



WAIPAHU HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE  
(A Shin Buddhist Temple)

## GOLDEN CHAIN

Monthly Newsletter

**FEBRUARY 2025**

Nurturing Nembutsu: Cultivating Awareness



**JODO SHINSHU, Teaching of Pure Land  
Amida Buddha's Vow #31, (10<sup>th</sup> Vow) 1/2025  
Jeffrey Soga, Resident Minister**

The new year has begun, and it's already February. I wonder how you welcomed the new year. As I asked in the December issue, I hope you started with words of gratitude, thankfulness and praise for each other, not make people around you uncomfortable or disgusted? This month, I will continue to write about the Amida Buddha's Tenth Vow.

*If, when I attain Buddhahood, the humans and devas in my land should give rise to only thought of attachment to their body, may I not attain the perfect enlightenment.*

(Page 21, The Three Pure Land Sutras Volume II, The Larger Sutra)

(My interpretation): If I, Amida, attain enlightenment as a Buddha, but all the people of my land have thoughts and attachments from ignorance, then I cannot be a Buddha of Enlightenment.

I translate this Vow with my understanding. Why do people live their lives filled with suffering and frustration, although their lives are able to be lived only once and it is unrepeatable? As a minister and police chaplain, I sometimes see people in the community whose is one of relationships with family, husband and wife, siblings, parents, in-laws, friends not getting along, and hurt each other. Human relationships can often be troublesome and complicated. Why is that? The Buddha taught that the root of this issue lies in ignorance or "MU MYO". "MU" means 'no' and "MYO" means 'light'. From this ignorance arises attachment, and then greed, anger, and the delusions of complaints emerge, leading to suffering.

This ignorance, how does it occur or what is an origin within us? If we can find the cause of this "MU MYO ignorance", we can resolve and not have suffering. In other words we can live in peace and happiness. The book, "Daijo Kishin Ron" says; "suddenly arises without us noticing". If we could understand its cause, we could cut off that root, but because it arises unexpectedly, we cannot identify its source. Thus, we find ourselves in a helpless situation."

In response to the suffering that arises from "MU MYO" ignorance, the Buddha is teaching us to calmly observe our own ignorant mind through focused meditation, to cease doing bad or abandoning evil things, and to practice good deeds or cultivating goodness.  
(Continued to next page)

(From Page 1, Teaching of Pure Land)

However, while it would be great if we could practice as the Buddha instructed, it is extremely difficult. Our attachment hearts inevitably emerge from ignorance.

"Amida Buddha must have known my heart and established this Tenth Vow. In this world, it is impossible to change my view from ignorance to enlightenment, but if I could attain enlightenment in the Pure Land, attachment would no longer exist. This attachment is the rigid thinking of 'it must be this way, or it must be done this way.' For example, people think man must do things this way, or a woman must do them differently; the elderly must act one way, and the young must act another—it's a fixed, rigid mindset. This is the cause of suffering. If we could see things with a more flexible and open heart, we would be able to perceive a different world and way of thinking." This passage seems to reflect on the Buddhist idea of attachment and how rigid thinking creates suffering, while embracing flexibility and openness can lead to a more enlightened perspective. By listening Amida Buddha's Vow (Compassionate Heart), we are able to realize we have MU MYO ignorance. Many who don't listen to the Buddha's Vow, complain openly and grumble a lot and make others uncomfortable. I learn in Hawaiian, "you no polole, me polole."

On January 20th, a new president took office. There have been various opinions about him, but he was the one chosen by the majority of the Nation. Let's make sure to support him. There has been a lot of news coverage about this, but I would like people to understand that attachment is the cause of suffering. I wonder if anyone could teach him that.

## **2025 NEW YEAR'S PARTY** (Shinnen Enkai)

As we posted in last month's Golden Chain newsletter, the Waipahu Hongwanji Mission will be having its annual New Year's party on February 23, 2025. There will be lots of entertainment, ono food, door prizes, and much more! Everyone is welcome to join us!

You can either come down to the church to sign up or call Reverend Soga at 808-677-4221. Please sign up by Feb 1st. Have a safe and healthy New Year and we hope to see you all there!

