



WAIPAHU HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE  
(A Shin Buddhist Temple)

## GOLDEN CHAIN

Monthly Newsletter

**SEPTEMBER 2025**

Nurturing Nembutsu: Cultivating Awareness



**JODO SHINSHU, Teaching of Pure Land  
Amida Buddha's Vow #38, (12<sup>th</sup> Vow) 9/2025  
Jeffrey Soga, Resident Minister**

How are you, everyone at Waipahu and Waianae Hongwanji? The hot days continue, but the month of the Autumn Ohigan is approaching. From now on, the sun will slowly begin to lean toward the south, bringing with it cooler days ahead. Please take good care of yourselves and patiently endure the lingering summer heat.

This month as well, I will continue to reflect together on the Twelfth Vow – The Vow of Immeasurable Light. I'd like to quote the Vow:

*"If when I attain Buddhahood, my light should be finite, not illuminating even a hundred thousand Kotis of nayutas of Buddha-lands, may I not attain the perfect enlightenment."*

(My Interpretation)

If, at the time I (Amida Buddha) attain enlightenment as a Buddha, the light of my wisdom – the radiance that is its working – has limits and is unable to illuminate the countless lands of Buddhas, then I shall not attain perfect enlightenment.

"Last month, I shared how Amida Buddha's light warmly shines upon us, nurturing us and clearly showing us the path we should follow. This month, let us reflect on what it truly means to be illuminated by that light, drawing from the writings of Shinran Shonin. In his work *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Shinran Shonin quotes Master Donran (T'an-luan)'s "*The Commentary on the Treatise*". There it says, "*Wherever the light of Amida reaches, all darkness is dispelled.*" In our daily lives, no matter how late at night or how dark a room may be, the moment we flip a switch and the fluorescent light comes on, the darkness is instantly gone. You may think, 'Well, of course—that's only natural.' And yes, it really is something very natural. But then, let us pause and consider—what does this really mean for us?"

Before writing about how darkness is dispelled, Master Donran first refers to the description of human beings in the *Meditation Sutra*. Allow me to share a paraphrased passage: "What is meant by "matter of mind"? The person who commits such karmic evil does so based on his own false and inverted views. The ten utterances, however, arise when a true teacher, consoling him by various means, makes him hear the dharma that is true reality.

(Continued to Page 2)

(JODO SHINSHU, From Page 1)

Thus, the latter is real, the former is unreal. How can there be any comparison? Suppose there is a room that has been dark for a thousand years, If light reaches it, however briefly, the room immediately becomes bright. How can the darkness say that, having occupied the room for a thousand years, it refuses to leave? This is termed “matter of mind.”

What kind of days are you spending as you read this? Are you living each day with peace of mind, filled with gratitude and joy? Or perhaps, as the years pass, do you sometimes find yourself regretting the things you have done in the past? Do you feel hurt when your children treat you in the same way you once treated your parents? Do you then blame others, speaking words of complaint or criticism, and in doing so, lose the peace of mind you long for? And as the end of life draws nearer, little by little yet with certainty, do you ever feel anxiety and wonder, “How long will this suffering continue?” It is like when our hearts are shut away in darkness. It is the suffering that has continued with us from the distant past and will carry on into the future. Yet here, as Master Donran (T’an-luan) writes “It is like a dark room that has remained pitch black for a thousand years. But if light should enter, at that very moment the room becomes bright, and the darkness of a thousand years instantly disappears.”

Dear friends, as you read this, please reflect upon the Twelfth Vow of Amida Buddha and recite the Nembutsu with the aspiration to be born in the Pure Land. When you do so, the darkness within your heart will surely fade away, and a sense of peace and gratitude will arise. In that joy, you will be able to share kindness and appreciation with others in your daily life. Please recite the Nembutsu together, day and night, morning and afternoon.

In gassho,



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

**Waipahu Hongwanji Mission**

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



Dear Waipahu Hongwanji Sangha,

As summer nears an end and most children are back at school, so also ends obon season. We held our final obon service with our pet obon on August 24<sup>th</sup>. Rev. Soga has made this an annual event because our pets are integral members of our families and embraced in Buddha's compassion as are all beings.

Early in August, I attended a full week of seminars held at the BSC where Rev. Dr. Enrique Galvan-Alvarez spoke. He is a Jodo Shinshu minister in the UK who holds services and dharma classes in English and Spanish. It was refreshing and captivating to hear his story of converting from Christianity and Tibetan Buddhism to Jodo Shinshu. He said that it was a totally unexpected journey, but isn't that how life is, he explained? Life never turns out how we plan it. Causes and conditions always bring us surprises each day and take us down a totally different path than we envisioned. Our initial human reaction is normally rejection and resistance. "This is not what I wanted." But it's an opportunity to come to a different understanding of ourselves. And when we can accept it and look back, we usually feel grateful and happy for the lessons we learned and the people and relationships along the way.

