



1727 Pali Hwy, Honolulu, HI 96813

GOJI

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NEWSLETTER

of the
Honpa Hongwanji
Hawai'i Betsuin
hawaiibetsuin.org

2025 Slogan:

**“Nurturing Nembutsu:
Cultivating Awareness”**



BETSUIN MINISTERS

Chief Minister
Rev. Yuika Hasebe

Ministerial Staff
Rev. Shingo Furusawa
Rev. Charlene Kihara

New Year's Greetings from the Gomonshu

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





Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani
Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

“Nurturing Nembutsu, Cultivating Awareness”



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 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, al-

lowing 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.

Rev. Toshiyuki Umitani
Bishop
Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii



GOJI

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DEADLINE:

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The opinions expressed by individual contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Honpa Hongwanji Hawai’i Betsuin.

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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

From the Betsuin Ministers

Rimban, Yuika Hasebe

Under the Great Compassion and Wisdom, I hope you are having a wonderful New year! I would like to extend my deepest appreciation for your support and thoughtfulness for Hawaii Betsuin. 2024 was a great year, working together with you, and I hope we can try more exciting and relevant events in 2025! The world is ever more unpredictable, and so, let us work together to make a more harmonious and kind community and world.

Namo Amida Butsu



Rev. Shingo Furusawa

Happy New Year!
Thank you very much for your kindness last year. I would like to ask for your continued help and support this year, and let us continue to listen to the Buddha Dharma together in 2025!

In Gassho.
Rev. Shingo Furusawa



Warren Tamamoto MD President, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

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. 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,
Warren Tamamoto MD
President, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii



Rev. Charlene Kihara

It is hard to believe that 2024 has ended. What a year it has been. It was a year filled with turmoil, war, violence, civil unrest, and political upheaval not only worldwide but also here in Hawaii. However, there is an island of hope for our Sangha members. Here at Hongwanji, we are, in some ways, buffered from the chaos that affects our society. Despite the unwelcome news around the world and in Hawaii, at the Hongwanji, we celebrated the Triple Celebration at the Ala Moana Hotel, the publication of the new Gatha Book, and we welcomed the celebrated activist and actor George Takei as a speaker at an exceptional service. Through our belief in the compassion of Amida Buddha, we are supported and embraced, just as we are. Wishing you health and prosperity in 2025.

Namo Amida Butsu.
Rev. Charlene Kihara



President's Message: Cindy Alm, President

Welcoming The New Year



As we welcome the new year, my deep gratitude to our members and community for the many ways that you have supported the Hawaii Betsuin. Here are a few heartwarming examples.

One of our temple members, after hearing that fresh flowers are needed weekly for the altar arrangements, volunteered to send cut flowers and greens from her garden to the temple each week.

While I was volunteering at the temple office, a member came in with a wad of cash. He said that he had not been able to come to the temple for some time but watched the Sunday service on YouTube and put aside a donation each time. He had come to bring the amount that he had set aside.

One of our members cleaned out the large black tub near the Annex Temple. The tub had been there for many years and used to have lotus plants in them. She filled the clean tub with water and added lotus seeds and fertilizer. Beautiful flowers bloomed. Stop by to see if the flowers are blooming again.

One of themes of a Dharma message given in December was to live each moment of our lives to the fullest. These simple acts of kindness are examples of ways to live our lives to the fullest.

Happy New Year. Akemashite Omedetou.

Board Actions: November 2024:

- Adoption of gift handling procedures including board awareness, notifications, processing donations, fund management, and support for a board culture of asking questions and raising concerns.
- Approval of a \$25,000 Hawaii Tourism Authority grant to develop a cultural/spiritual tour connecting Hawaii Betsuin's immigrant roots and the indigenous Hawaiian community.