Where: Waipahu Hongwanji Mission social hall  
Time: 9:00 a.m. - General Membership meeting and Installation of Officers in Hondo  
10:00 a.m. - Party begins  
Cost: \$20 per person, children 12 and younger are free (Collected at the door)

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

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



Dear Waipahu Hongwanji Sangha,

2025 is off to a quick start and I hope the year has been good to you so far. Personally, to me, it was overwhelming because with the turning of a new year, comes a whirlwind of change. Some changes are of my own making such as my new year resolutions to be more physically active and eat better. And some changes are out of my control like having two of my cars break down on New Years' Day (which actually happened). Or facing broader world changes like new political policies from a new president or rising inflation or not being able to find eggs anywhere. When faced with change, it's the ones that are out of my control that tend to result in fear or anxiety.

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus said: "the only constant thing in life is change". Which is a very insightful view and, also, the central point of Buddhism. That nothing in life is permanent. And our human desire to resist life's changes is futile and the main cause of suffering and stress. So, I needed to pause and reflect on this dharma tenet and put things into better perspective.

Self-help author and frequent Oprah guest Eckhart Tolle said: "Some changes look negative on the surface, but you will soon realize that space is being created in your life for something new to emerge". Change is not a scary negative thing. It only appears that way because of the uncertainty and because we are not guaranteed our desired outcome. But, what if we instead, allow change to flow into our lives and view it as necessary to free up space for new things to enter.

And whether the outcome is what we want or don't want, we can welcome it, accept it, and deal with it. Because as Charlie Chaplin said: "nothing is permanent in this wicked world – not even our troubles".

To kick off January, many came to start the year off on a positive note by attending our New Years' Service. Rev. Yamagishi of Kamuela Hongwanji was our guest speaker at Hoonko Service on the 19<sup>th</sup> and was gracious to share the charitable things that Honokaa and Kamuela temples are doing in their communities. This includes Honokaa volunteers cooking and delivering 400 meals every Friday to kupuna and children and their annual Peace Day Parade.

Coming up on February 7 & 8 is the Gisseikai Legislative Assembly and Living Treasures Luncheon. Also in February is our New Years' Party on Sunday the 23<sup>rd</sup>. The planning committee is working hard to put on a fun event for all. There will be good food and entertainment from Hanayagi Mitsusumi Dance Studio, Madoka no Kai Shamisen, Ryugen Taiko, and the Magic of Ron.

On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, Pearl City temple is hosting Oahu District's Sangha Day. The theme is music and nembutsu and the guest speaker will be Roy Sakuma. I hope to also see you at our many events this year and please take advantage of opportunities to explore the dharma teachings this year.

Finally, this year, Waipahu's bon dance will be held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday in July instead of the traditional 2<sup>nd</sup> weekend. There were multiple other Oahu temples with competing bon dances on the 2<sup>nd</sup> weekend so it was mutually agreed by the kyodan board, our performers and dancers to move it up one weekend.

In Gassho,



Reverend Masanari Yamagishi was the guest speaker at Hoonko Service on 1/19 with Rev. Jeffrey.



Everybody enjoyed and worked hard for Mochitsuki on 12/29/24.



BWA members visited honorary members on 1/7/25  
From Left: Peggy Tsukida, Edna Otsuka, Janet Yoshida, Tsunako Sakata and Emiko Onaga and her daughter  
BWA members were Mae Matsushige, Wilma Sumida, and Kumika Soga



BWA General Membership Meeting was held 1/25/25.

They talked about State Conference at Ala Moana on March 29, 2026, and World Convention at Honolulu Convention Center in 2027 and other important matters.

Please mark your calendar: BWA Dana Day Sunday; February 16, Sunday, 2025, Special Guest Speaker: Mrs. Yumi Suzuki

# MEMBERSHIP DUES

Just a friendly reminder...We are currently in the process of collecting membership dues for 2025. For those who have already submitted their dues, "Thank you so much". We wish everyone a fantastic, healthy, and safe 2025! Take care and MAHALO!

## MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR 2025

<b>1 (2024)</b> February 8 Sumiko Hoshiyama Ando February 16 Stephen Hiroshi Nii	<b>1<sup>st</sup> (2024)</b> March None
<b>3 (2023)</b> February 7 Setsuko Uyeno February 12 Gene Hisami Inoshita February 15 Toshiyuki Roy Tanamachi	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> (2022)</b> March 6 Gayle Chiyomi Miyamoto
<b>7<sup>th</sup> (2019)</b> February 7 Ernest Yoshio Sugita February 11 Yoshio Asato	<b>7<sup>th</sup> (2019)</b> March 3 Myra Shizuko Oyama March 22 Thomas Hisashi Kushima
<b>13<sup>th</sup> (2013)</b> February 19 Kiyoko Matsumoto February 21 Katsuma Tanaka February 22 Haruko Kunishige	<b>13<sup>th</sup> (2013)</b> March 6 Henry Toshisada Maruyama March 7 Beatrice Michiko Fukuoka March 18 Sadami Ige
<b>17<sup>th</sup> (2009)</b> February 13 Fusayo Inoshita February 22 Kiku Nakamoto	<b>17<sup>th</sup> (2009)</b> March 14 Ricky Hiroshi Ogata March 15 Hideo Yamamoto March 15 Tokuchichi Miura
<b>25<sup>th</sup> (2001)</b> February 13 Masato Yamamoto February 20 Shizuko Bryan	<b>25<sup>th</sup> (2001)</b> March 9 Horace Heiji Nouchi March 19 Mitsue Kawakami March 27 Charlotte Umiko Nishimura
<b>33<sup>th</sup> (1993)</b> February 10 George Kiyoshi Nobunaga February 11 Sagami Shinozawa February 27 Ryoto Yasui	<b>33<sup>rd</sup> (1993)</b> March 16 Fred Masaru Yokota March 29 Yutaka Kimura March 31 James Shigeru Furumoto
<b>50<sup>th</sup> (1976)</b> none	<b>50<sup>th</sup> (1975)</b> March 27 Tachi Nakanishi

### 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!

## SPECIAL DONATION

Wendy Coelho ... \$50  
Special

Yoshiko Higa ... \$200  
Special

Charlene Ikeda ... \$1,000  
In memory of Robert & Kazuko Ikeda

Edna & Brian Otsuko ... \$500  
In memory of Jane Tanaka

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

Mae Sunahara ... \$100  
In memory of Hiroji & Nancy Miyashita

Lily Tokuhara and Family ... \$500  
In memory of Jon Tokuhara

George & Cheryl Uwono ... \$100  
Special

Francis Uyeno ... \$500  
Special

Lilinone Watanabe ... \$500  
Special

Nobuo Hata ... \$100  
Visitation

Kathleen Ikeda-Lee ... \$1,000  
In memory of Robert & Kazuko Ikeda

Shoichi & Yukiko Noguchi ... \$500  
Visitation

Saiki Family ... \$3,000  
Funeral for Kirk Saiki

Dixon Sasaki ... \$250  
In memory Yoshikazu Sasaki

Marsha Tamura ... \$50  
Special

Cindy Ujimori ... \$100  
Special

Lynn Yoshimura  
Special ... \$500  
In memory of Ross Yoshimura ... \$250  
In memory of Elaine Yoshimura ... \$250  
In memory of Richard Kawate ... \$100

Sharon Toma ... \$1,000  
Special

**New Year:** Ellen Ujimori, Miles Tamura

**Social Concers:** Elain & Lawrence Kanemoto

**HOONKO:** Milton Fujioka, Marjory & Henry Funasaki, Daniel & Lois Hanaoka, Steven & Jan Honda, Doris Kakugawa & Iris Tsuha, Elaine & Lawrence Kanemoto, Thomas & Sachie Kaneshiro, Frances Matsumoto, Wilfred & Mae Matsushige, Flora Minemoto, Masumi Murakami, Lori Noborikawa, Jenny Nomura, Emiko Onaga, Edna Otsuka, Thomas Sekine, Beatrice Sonoda, Wilma & Calvin Sumida, Robert Tsumoto, Kuniomi & Akemi Uehara, Ellen Ujimori, Cindy & Guy Ujimori, Masao & Yukiko Uyeda, Craig & Megumi Uyeno, Francis Uyeno, Evan Watarida, Helen Yonashiro & Lynn Fujikawa

### 2025 Dues:

Clyde & Paulette Fujii, Wesley Hama, Roy & Dorothy Hirata, Jan & Stephen Honda, Wesley Imaoka, Carole Inouye, Shirlie Ishitani, Kimiko Kanno, Judith & William Kishimoto, Gale & Adrian Koizumi, Kara & Scott Mendoza, Flora Minemoto, Masumi Murakami, Lori & Curtis Noborikawa, Lisa Okada, Kenneth & Amy Omoto, Joyce & Robert Oshita, Tsunako Sakata, George Sawa, Thomas Sekine, Sheryl Shimada, Bea Sonoda, Harriet Sugimoto, Calvin & Wilma Sumida, Mae Sunahara, Robert Tsumoto, Kuniomi & Akemi Uehara, Guy & Cindy Ujimori, Ellen Ujimori, Francis Uyeno, Craig & Megumi Uyeno, Duane & Michelle Uyeno, Lynne Yoshimura

## Shirlie's corner

### VALENTINE'S DAY TREAT- RED VELVET BROWNIES

Valentine's Day America is celebrated with many go-to practices. Offering a bouquet of red roses to your beloved; purchasing a card with a heartfelt message; sharing a candlelit meal with your significant other; and of course, giving a heart-shaped box of chocolates.