For Rev. Galvan-Alvarez, his life changed when he was fully awakened to the depth of the primal vow as Dr. Al Bloom shared with him the teachings of Shinran Shonin. After many years of dedicated practice and studying, he could not achieve fulfillment with his own self-power. It was when he accepted the vow of Amida Buddha, knowing with certainty that we will all become Buddha, and embracing a personal connection to Namu Amida Butsu, that he devoted his life to Jodo Shinshu and the acceptance of the other-power. I plan to share more of what he spoke of in our dharma talk-story sessions after service.

Our September calendar is filled with upcoming events starting with Bishop Umitani's visit to Waipahu Sunday service on the 7<sup>th</sup>. Please come say hi, and welcome our Bishop. The Annual State Lay Convention is coming up on Sept. 12 & 13<sup>th</sup> at both Jikoen and Honpa. And Sept. 20 & 21 weekend, there is the Statewide Choral Fest. Several of our members will be joining their voices with other participants from across the state in a united gatha choir.

Sept. 21 is Waipahu's Fall Ohigan service. And Sept. 22 is Peace Day with the "Ring your bell for peace" virtual event with special guest Jake Shimabukuro.

Finally, a reminder that starting on Oct. 1, Rev. Soga will serve as minister of both Waipahu and Pearl City Hongwanji. Rev. Soga will be leading the Sunday services at Pearl City on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays of each month, while performing services at Waipahu on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays. We, at Waipahu will continue to have Sunday services each week. But we will be seeking lay member assistance for those willing to giving Sunday talks, flower donations for services, and temple service preparation. We hope to see you at our upcoming events.

In Gassho,

## SPECIAL DONATION

In memory of Iwao & Stanley Hashiro  
 Edward Hashiro... \$60  
 Glenn Hashiro ... \$60  
 Judy Hashiro ... \$ 60  
 Lillian Kaneshiro ... \$60  
 Alice Kogasaka ... \$60

In memory of Jean Uyeno & Shizuko Shimabukuro  
 Dorothy Hirata ... \$500  
 Craig Uyeno ... \$100  
 Duane Uyeno ... \$100  
 Francis Uyeno ... \$500  
 Uyeno Family ... \$200

Alice Murayama ... \$100  
 Special

Masumi Murakami ... \$1,000  
 In memory of George & Harry Murakami

Calen Miyahara ... \$150  
 In memory of Jean Miyahara

Lisa Okada ... \$500  
 In memory of Violet Okada

Gary Penn ... \$1,000  
 Funeral for Tomika Penn

Kirana Soga ... \$500  
 Special

Yasuda Family ... \$300  
 In memory of Gary Yasuda

Waipahu Soto Zen Temple ... \$100  
 Special

**MEMBERSHIP:** Janice Fujiwara, Carrie Hayashi

## MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR 2025

**1<sup>st</sup> (2024)** None  
**3<sup>rd</sup> (2022)** None

**7<sup>th</sup> (2019)**  
 September 23 Masao Fukeda  
 September 30 Sadao Kawamoto

**13<sup>th</sup> (2013)**  
 September 11 Daniel Tsunezo Hanaoka  
 September 23 Masami Kusunoki

**17<sup>th</sup> (2009)**  
 September 6 Richard Masamitsu Okita  
 September 16 Jane Setsuko Higashiyama  
 September 29 Ernie Masaji Matsuda

**25<sup>th</sup> (2001)**  
 September 8 Sueki Itagaki  
 September 27 Teru Okita

**33<sup>rd</sup> (1993)**  
 September 4 Robert Arnold Edwards  
 September 13 James Masato Miyamoto  
 September 15 Takeshi Nishimura  
 September 27 Masao Kaneshiro

**50<sup>th</sup> (1976)** None

**1<sup>st</sup> (2024)**  
 October 7 Raymond Kiyoto Takemoto

**3<sup>rd</sup> (2023)**  
 October 7 Fred Jiro Edamatsu  
 October 12 Clarence Katsumi Otsuka  
 October 27 Vanessa Tanouye

**7<sup>th</sup> (2019)**  
 October 14 Teddy Tsuneo Taniguchi

**13<sup>th</sup> (2013)**  
 October 15 Sadako Kaneshiro

**17<sup>th</sup> (2009)**  
 October 16 Thelma Aiko Matsuo

**25<sup>th</sup> (2001)**  
 October 10 Seiichi Miyashiro  
 October 12 Kimiko Takamoto  
 October 23 Shigeru Yamashiro  
 October 23 Masao Larry Nishida  
 October 30 Ayami Inoshita

**33<sup>rd</sup> (1993)**  
 October 3 George Takeo Kanechika  
 October 13 Michie Matsushige  
 October 26 Tsutae Nishimura

**50<sup>th</sup> (1976)**  
 October 31 Yasuo Oshiro

浄土真宗の教え 2025年8月  
「阿弥陀様の願いその38(第十二願) 光明無量の願 (その4)」  
駐在開教使 曾我大円

ワイパフ、ワイアナエ本願寺の皆様お元気ですか？暑い日が続いていますが、秋のお彼岸の月がやってきます。これから少しずつ太陽が南の方へ傾いてくれます。少しずつ涼しくなってくると思いながら、しっかり辛抱してこの残暑の季節を過ごして下さい。

