



# The Messenger

Nurturing Nembutsu: Sharing Gratitude

## Calendar of Events

### January 2026

- 04 Sun 9:00am Sunday Service and Installation of WHM Board
- 11 Sun 9:00am Sunday Service
- 18 Sun 9:00am Hoonko Service with Rev. Takako Hashimoto
- 25 Sun 9:00am Sunday Service

### February 2026

- 01 Sun 9:00 am Sunday Service
- 08 Sun 9:00 am Sunday Service
- 15 Sun 9:00 am Sunday Service
- 22 Sun 9:00 am Sunday Service

Save the Date: WHM Bon Dance June 12 - 13, 2026

## WHM Clean Up Day

Our WHM Clean Up Day was a wonderful example of our community working together. With the help of our members, Navy volunteers, Aikido class volunteers, and friends and family, we were able to clean our temple, columbarium, and BWA room. We would also like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who prepared lunch and donated desserts. We are deeply grateful to all who generously gave their time, effort, and support to our temple.



# 2026 New Year's Greetings From His Eminence Gomonshu Kojun Ohtani

As we welcome the arrival of the New Year, I extend my sincere greetings.

In recent years, natural disasters—including typhoons, torrential rains, earthquakes, and large-scale wildfires—have occurred with increasing frequency both in Japan and around the world, causing devastating damage and casualties. I offer my heartfelt condolences for those who lost their lives, and I express my deepest sympathy to all who have been affected. I fervently hope that you may all regain normalcy in your daily lives as soon as possible.

Last year marked a significant milestone, the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II. In July, I had the honor of attending memorial services in Okinawa, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki—places that suffered destruction beyond words—and had the precious opportunity to listen to the accounts of those who lived through the war. I once again engraved in my heart the words of Sokunyo Monshu who said at the 1995 “50th Anniversary of the End of World War II Memorial Service for All the War Dead”: *“We cannot help but feel deep remorse before the Buddhas and Spiritual Leaders for the fact that we were unfaithful to the teachings of our Founder and actively cooperated with the war in the name of Buddhism.”* With renewed recognition of our organization’s wartime responsibility, I reaffirmed my resolve as we continue forward on this path.

In the postwar years, our organization began its journey by refusing to avert its eyes from the fact of its active cooperation and involvement in the war, and by striving to build a peaceful society in which all people may live in spiritual fulfillment. We must continue to confront these truths with sincerity and ensure that such errors are never repeated. Even now, around the world, wars and conflicts persist, and countless precious lives remain at risk. In such times, let us hold close to our hearts Shinran Shonin’s aspiration—*“May there be peace in the world, and may the Buddha’s teaching spread!”*—and walk each day in harmony with this wish.

January 1, 2026

OHTANI Kojun  
Monshu  
Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha

*This translation is prepared by the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii.*

# New Year's Greeting

Happy New Year!



As we welcome another year, let us once again be mindful that we are all embraced by Amida Buddha's boundless Compassion. With deep gratitude, I look forward to walking the path of the Nembutsu together with all of you in the coming year. I would also like to express my heartfelt appreciation for your continued understanding and support of the various activities of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii.

In October of last year, I had an opportunity to visit Ryukoku University in Kyoto. While there, a framed calligraphy on the wall caught my eye. It read, “共結來縁” (“Let us together form the karmic bond to come”). This particular work was written by Rev. Shunkai Matsuura, the former Chief Priest of Mibu Temple in Kyoto and a graduate of Ryukoku University. With his calligraphy, he expressed the wish that “people from various backgrounds come together, cherish the bond they share, and move forward toward a common goal.”

I found these words truly inspiring. Upon returning to Hawaii, I learned that this phrase originally comes from an ancient Chinese poem: “Mountains and rivers may divide us, but the wind and moon share the same sky. Sending this robe to my fellow disciples (of the Buddha), may we together form a karmic bond.” Over 1,300 years ago, Prince Nagaya of Japan had these words embroidered on a thousand robes sent to the Tang dynasty, wishing that, even though we are different, our shared goal is to spread the teachings of Buddha. It is said that the great Chinese master Ganjin was deeply moved by this message, which inspired him to cross the sea to Japan to transmit the Buddhist precepts.

In our Hongwanji Sangha, too, people of many backgrounds come together. Each of us carries our own karmic conditions—unique and irreplaceable by others. There are moments when we may wish that someone could take our place, or when we long to carry another's burden, but ultimately, we each must walk our own path. At times, this journey makes you feel lonely or uncertain.

Yet, Amida Buddha never abandons us. Out of immeasurable Compassion, Amida Buddha fulfilled the Vow to bring every being to the Pure Land. That compassionate calling—“Namo Amida Butsu”—reaches each one of us, here and now. Through the Nembutsu, we come to realize that the path we once thought we walked alone is in fact illuminated by Amida's Light and is shared with many fellow travelers. From that awareness arises a heart of gratitude and joy.

