



WAIPAHU HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE
(A Shin Buddhist Temple)

GOLDEN CHAIN

Monthly Newsletter

JANUARY 2025

Nurturing Nembutsu: Cultivating Awareness



New Year's Greeting

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

As in previous years, many people throughout the world have been affected by natural disasters, including earthquakes, floods, and forest fires. 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 normalcy.

In addition to the continuing Russian invasion of Ukraine that began in February 2022, armed conflict in the Middle East since October 2023 has intensified, putting a toll on civilians. As Buddhists, let us embrace the words of Sakyamuni Buddha that "Everyone fears violence and is scared of death. In consideration of all life, do not kill and do not make others kill."

We, as human beings who have received life in this world, shall have our human rights equally guaranteed regardless of reason, and must never have our lives threatened. However in reality, 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 as well as Nembutsu followers who aspire to achieve peace, we must keep seriously in our hearts the words of Sakyamuni Buddha as well as Shinran Shonin who aspired for a peaceful world in pursuing our endeavor of contributing toward world peace and security.

Through the Jodo Shinshu teaching, we are guided to appreciate Amida Buddha's working that enables us to become aware of our true self. Being caught up in our self-centered thinking and desires, we are unable to accept the Universal Truth of dependent origination and impermanence, and that is why we constantly suffer from our human desires.

Unable to leave us in such a state, Amida Buddha continuously works to lead us to the Dharma. By regarding each individual as a fellow traveler following the same path being guided and embraced by Amida Buddha, we are enabled to respect and help each other while courageously coping with difficult social issues. Let us continue listening and appreciating Amida Buddha's working as Buddhist followers while cherishing each and every day.

January 1, 2025

OHTANI Kojun
Monshu
Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha



**2025 New Year's Message:
"Nurturing Nembutsu, Cultivating Awareness"**

Rev. Toshiyuki Umitani, Bishop
Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

As we stand at the threshold of 2025, I am filled with profound gratitude for the Sangha of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii and the spiritual journey we continue to share. The theme for this year, "Nurturing Nembutsu: Cultivating Awareness," reflects not only our collective aspiration but also our personal commitment to deepening our connection with Amida Buddha and fostering a more profound awareness in every aspect of our lives.

The Nembutsu, "Namo Amida Butsu," is much more than a simple recitation. It is the living embodiment of Amida Buddha's all-embracing Compassion, a compassion that transcends all boundaries we create. No one is left behind. No one is excluded from Amida Buddha's deepest aspiration to save all beings. In this truth, we find solace and strength, knowing that no matter our imperfections or struggles, we are always embraced by the boundless Wisdom and Compassion of Amida Buddha.

I, too, wrestle with my limitations—foolishness, selfishness, ignorance, and the tendency to judge or discriminate against others. These failings often cloud my perspective, narrowing my view of the world and of others. Yet, despite these limitations, I am continually reminded

(Continued to Page 5)



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

Warren Tamamoto MD
President, 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 look forward to the New Year, 2025!

As we enter the new year, it is natural to look back at the past year. As I look back at the year 2024, I have many warm and happy memories of family and friends. Wonderful family trips to the mainland USA and Japan. An "epic" hiking trip to Korea. Quiet reflection during temple service on Sunday mornings followed by fellowship and delicious lunches! And for myself, one of the highlights of the year was the memorable weekend we spent at the Triple Celebration (850th/800th/135th) in September, held at the Ala Moana Hotel. There were sad occasions as well, with loss of family and close friends. Reliving memories from the past year, I feel fortunate and I am so grateful for all of the events of the past year. *Ichigo ichie*. I hope that you feel the same way.

Looking forward to the New Year, I do not know what the future holds for us - as individuals, as a community and as a Buddhist organization. Just think, five years ago no one thought that we would need to survive a pandemic or experience a Maui wildfire. (Continued to Page 5)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
Evan Watarida, President of Waipahu Hongwanji



Dear Waipahu Hongwanji Sangha,

Akemashite Omedetou Gozaimasu! Welcome to 2025! Another year is in the rear-view mirror and a new year awaits us with uncertainty but also hope, excitement, and opportunity.

