、去年は本願寺において3月29日より5月21日までの5期30日間にわたり、「親鸞聖人御誕生850年立教開宗800年慶讃法要」をお勤めいたしました。ご参拝くださいました皆さま、お力添えを賜りました皆さまに心より感謝申し上げます。私たちが立教開宗800年の慶讃法要をお勤めできましたことは、時代や場所を超えて多くの先人の方々が、浄土真宗のみ教えを生きる支えとして、今日まで大切に受け継いでこられたからに他なりません。

これからもみ教えを聞き、それを支えとして、一日一日を大切に過ごしてまいりましょう。

2024年1月1日

浄土真宗本願寺派  
門主 大谷光淳



## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

### **Evan Watarida, President of Waipahu Hongwanji**

Dear Waipahu Hongwanji Sangha,

Aloha means both hello and goodbye. So, for this month's newsletter, I say Aloha to 2023 and Aloha to 2024. Just like the never-ending cycle of cause and condition, each ending is simply the start of something new.

Looking back on 2023, I am grateful for our wonderful temple family. We were finally able to have a full year of normal in-person events. We had a successful Bon Dance with a huge turnout of support and attendees. We were able to hold all our special services and have fellowship with our friends at other temples. In May, many Waipahu members were able to visit the Honzan in Kyoto for the joint anniversary of Jodo Shinshu religion and Shinran Shonin's birth. In August, we welcomed Rev. Jay Okamoto and son Issei who came for a visit. In November, we had the honor of hosting our newly inducted Bishop Umitani for our Eitaikyo service.

Unfortunately, in 2023, we also experienced tragedy with the loss of Lahaina Hongwanji to the Maui wildfires. Although the structure is gone, there was a tremendous outpouring of generosity and support. Honpa has already received almost \$1 million for the Maui Wildfire Relief fund. That is in addition to other aid support and insurance that is expected. The Lahaina members and community have said they are committed to rebuilding stronger, and it is the Lahaina members that will dictate how that will look like.

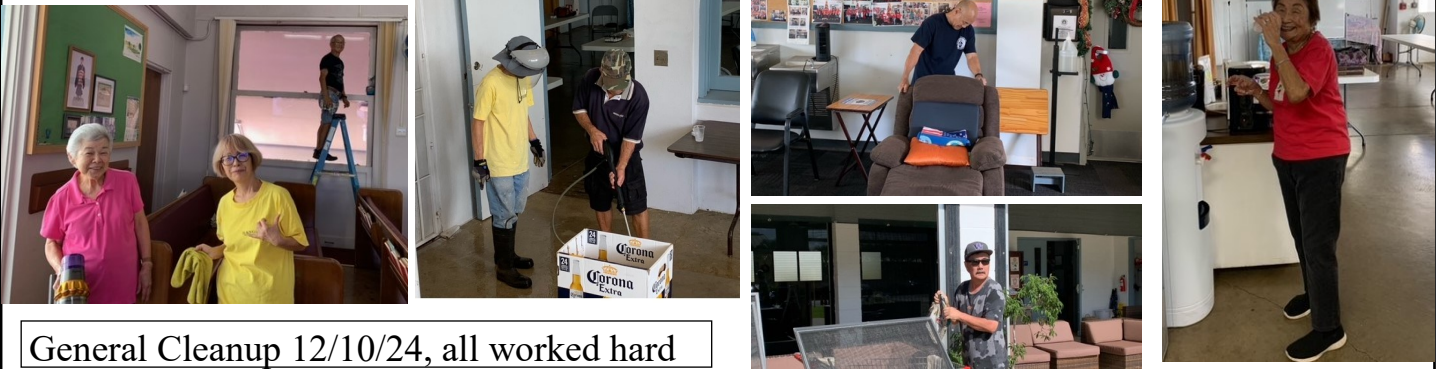
As we get ready for 2024, we want to continue the momentum we've started after the pandemic years. We wish to have more activities for members and their families so we can grow in numbers and excitement. We want to have better relationships with our community partners outside the temple. We want to continue finding ways to invite the community to learn about us and nurture opportunities to make the most use of our facilities. Examples are having Waipahu School for Adults, Leeward Judo Club, and Project Dana using our spaces. We are also looking to have more fundraisers this year with the help of the BWA. But we can't do it all without the help of volunteers. Please look out for upcoming activities and lend support when you can.