今月も「第十二願、光明無量の願」を皆さんと考えさせて頂きます。  
たとひわれ仏を得たらんに、光明よく限量ありて、下百千億那由他の諸仏の国を照らさざるに至らば、正覚を取らじ。(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、私の智慧の働きとしての光明に限りがあって、無数の仏様の国を照らすことが出来ないならば、私は正覚の佛となることはできません。

先月は阿弥陀様の光明は温かく私たちを照らし、育てて下さる、そしてしっかり私たちの進むべき道を示して下さいを書きました。今月は光に照らされるということはどういうことか、親鸞聖人のお書物からいただきます。

親鸞聖人は「教行信証」というお書物に曇鸞大師の「往生論註」のお言葉をひかれておられます。そこには「阿弥陀様の光が届くところには、全ての暗闇が破られていく」と書かれてあります。私たちの生活の中では、どんな真夜中、真っ暗な部屋でも、電気のスイッチをポンといれ、蛍光灯の光が灯る瞬間に真っ暗ではなくなりま

す。当たり前なことじゃないかと思われることでしょうか。そうなのです、とても当たり前のことなのです。が、どうでしょうか。

曇鸞大師は闇が破られるということを書かれる前に観無量寿經に説明されてある私たち人間の姿を引用されてあります。私が意識して引用します。「人がいて、五逆、十悪を作り、いろんな悪いことをして、長い年月に苦しみの世界に落ちて色々な苦しみの人生を送ってきました。臨終の時、もう命の火が消えそうなその時に、そこに善知識が現れて、「お浄土に生まれたいと思うて、南無阿弥陀仏を称えなさい」と教えられ、言われるままに心を落ち着かせ、声を出してお念仏を十回称えました。その人(つぎのページへ)

(まえのページより)

あんらくじょうど う かくしん あんしん なに おそ なが あいだ くる  
は安楽浄土に生まれることを確信して、安心して何も恐れることなく、長い間の苦しみ  
はな  
からも離れることができました。」

よ まいにち おく こころやす かんしゃ  
これを読んでおられる皆さんはどんな毎日を送っておられますか。心安らかに感謝  
よろこ ひぐらし とし  
と喜びの日暮らしをしておられますか。それとも、ふと歳をとってきて、今までして  
こうかい じぶん おや し う こども  
きたことを後悔し、また自分が親にしたような仕打ちを子供さんたちからされて、それ  
わるくち ぐち い つず こころやす な ひぐ  
らを人のせいにして悪口や愚痴を言い続け、そのために心安らぐことの無い日暮らし  
おく かくじつ ちか いのち お ふあん おも くる  
を送り、少しずつ、そして確実に近づいてくる命の終わりに不安を思い、この苦しみ  
つず  
はいつまで続いていくのだろうと思うことはないですか。

くらやみ と おな か こ みらい つず  
これは心が暗闇に閉ざされていることと同じです。ずーっと過去から未来へ続いている  
くる どんらんだいし つぎ か  
私たちの苦しみです。しかし、ここで曇鸞大師は次のように書かれています。「た  
せんねんつづ まっくら へ や あんしつ ひかり とど とき へ や あか  
とへば千年続いた真っ暗な部屋、闇室に、もし光が届いたならば、その時に部屋は明  
せんねんつづ くらやみ ま に  
るくなり、千年続いた暗闇もあつという間に逃げていってしまいます。」

よ みな あみださま じょうど ゆ  
どうぞこれを読まれている皆さん、阿弥陀様の十二願のお心を思い、お浄土に往きた  
ねんぶつ くらやみ に やす  
いと思いながら、お念仏をして下さい。すると必ず心の中にある暗闇が逃げてゆき、安  
かんしゃ おも わ よろこ みな ひぐ  
らかに、感謝の思いが湧いてきます。その喜びを皆にも分けることができる日暮らし  
ねんぶつ  
をすることができるようになります。どうぞお念仏をして下さい。

合掌、称名

**Waipahu Hongwanji Mission**

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E-mail: waipahuhongwanji@hawaii.rr.com  
Resident Minister: Reverend Jeffrey D. Soga

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**SEPTEMBER 2025**

**Address Correction Requested**

**Condolence**

Waipahu Hongwanji extends deepest  
Sympathy to the family of :

Tomika Penn

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

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

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

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

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

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

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**AUTUMN OHIGAN  
Equinox Service**

September 21, Sunday, 2025

**PEACE DAY BELL RINGING**

September 22, Monday, 2025

8:30 a.m. Program starts

9 a.m. Bell Ringing

**ADULT DHARMA CLASS**

**Discussion Session**

September 28 , Sunday, 2025

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

**Project Dana Caregiver Support Program**

Saturday, September 13, 2025, 10 a.m.  
Social Hall & Zoom