Lots of us look at the new year transition as an opportunity to reflect on the past and have a fresh start into the new year. Many people make new year resolutions for themselves. But does setting new year goals align with dharma practice? Personally, I try to set goals for myself and if you're anything like me, it'll only be a few weeks and I'll already make an excuse like, "I know I'm getting older and more overweight, but the dharma teaches that change is inevitable so I should just learn to accept it and be content with being this way". But then I relent that this is just a cop out. Because I truly believe Buddhism teaches us that we should be constantly improving our physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.

On the other hand, I could go to the other extreme and be strict on myself and try to be disciplined until I achieve my goals. Which I already know will cause more stress and disappointment when I fall short of what I set out to do. So maybe there's a middle path that's better?

Recently, I was reading a dharma article that said, instead of making a resolution for an outcome, we should mindfully reflect on that resolution and uncover what is our intention. For example, if my resolution is to lose weight, what is my underlying intention? Maybe I really want to feel better about the way I view myself or to maintain better energy so I may enjoy a longer life with my family. If my resolution is to make more money. Maybe my true intention is to feel less insecure about my financial future or to be more at peace with what I have and my present situation.

So, yes, making resolutions is dharma-centric especially if we are mindful of our intentions and uncover what is the void we are seeking to fill. Then our goals will become less materialistic and "surfacy". There will be deeper meaning behind our desires and our actions. And the dharma will now have an integral role in our personal growth. Now suddenly, I'm not just exercising for better abs. I'm striving to attain mental and physical balance with a sense of inner peace. Now our outcomes will be much more long-lasting and transformational and the journey to get there will be fulfilling.

I wish to thank the temple members and adult day care clients and staff for their donations to the Oahu District Jr. YBA Toys for Tots campaign. We filled two boxes with new toys that will go to families in need. And thank you to those that came out for mochi making.

I look forward to seeing you at the New Years' Party on Sunday February 23. There will be good food, a great variety of entertainment, and a chance to fellowship and enjoy with the temple sangha. I also hope to also see you at our many events this year and please take advantage of opportunities to explore the dharma teachings this year.

In Gassho,

WAIPAHU HONGWANJI NEWS



BWA HO ON KO (Founder's Memorial Service) was held on December 15. Left photo: BWA members and friends line up with guest speaker. Right: Special Guest Speaker, Mrs. Irene Nakamoto, retired minister. She was also a teacher of August Ahrens Elementary School and retired as Principal of Ewa Elementary School.

HO ON KO Service

Annual Memorial Service for Shinran Shonin, founder of Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji
All are invited.

Date: January 19, 2025, Sunday
Time: 9 a.m.

Special Guest Speaker:
Reverend Masanari Yamagishi,
Waimea Hongwanji



From Soga Family,
Happy New Year!

Soga family received new family last year.

Sage Tatsuya Ojiri was born 8/2024.
Father: Ren & Mother: Michelle

Celine Mika Marzi was born 12/2024.
Father: Tony & Mother: Maitri

Jeffrey and Kirana could finish Honolulu Marathon.



The big boxes of "Toys for Tots" which were full of toys, were picked up by Oahu United Jr. YBA, and taken to Aiea Hongwanji where they collected and picked by Marine Corp on Sunday, 12/15.

Thank you all who brought your kind thoughts with new toys to support the program.

Also, special thank to Oahu United Jr. YBA support the program of US Marine Corp.

Photo left: Diandra Thomson, Jr. YBA member



BWA (Buddhist Women's Association) News:

Please mark your calendar:

- 1/7/2025 Visitation for honorary members (leaving temple 9 a.m.)
 - 1/25/2025 General Membership meeting and luncheon (10:30 a.m.)
 - 2/16/2025 Oahu United BWA Meeting at Waipahu Hongwanji (1 p.m.)
- 2025 Membership dues is \$15.

Pease make your check payable to: **Waipahu Hongwanji BWA**

A Waipahu Hongwanji member's requests:

"Eight plots for sale Mililani Memorial Park. Prime location, close to entrance. Discount for multiple. Please call Waipahu Hongwanji (808) 677-4221 if you're interested.