In America, these gestures more often than not, are made by men. In Japan, however, it is the ladies who gift their special man with gifts of lots and lots of chocolate on Valentine's Day. Although men don't have to spend money on Valentine's Day, that doesn't mean they get away with not reciprocating for the rest of the year. The men in Japan, get to shower their special lady on White Day, March 14<sup>th</sup> with decadent chocolates of equal or greater value than what they received on Valentine's Day.

Whether in America or in Japan, ladies and men may prefer to bake a special treat for their special someone. Red velvet cake is a popular choice for any occasion, but especially on Valentine's Day. The vibrant red color of this smooth and soft cake with its luscious cream cheese frosting is very appealing on this special day. After all, red is the universal color of LOVE!

Here is a variation of the red velvet cake - red velvet cheesecake brownies.

#### Red Velvet Brownies

1 c white sugar	1 tsp vanilla extract
$\frac{1}{2}$ c unsalted butter, melted	1 tsp distilled white vinegar
$\frac{1}{4}$ c unsweetened cocoa powder	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt
1 oz red food coloring	2 large eggs, slightly beaten

#### Cheesecake Filling

1 (8 oz) package cream cheese at room temperature		
$\frac{1}{4}$ c white sugar	1 large egg	1 tsp vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease an 8x8 inch baking pan.

Red velvet brownies: Whisk 1 cup sugar and melted butter in a large mixing bowl; stir in cocoa, red food coloring, 1 tsp vanilla extract, vinegar, and salt, one at a time, mixing well after each addition to avoid lumps, Mix in 2 eggs until thoroughly combined.

Stir flour into cocoa mixture just until combined; set aside  $\frac{1}{4}$  c batter. Pour the remaining batter into the prepared baking dish.

Cheesecake filling: Beat cream cheese in a bowl using an electric mixer on medium speed until light and fluffy. Add  $\frac{1}{4}$  c sugar, 1 egg, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp vanilla extract; continue to beat until well blended and only small lumps remain, 3 to 4 minutes.

Spoon cream cheese mixture in dollops over the batter in pan; gently smooth tops of dollops even with batter using a knife or offset spatula. Do not overmix. Drizzle reserved  $\frac{1}{4}$  c of batter over the dollops of cream cheese mixture. Drag a knife or skewer through the batter and cream cheese mixture to create swirls.

Bake in preheated oven until top is dry and edges have started to pull away from the sides of the pan, about 30 to 35 minutes. Cool completely before cutting into bars; store covered in refrigerator.

## CHAIR YOGA WITH ROY ARAKAKI

Roy Arakaki, who is affiliated with Body and Brain Yoga Tai Chi, conducted a 30-minute chair yoga session with our clients at the Adult Day Care Center and a few members from Waipahu Hongwanji Mission. Our clients were very responsive. The church members who participated (including Reverend Jeff and Mrs. Soga), all agreed that chair yoga, while not your typical yoga discipline, left them feeling physically stimulated. Everyone agreed that chair yoga with Roy was a worthwhile activity. Most agreed that they would like to have regular sessions.

Roy has studied Body and Brain Yoga Tai Chi discipline at the training center in Sedona and is a certified trainer. He has been sharing his expertise and love for the practice through the Outreach program. He would like very much to come back and work with us.

We will work on establishing regular sessions in the future and will provide class information when schedule is finalized.

\*\*\*\*\* \*\* \*\*\*\*\* \*\* \*\*\*\*\* \*\* \*\*\*\*\* \*\* \*\*\*\*\*

### **OAHU United JR. YBA IS SPONSERING Donation for Oahu SPCA**

Please support Jrs. working so hard to help SPCA program. Please look at the attached poster.