Special Board Meeting on December 2:

- Adoption of Hawaii Betsuin Board's response to Hawaii Kyodan Board relating to Stan Sheriff Fundraising Issue. (Actions taken at the regular December board meeting will be reported in February)

Mahalo

- Temple Clean Up Day: Scouting American (Troop 49 and Cub Scouts), Honpa Hongwanji Girl Scouts, Buddhist Women's Association, Dharma School, temple board, office staff, ministers, and temple volunteers. Special thank you to Rick Tabor for organizing volunteers from RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program) and Club 100 who prepared and served sandwiches for the volunteers. Thank you, also, to Wendy Harman, Business Manager Jenny Wakumoto, and Office Coordinator Colleen Kunishige, for coordinating the volunteer assignments and purchasing the ingredients and supplies for the volunteer lunch.
- Dharma School Gathering: Debbie Kubota for organizing the 6th annual program; David Atcheson & Wendie Yumori for organizing Hawaii Betsuin's watch party.

Save the Date for 2025:

- General Membership Meeting and New Year's Party, January 26
- Hongwanji Spring Bazaar, March 30
- Bon Dance, June 27 and 28
- Golf Tournament, August 14

Leadership Transition: Executive Director, Jon Matsuoka Steps Down

Mahalo to Executive Director Dr. Jon Matsuoka Hawaii Betsuin's Executive Director Dr. Jon Matsuoka has served our temple for nearly three years. He stepped down from his position effective December 31, 2024. He brought to Hawaii Betsuin extensive executive leadership experience and a belief in the universality of Buddhist teachings.

During his time as Executive Director, he built partnerships with the Native Hawaiian, LGBTQIA+, local Japanese organizations, and the spiritual community in Hawaii. He also worked to diversify and grow the temple's income streams and increase the relevance of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. Some of his notable initiatives included bringing actor and civil rights activist George Takei to speak on "What Buddhism Means to Me" and to share reflections on the Day of Remembrance, and twilight concerts

at Foster Botanical Gardens honoring Mary Mikahala Robinson Foster.

His initiatives will continue after his departure. A documentary on Native Hawaiian Buddhist women will be completed. His initial steps to identify mental health and counseling needs at temples statewide will be carried on. His development of a regenerative tourism experience for Japanese tourists seeking a deeper understanding of the Meiji era immigration and the interconnection with the Native Hawaiian community in those early years, will be a blueprint for future work.

During the transition, Betsuin President Cindy Alm and Hawaii Betsuin's chief minister, Rimban Yuika Hasebe, will cover the Executive Director's responsibilities.



We will keep you updated as the transition process unfolds. Please join us in thanking Dr. Matsuoka for his service and dedication.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Hawaii Betsuin.

[Photo taken at Twilight Concert at Foster Botanical Gardens, September 2023, by Pacific Buddhist Academy]

Cindy Alm

Hawaii Betsuin JANUARY 2025 Speakers' Schedule

January 1, 2025 at 10:00 AM

New Year's Day Service
Japanese Message: Rev. Hasebe
English Message: Bishop Umitani

5
Sunday Service
Japanese: Rev. Yuika Hasebe
English: Rev. Yuika Hasebe

12
Sunday Service
Japanese: Rev. Shingo Furusawa
English: Rev. David Nakamoto
1:00 PM Nicchu Rev. Furusawa

19
Hoonko
Japanese: Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani
English: Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani

26
Sunday Service
Japanese: TBD
English: Rev. Charlene Kihara

Project Dana's Caring for the Caregiver January 2025 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)

BWA News and Events

Fujiko Motobu

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2025!

Year 2024 went by so quickly, that it is hard to believe that it is nearly a new year, 2025, the year of the SNAKE. This was the year of the DRAGON and the world was certainly in a turmoil with war, fire, flood and rain. Climate change certainly does damages to the world. It even hit Hawaii, including some parts of Oahu. I hope you were in a safe zone. Aina Haina was ok. I hope it stays this way.

As we age, we are lucky to be retired

from our job, but there are many obstacles that we meet and wish they were not around; such as, getting deaf, losing good vision, inability to move about with ease and quickly, etc. due to bad legs and bad back. We never know what old age brings for us old people. Luckily, I still maintain a good sense of smell, so when someone is cooking good food I can certainly smell it and hope it is for me. My mouth is still agile and I can converse a mile a minute. I don't believe I have developed dementia, so I



can talk common sense. And, the one thing that I love to do is to write for our church newsletter, the GOJI Newsletter my column on BWA and health and humor.