(From Page 2. New Year Message, Bishop Umitani)

that Amida's Compassion does not waver. The Nembutsu is my anchor, a reminder that I am welcomed just as I am into the warmth of Amida Buddha's embrace. My heart and mind are nurtured in this space, and in turn, my Nembutsu becomes a living expression of joy, gratitude, and humility for the life I live within this Compassion.

As we are nurtured by Amida's Compassionate voice, we are also called to cultivate awareness. This awareness is not merely intellectual or passive; it is a dynamic and active practice that calls us to wake up to the reality of our interconnectedness. It invites us to see the world with clearer eyes, to recognize the oneness of all life, and to develop a deeper understanding of the truths that shape our existence.

In today's world, where distractions and self-centeredness abound, cultivating awareness becomes even more crucial. It helps us move beyond the narrow confines of our personal concerns, allowing us to see the interdependence of all beings. It teaches us to live more mindfully, to understand the suffering of others, and to act with greater compassion. The gift of the Nembutsu is this awareness—an invitation to step forward, to embrace others with open hearts, and to recognize that we are all held within the same Compassionate Light.

Let us renew our commitment to live a life of Nembutsu. Let us nurture our hearts and minds by participating in temple services and activities, deepening our relationships with the Sangha, and listening to the Dharma. In doing so, we not only deepen our appreciation of the Nembutsu but also cultivate an awareness that allows us to live more fully and purposefully.

As we step forward into 2025, let us move together with hearts full of joy and gratitude infused with awareness. Let us share the joy of Nembutsu with everyone we encounter, and through our mindful living, let us help to build a world that is more compassionate, more aware, and more connected.

I wish each and every one of you a joyful and peaceful New Year. May the light of Amida Buddha continue to shine upon us and guide us always.

Namo Amida Butsu.

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(From Page 2, New Year Message, President Tamamoto)

However, in the face of hardship, we persevered. We met the challenges placed before us by caring for each other and by working together. I believe we are stronger as a Buddhist organization because of how we, each one of us, responded to adversity.

Our five year theme which begins in 2025, "***Nurturing Nembutsu***" reminds us that the Nembutsu is the "core" of our existence. The Nembutsu, expressed as "*Namo Amida Butsu*" is our expression of gratitude in awareness of Amida's Compassion. Nembutsu is not just our gratitude, it is our response to Amida's voice which is calling out to each one of us. "Nurturing Nembutsu" reminds us that we nurture the Nembutsu when we share it with others, and in turn we are nurtured by Amida's love for us. Let us be mindful of the all-embracing Amida and continue on this journey together.

*"Happiness does not depend on what you have or who you are;
it solely relies on what you think." - Buddha*

With Gassho,

SPECIAL DONATION

Judith Hayashida ... \$590.15
In memory of Francis Yoshida

Carol Nezu ... \$100
In memory of Thomas Miyakado

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

Toma Family ... \$200
In memory of Shigeo Toma

Charijean Watanabe ... \$500
Special

Miyamoto family ... \$100
In memory of Mr. and Mrs. Miyamoto

Kirana Soga ... \$800
For residence Refrigerator

Doreen Tanoue ... \$200
Pre Cremation Service for Yukiko Nakamura

Peggy Tsukida ... \$100
In memory of Masao Tsukida

BUILDING MAINTENANCE FUND: Francis Uyeno ... \$1,000

ETAIKYO:

Adrienne & Ellen Ayakawa, Gary Maeda, Wilfred & Mae Matsushige, Flora & Lionel Minemoto, Fumiko & Stephen Nii, Lori Noborikawa, Jenny Nomura, Lisa Okada, Tsunako Sakata, George Sawa, Wilma & Calvin Sumida, Gail Tagashira, Ellen Ujimori, Guy & Cindy Ujimori, Craig & Megumi Uyeno, Helen Yonashiro & Lynn Fujikawa, Janet Yoshida