Our Waipahu New Year's party is scheduled for Sunday Jan. 14 in the social hall. Contact the temple or Rev. Soga to RSVP. Cost will be \$10 per person. Cash donations and donations for bingo prizes are requested. If you have extra gift cards from Christmas, those would make great prizes.

Thank you to all our members for your support of the temple and the dharma. It was a busy, eventful, and "fast moving" year. I look forward to seeing more of you all in 2024.

In Gassho,

**WAIPAHU HONGWANJI NEWS**



**General Cleanup 12/10/24, all worked hard**



**BWA HOON KO 12/17/24, Guest Speaker: Ms. Aryn Ishikawa**



**Year End BWA Visitation: Reverend and Mrs. Soga visited BWA members in the month of December. From left: Helene Tanimoto, Sachi Kaneshiro (we saw her husband, Thomas), Kimi Koizumi, Tsunako Sakata, Pggly Tsukida and Janet Yoshida**

## WAIPAHU HONGWANJI NEWS

# NEW YEAR PARTY 2024!

Sunday, January 14, 2024, 9 a.m.

(Main Temple) Sunday Service/General Membership Meeting/Installation Ceremony  
9 a.m. For 2024 - 2025 Officers.

(Social Hall) Happy Hour, Lunch, Entertainment, Door  
Prizes, Clean up

There will be special entertainment, door prizes, so let's celebrate the brand new year with all Waipahu Hongwanji members and friends.

**Lunch Cost: \$10/adult, free/children**  
Door prizes donations are appreciated.  
Please call Waipahu Hongwanji at  
(808) 677-4221 to sign up by **January 7, 2024.**



## MINI BAZAAR

Waipahu Hongwanji is collecting donations in **GOOD CONDITION** starting January 15 thru March 9.

## Waipahu Hongwanji B.W.A. (Fujinkai) NEWS

### 2024 B.W.A. GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING And luncheon

Date: January 27, Saturday, 2024                      Time: 11:00 a.m.  
Place: Waipahu Hongwanji social hall                      Deadline: January 14, Sunday

### *Special donation for our 2023 B.W.A Hoon ko service.*

*Thank you for your generous donations.*

Adrienne Ayakawa, M/M Henry Funasaki, Daniel Hanaoka, M/M Stephon Honda, Janet Kaya, M/M Tomas Kaneshiro, M/M Richard Kodama, Kimi Koizumi, Gary Maeda, M/M Makoto Matsushige, Flora & Lionel Minemoto, Masumi Murakami, Fumiko Nii, Lori Noborikawa, Jenny Nomura, Lisa Okada, Edna Otsuka, Jan Ro, Tsunako Sakata, George Sawa, Annette Sekine, Thomas Sekine, Kumika Soga, George Sugawara, M/M Calvin Sumida, Jane Tanaka, M/M Victor Tanimoto, Lilly Tokuhara, Robert Tsumoto, Ellen Ujimori, M/M Masao Uyeda, M/M Kuniomi Uyehara, Francis Uyeno, Evan Watarida, Helen Yonashiro, Janet Yoshida,

**2024 HONGWANJI CALENDAR** is available at Waipahu Hongwanji office, please pick up as soon as possible. Please call Reverend Soga at (808) 677-4221 when you can come.