**Waipahu Hongwanji BWA will sponsor the Dana Day  
February 16, Sunday, 2025,  
Special Guest Speaker: Mrs. Yumi Suzuki**



*Come and join our wonderful Ohana at the...*

**Waipahu Hongwanji Mission**

**ADULT DAY CARE CENTER**

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浄土真宗の教え 2025年2月  
「阿弥陀様の願いその31（第十願） 不貧計心の願（その4）」  
駐在開教使 曾我大円

あたらし はじ  
新しい年が始まり、はや二月となります。どんな新年を迎えられたことでしょうか。十二月号でお願い  
かんしや さんたん  
したように、感謝（ありがとう）と讃嘆（ほめあう）の言葉で始めて下さいましたか。今月も続いて  
あみださま ねが  
阿弥陀様の願いについて書かせていただきます。

たとひわれ仏を得たらんに、国中の人天、もし想念を起こして、身を貧計せば、正覚を取らじ。

（不貧計心の願）（浄土真宗聖典17ページ）

（私の意識）もし私（阿弥陀様）が佛としての悟りを得る時に、私の国のすべての人々が、もし想念を起こして、執着の心を起こすことがあるならば、私は聖覚の佛となることは出来ません。

ねが かんが  
この願いを私なりに考えてみるのです。人はどうして一度しかない、繰り返すことの出来ない人生  
くる かぞく きょうだい  
を、苦しみや、やるせない思いで生きるのでしょうか。私もお坊さんをしておりまして、家族、兄弟、  
しまい おやこ よめしゅうとめ ともだち ときどきなかくよく にんげんかんけい めんどうくさ  
姉妹、親子、嫁姑、友達、時々仲良く出来てない方もおられます。とかく人間関係は面倒臭い時  
しやかさま げんいん むみょう しゅうちやく  
あります。なぜでしょうか？お釈迦様はこの原因は無明にあり、この無明から執着というものが起  
よく ほらだち しんに ぐち ぼんのう はたら くる  
り、そして欲、腹立ち（瞋恚）、そして愚痴の煩惱が働き、苦しみとなる、と教えておられます。こ  
こつねんねんきのむみょう  
の無明はどうして私たちの中にあるのか、それは昔から「忽然念起無明「いつの間にか起こって  
げんいん もと た  
る」」（大乘起信論）と教えられてあります。もし、その原因が分かれば、その本を断てばいいのです  
ゆえ わたしたち  
が、いつの間にやら起こってくるものですから、その原因がわかりません。故に私達にはどうしよう  
もないのです。

こころしず そくりよぎょうしん わる  
この無明から起こる苦しみに対し、心静かに自分の無明の心を見つめ（息慮凝心）、悪いことをや  
よ はいあくしゅうぜん  
め、善い事をする（廃悪修善）と説かれたのがお釈迦様でした。しかしねえ、お釈迦様の言われるよ  
しゆぎょう なかなかむずか ます  
うに修行ができればいいのですが、それが中々難しい。どうしても貧しい心が無明から出てしまいま  
す。

阿弥陀様はその私の心を知らしめして、この第十願を建てられたのでしょうかね。この世ではどうにも  
じょうど さと ひら  
なりません、お浄土で覚りを開くことが出来たならば、執着という言葉も元から無くなり、貧しい心  
き  
もいつの間にか消えていくのです。この執着というのは、こうじゃなければ、こうするんだ、という凝  
かた  
り固まった考えですね。男だったらこうしないと、あなたは女なのだからこうじゃないと、年寄り、  
若者は、こうでなければいけないという凝り固まった考え方ですね。これが苦しみの因（たね）です  
ね。もっと柔らかく、大きな心で物事を見ることができれば、また違う世界、考え方をもてるはずな  
のです。

先日、1月20日、新しい大統領が就任されました。何かと前評判がありますが、アメリカ国民の過半数  
が選んだ方です。しっかり応援してあげましょう。色々とニュースに取り沙汰されていますが、執着  
の心が苦しみの因なのだ、と知っておいて欲しいものです。誰か教えてあげてもらえないですかね。

**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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Permit No. 5  
Waipahu, Hawaii

**FEBRUARY 2025**

**Address Correction Requested**

**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.

(From February to June)  
**Every Sunday 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.**  
Ewa Fukushima Taiko Practice

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**ADULT DHARMA CLASS**

**Discussion Session**

February 9, Sunday, 2024

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

**Project Dana Caregiver Support Program**

Saturday, February 8, 2025, 10 a.m.  
Conference Room

Please attend

**the General Membership Meeting  
Installation Ceremony and  
New Year Party**

**Sunday, February 23, 2025**

9 a.m. Family Service  
General Membership Meeting  
Installation Ceremony  
10 a.m. New Year Party