Let's hope that his year will bring you lots of happiness and prosperity. Be kind to yourself and others, listen to others and do what they tell you to do, also remember not to tell lies and be greedy. Share what you have. Don't get angry at people, and last. Say "thank you" to many people, many times is ok. You taught your children to say thank you, so now, you can say "thank you" to them. This is what Shinran Shonin taught us before he passed away.

A smile from you is very precious, so smile to others. It's not costing you anything, but making the other person happy and he may smile back at you. Don't forget to say NAMO AMIDA BUTSU every day.

Happy new year to you. Let's all have a great year in 2025. I will be 69years old (read it backward) and hope to live till year 2029. On September 20,2029, my birthday, come to the church and I will serve all of you a little Japanese sake cup of Okinawa sake which is delicious. Do you know how old I will be?

In gassho,
Fujiko Motobu

Hawaii Betsuin

General Membership Meeting and New Year's Party 2025

Sunday, January 26, 2025 11:00 am - 2:00 pm in the Social Hall

Adult 18-64: \$25
Senior 65+: \$20
Child 5-17: \$15
Under 5: free

For Tickets scan...



or go to the Betsuin office



蛇
2025
Year of the Snake

Catered Buffet-style lunch * Silent Auction
Entertainment * Games * Prizes

In Memoriam



NOVEMBER 2024

The Hawai'i Betsuin extends its deepest sympathy to the families of the following members who recently passed away. May the family members and friends find solace and comfort in the Nembutsu. Namo Amida Butsu

Radio Programs
KZOO (1210 AM)
Japanese Language,
SATURDAY AT 7:30 AM
JANUARY 2025

- 04.....Gomonshu Kojun Ohtani & Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani
- 11.....Rev. Yuika Hasebe
- 18.....Rev. Ryoso Toshima
- 25.....Rev. Shingo Furusawa

Information Regarding Sunday Services

Attendee limits for in-person funerals and memorial services are now based on room capacity and families' comfort levels. Other service options are available. Please call the Betsuin office at (808) 536-7044 for current information and to plan for your family's needs.

Services are open to in-person attendees and a Zoom option continues to be available for the 9:30 a.m. English-language Family Services. The 8 a.m. Japanese language services continue in person only.

Many past services are available for replay on the Hawai'i Betsuin YouTube channel. For current information on Betsuin services, including Zoom connection details, see the online calendar at hawaiihetsuin.org. You may also check the Betsuin Bulletin sent by email on Fridays (subscribe at hawaiihetsuin.org/email-signup/). Or, you can call the Betsuin office at (808) 536-7044.



EVERYONE WELCOMED!

- 01 TSUDA, Sadame (101)
- 05 KOMEYA, Thelma Tatsuko (87)
- 11 UETAKE, Arthur Morio (84)
- 16 MOTOSUE, Helen Sakiko (87)
- 24 MURAOKA, Agnes Sumie (90)
- 28 FURUNO, Richard Shigeto (95)

2025 Memorial Service Schedule

2025 is the memorial year for those who passed away in:

2024: 1st year	2013: 13th year	1993: 33th year
2023: 3rd year	2009: 17th year	1976: 50th year
2019: 7th year	2001: 25th year	1926: 100th year

Schedule of Monthly Nursing Home Services

Leahi Hospital

Service every 2nd Tuesday at 10:00 AM

Hale O Meleana

Service Every 2nd Friday at 10:30 A.M.

Hale Ho Aloha

Service Every 3rd Tuesday at 10:00 A.M.

Maluhia Hospital

Service Every 3rd Wednesday at 10:00 A.M.



The great practice is to say the Name of the Tathagata of un-hindered light. This practice, comprehensively encompassing all practices, is perfect and most rapid in bringing them to fullness. For this reason, it is called "great practice." Saying the Name then breaks through all the ignorance of sentient beings and readily brings all their aspirations to fulfillment. Saying the Name is in itself mindfulness; mindfulness is nembutsu; nembutsu is Namo-amida-butsu.

-Shinran Shonin