## SPECIAL DONATION

Gail Fujimoto ... \$200  
In memory of Roy Mitsuo Fujimoto

Gail Fujimoto ... \$200  
Special

Milton Fujioka ... \$1,000  
by HECO Kokua Community Award

Shari & Shane Henderson ... \$300  
Special

Mikio Kawamura ... \$50  
Visitation

Wilfred & Mae Matsushige ... \$100  
In memory of Linda Momohara

Mona Miyamura ... \$100  
In memory of Leatrice Oshiro

Fammily of late Henry Oshiro ... \$150  
In memory of Henry Oshiro

Masako Sakata ... \$50  
Visitation

Tsunako Sakata ... \$50  
Use of conference hall

Edward Santos ... \$200  
Funeral for Vanassa Tanouye

Takara family ... \$100  
In memory of Michiko Takara

Oahu United Jr. YBA ... \$100  
Use of Social Hall

Peggy Tsukida  
New Year Donation... \$100  
Adult Day Care Center ... \$500

Francis Uyeno ... \$500  
Maintenance Fund

Yamaguchi Family ... \$500  
Funeral for Satsue Yamaguchi

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### Membership 2023

**2023:** Gertrude Takemoto, Barbara Torricer

**2024:** Gail Fujimoto, Carol and Andrew Miyasato, M/M Terumi Muraoka, Lisa Okada,  
Lily Tokuhara, M/M Kuniomi Uehara

**EITAIKYO:** Adrienne & Ellen Ayakawa, Thomas Kaneshiro, Wilfred & Mae Matsushige,  
Janet Yoshida

**SOCIAL CONCERNS:** Adrienne & Ellen Ayakawa, Thomas Kaneshiro, Wilfred & Mae  
Matsushige, Harriet Sugimoto, Janet Yoshida

**HAPPY NEW YEAR and Best Wishes for 2024!**  
**From**  
**Reverend Jeffrey and Kumika Soga and family**

## MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR 2024

### JANUARY 2024

**1<sup>st</sup> (2023)**

January 14 Kimiko Kamisato  
January 31 Leroy David Braden

**3<sup>rd</sup> (2022)**

January 13 Jon Satoshi Tokuhara

**7<sup>th</sup> (2018)**

January 2 Mitsue Annie Iwane  
January 14 Kazuto Sugimoto

**13<sup>th</sup> (2012)**

January 14 Isami Inoshita

**17<sup>th</sup> (2008)**

January 8 Mabel Chiyomi Maeda

**25<sup>th</sup> (2000)**

January 17 Umeyo Masuoka

**33<sup>rd</sup> (1992)**

January 5 Matsuko Takeuchi

**50<sup>th</sup> (1975)**

January 23 Masao Sasaki

### FEBRUARY

**1<sup>st</sup> (2023)**

February 7 Setsuko Uyeno  
February 12 Gene Hisami Inoshita  
February 15 Toshiyuki Roy Tanamachi

**3<sup>rd</sup> (2022)**

February 3 Emiko Serikaku  
February 9 Susumu Fujita  
February 13 Takeo Tanouye  
February 21 Michael Michio Nagaji

**7<sup>th</sup> (2018)**

February 20 Shigeo Higa  
February 25 Matsuko Matsui

**13<sup>th</sup> (2012)**

February 22 Kimie Nellie Tatsutani

**17<sup>th</sup> (2008)**

February 11 Masako Miyakaku  
February 18 Gladys Haruko Hanaoka

**25<sup>th</sup> (2000)**

February 8 Tokuichi Tamura  
February 19 Koiso Tamura  
February 22 Masayuki Takemoto

**33<sup>rd</sup> (1992)**

February 3 Hiroshi Yonashiro  
February 19 Haruji Shinno  
February 25 Yoshio Inoshita

**50<sup>th</sup> (1975)**

February 21 Kamada Nakamura

### REMINDER

## 2024 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES \$300

Please send your check PAYABLE TO :

**Waipahu Hongwanji Mission**  
**94-821 Kuhaulua St., Waipahu, HI 96797**

Now is the season when members are sending new year's dues. So please make sure that you indicate whether you are paying the membership dues of 2023 or 2024.

**Waipahu Hongwanji Mission**

94-821 Kuhaulua Street  
Waipahu, HI 96797  
Phone: 808 677-4221  
E-mail: waipahuhongwanji@hawaii.rr.com  
Resident Minister: Reverend Jeffrey D. Soga

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**JANUARY 2024**

**Address Correction Requested**

**Condolence**

Waipahu Hongwanji extends deepest sympathy to the families of:

Satsue Yamaguchi  
Vanessa Tanouye  
Clarence Otsuka

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

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

**Every Thursday:** 9 a.m. Kokua Day

**Every Saturday, 8:30 a.m. Hosha Day**

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

**2nd Saturday: 9:30 a.m.**  
Project Dana, Caregiver Support Program.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**NEW YEAR’S EVE SERVICE:**  
December 31, 2023, Sunday, 10 a.m.

**NEW YEAR’S DAY SERVICE:**  
January 1, 2024, 9 a.m.

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**HOON KO (Shinran Shonin’s Memorial)**  
Service

**January 21, 2024, 9 a.m.**

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**Project Dana**  
**Care Giver Support Program**

Saturday, January 13, 2023  
9:30 a.m.—11:30 a.m.

At Waipahu Hongwanji Social Hall  
In person and Zoom,  
Please call Reverend Jeff if you can attend.