SOCIAL CONCERNS: Frances Matsumoto, Wilma & Calvin Sumida

HOONKO: Gail Tagashira

OBON: Roy & Dorothy Hirata

BWA Hoonko Donation:

Henry Funasaki, Kuniomi Uehara, Daniel Hanaoka, Roy Hirata, Thomas Sekine, Adrienne Arakawa, Masao Uyeda, Margy Kodama, Yoshito Kamikawa, Francis Uyeno, Robert Tsumoto, Thomas Kaneshiro, Janet Yoshida, Tsunako Sakata, Lisa Okada, Lilly Tokuhara, Jenny Nomura, Flora Minemoto, Lori Noborikawa, Mae Matsushige, Wilma Sumida, Jane Shigeta, Sueko Kodama, Beatrice Sonoda, Ellen Ujimori, Janet Kaya, Kumika Soga

Project Dana Caregiver Support Program

Wednesday, January 8, 2025, 10:00 am to 11:30 am

Topic: Understanding Medicare Enrollment Periods

Speaker: Elliott Khlopin, Thanh Tran, and

Martha Khlopin - Get2insurance.com

Location: Zoom and Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin
(1727 Pali Highway, Honolulu, HI 96813)



Saturday, January 11, 2025, 10:00 am to 11:30 am

Topic: The Truth About Long-Term Care: Why it's the Most Critical Decision
You'll Ever Make

Speaker: Roger Higa, Hawai'i Long-Term Care Solutions President/CEO

Location: Zoom and Waipahu Hongwanji Buddhist Temple
(94-821 Kuhaulua Street, Waipahu, HI 96797)

Please call or email if you are interested in attending or need more information:
Maria Morales, Program Coordinator, (808) 945-3736, cgs@projectdana.org

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR 2025

1st (2024)

January 7 Daryl Hatsuo Valdez
 January 7 Jane Yasuko Tanaka
 January 9 Nancy Natsue Miyashita
 January 27 Pamela Mari Umemoto

3rd (2023)

January 14 Kimiko Kamisato
 January 31 Leroy David Braden

7th (2019)

January 12 Ross Haruo Yoshimura

13th (2013)

January 21 Tomiyo Fujiwara
 January 26 Harriet Yaeko Kusunoki

17th (2009)

January 28 Kuniko Tsujimoto
 January 28 Kiyoko Fujimoto

25th (2001)

January 3 Francis Mitsuo Mise
 January 5 Kumiko M Kodama
 January 26 Rachel Yasue Yasui

33rd (1993)

January 11 Stanley Susumu Abe

50th (1976)

January 3 Kamado Oshiro
 January 18 Shoichi Sanada

1 (2024)

February 8 Sumiko Hoshiyama Ando
 February 16 Stephen Hiroshi Nii

3 (2023)

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

7th (2019)

February 7 Ernest Yoshio Sugita
 February 11 Yoshio Asato

13th (2013)

February 19 Kiyo Matsumoto
 February 21 Katsuma Tanaka
 February 22 Haruko Kunishige

17th (2009)

February 13 Fusayo Inoshita
 February 22 Kiku Nakamoto

25th (2001)

February 13 Masato Yamamoto
 February 20 Shizuko Bryan

33th (1993)

February 10 George Kiyoshi Nobunaga
 February 11 Sagami Shinozawa
 February 27 Ryoto Yasui

50th (1976)

none

Please "Kokua"

Although, the Waipahu Hongwanji Mission was established in 1902, the current temple building and its supporting infrastructure was constructed in 1952. As you can imagine, being over 70 years old, upkeep of the temple is a constant and never-ending endeavor.

To help accomplish this monumental task, a small group of volunteers, referred to as the "Kokua Gang", meet almost every Thursday to perform maintenance and repairs on whatever needs fixing at the time. Although, this group of volunteers have been able to perform these tasks up to now, the lack of younger, abled bodied members are rare, if not non-existent. This may soon require us to contract out some of the work, which will also require a lot of money. Therefore, we would prefer to avoid having to get to that point.

Therefore, we would like to ask anyone that is willing and able to join our Kokua Gang, to come out and lend a helping hand. As mentioned earlier, the Kokua Gang meets on Thursday mornings, usually around 8:30 - 9:00 a.m. and works until around noon, at which time, we normally enjoy a small lunch and talk story.

So, if you are sitting at home and have some free time or just want to lend a helping hand to maintain our wonderful temple, feel free to come by and join our Kokua Gang. Mahalo!

2025 NEW YEAR'S PARTY

(Shinnen Enkai)

*The Waipahu Hongwanji Mission will be having its annual New Year's party on Sunday, February 23, 2025. There will be lots of entertainment, oho food, door prizes, and much more! Everyone is welcome to join us! *** Monetary or Gift Card donations are most certainly welcomed.*

You can either come down to the church to sign up or call Reverend Soga at 808-677-4221. Have a safe and healthy New Year and we hope to see you all there!

Where: Waipahu Hongwanji Mission social hall
Time: 10:00 a.m. - General Membership meeting and Installation of Officers in Hondo
10:30 a.m. - Party begins
Cost: \$20 per person, children 12 and younger are FREE

Annual Membership Dues

Its that time of the year again! Time to collect the yearly membership dues.

As you all know, the price of everything has gone up and things are not the same as it was even 10 years ago. That, coupled with our aging infrastructure and buildings, present many challenges which require funds to help meet these challenges. WHM also provides support to the Honpa Hongwanji Mission headquarters and their mission through annual assessment payments. Therefore, your membership dues significantly help us in meeting all of our goals and obligations.

We are fully aware of the financial hardships people face these days and are trying our best to keep your annual membership dues as low as possible while still enabling us to maintain the Otera. The membership dues for 2025 remain at \$300 and checks may be made out to the "Waipahu Hongwanji Mission".

Again, thank you so much for being a part of our WHM Sangha and for supporting us throughout the years. And also, please remember that we would love to see all of you at our weekly Sunday services at 9:00 a.m., as well as, at our "Kokua Gang" (maintenance and upkeep) gatherings on Thursday mornings. Mahalo!

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や洪水、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。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月以来の中東における武力衝突でも多くの犠牲者が出ています。私たちは仏教徒として、「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を大切にいたしましょう。

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、また貧困や政治的・宗教的な対立により、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り念仏者である私たちは、お釈迦様のお言葉を深く心に刻み、世の安穏を願われた親鸞聖人のお心を体して、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。

浄土真宗のみ教えをいただく私たちは、阿弥陀さまのおはたらきによって、自分自身の真実の姿を知らされます。それは、自身の思いや欲望にとらわれ、お釈迦様が明らかにされた諸行無常や諸法無我といったこの世界の真実を、そのままに受け入れることができずに悩み苦しむ凡夫の姿です。

しかし、そのような私を救いの目当てとして阿弥陀様ははたらき続けて下さっています。私たちは等しく阿弥陀様から願われた者同士、互いに敬い合い助け合って、困難な社会の課題にも果敢に取り組んでいくことができます。本年も、阿弥陀さまのおはたらきを聞き、仏教徒として一日一日を大切に歩んでまいりましょう。

2025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
Phone: 808 677-4221
E-mail: waipahuhongwanji@hawaii.rr.com
Resident Minister: Reverend Jeffrey D. Soga

Non Profit Organization
U. S. POSTAGE
P A I D
Permit No. 5
Waipahu, Hawaii

JANUARY 2025

Address Correction Requested

Condolence

Waipahu Hongwanji extends deepest
Sympathy to the family of :

Kirk Isao Saiki

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

HO ON KO

(Annual Shinran Shonin's
Memorial Service)

January 19, Sunday, 2025, 9 a.m.

SHU SHO - E

(New Year's Day Service)

January 1, Wednesday, 2025, 9 a.m.

ADULT DHARMA CLASS

Discussion Session

January 19, Sunday, 2025

Please attend and bring all your questions
about Buddhism and your life.

BWA General Membership Meeting

January 25, Saturday, 2025

Project Dana Caregiver Support Program

Saturday, January 11, 2025, 10 a.m.

Social Hall