Let us make this year another opportunity to listen deeply to Amida Buddha's compassionate calling. In keeping with our 2026 theme, **“Nurturing Nembutsu: Sharing Gratitude,”** may we live each day with appreciation and share the joy of a life of gratitude with others.

May this year be filled with the warmth of Amida's Compassionate Light, peace of mind, and the joy of the Nembutsu for you and your loved ones.

In Gassho,  
Rev. Toshiyuki Umitani  
Bishop  
Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

# Hawaii Kyodan President's New Year's Letter for 2026

Happy New Year! Akemashite Omedetou Gozaimasu! Hauoli Makahiki Hou!

Aloha kākou! I hope that you and your loved ones are in good spirits as we enter the New Year – 2026!

Yes, another year has gone by quickly. I can look back at the past year and I'm happy that the year has gone well for my family. At the same time, I am aware that we are all a year older. I am sure that each one of us can recall losing a dear friend, colleague or family member this past year. Let us take a moment to be grateful for the connection that we enjoyed and still do enjoy with that person or persons.

It has occurred to me more than once in the past year that I won't be here forever. This realization often happens when I first get up in the morning. I think to myself, "Hey, I'm over 70!" Maybe it is because I must stretch out the stiffness in my fingers in the morning ("welcome to the land of osteoarthritis" says my friend the rheumatologist). I stretch muscles in my low back and legs before I can "bounce" out of bed. Realizing the truth of the impermanence of life makes me try to make the most of every day.

Our theme and slogan for 2026 is, "**Nurturing Nembutsu: Sharing Gratitude**". Shinran Shonin taught that the Nembutsu, the name of Amida Buddha, verbalized as *Namo Amida Butsu* is an expression of gratitude. The Nembutsu, *Namo Amida Butsu*, is our grateful response to Amida Buddha's Calling Voice. *Nurturing Nembutsu: Sharing Gratitude* reminds us that every moment of our lives, Amida Buddha embraces us with immeasurable Wisdom and Compassion. We respond to Amida's compassionate calling voice with profound gratitude.

This is my last New Year's Greeting to you as President of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii. Our Hawaii Kyodan Bylaws specifies term limits for the office of President and the last of my three terms will end with the close of our Legislative Assembly in February 2026. I plan to remain active on the HK Board of Directors as Immediate Past President and I look forward to seeing many of you in the future via Zoom or in person at various activities.

Serving as your president has been a wonderful life experience for me. I have made Dharma friends across our state, nationally and internationally. I have experienced many "Nembutsu Moments" learning about and living Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. I would like to express my deep appreciation to all of you for assisting in our mission to "share the living teachings of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism so that all people can have lives of harmony, peace and gratitude". Your dedication, creativity and determination in sharing the Nembutsu teachings makes a difference in our world.

I hope that you will enjoy peace and happiness in the New Year!

*"As one little candle lights another, so the light of Buddha's compassion will pass from one mind to another mind endlessly".*  
(The Teaching of Buddha)

With Gassho,  
Warren Tamamoto  
President, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii



# Minister's Message - A Happy New Year 2026



Through your help and support, we are having a great time, and we truly appreciate it. Arigatō gozaimasu.

The Hawaii Kyodan's slogan for five years was "Nurturing Nembutsu" and 2026's theme is "Sharing Gratitude."

In Buddhism, there is a beautiful teaching called Jiri-Rita (自利利他), which means "to benefit oneself and others at the same time." It reminds us that true happiness does not come from thinking only of ourselves, but from realizing that when we act with kindness and sincerity, our actions naturally bring joy and comfort to others as well.

Let me share a story from the Buddhist sutras. Once, a bodhisattva saw a bird struggling in a storm. He sheltered it with his robe, though he became drenched and cold. When the storm passed, the bird flew away singing — and the bodhisattva felt a deep warmth in his heart. In that simple act of compassion, he discovered that helping others is never a loss; it is the true path to one's own peace. (by Jataka Tales)

In the same way, when we support others — whether as a parent, a friend, or a fellow traveler in life — our hearts are also nurtured. This is the living practice of Jiri-Rita.

Let us all remember to live with gratitude and a sense of "Okagesama" — the awareness that we are supported by countless unseen causes and conditions. Each day, may we act with appreciation and kindness toward others, knowing that such actions enrich our own lives as well.

Namo Amida Butsu

In Gassho,  
Rev. Kojun, Takako, Kano, and Shoshi Hashimoto



**Wahiawa Hongwanji Mission Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday 9:00am - noon  
(Appointments are highly recommended)**

**Phone: 808-622-4320 Email: [office@wahiawahongwanji.org](mailto:office@wahiawahongwanji.org)**

To ensure clarity and accuracy, email is the preferred contact method. This avoids the potential for spelling mistakes or misunderstandings that can arise from unclear answering machine messages

**[www.wahiawahinbuddhists.org](http://www.wahiawahinbuddhists.org)**

**Columbarium Hours: Daily 10:00am - 3:00pm**

# Presidents' Corner

Happy New Year! 2026 is the year of the Horse, specifically the Fire Horse. Those born in the year of the Horse are energetic, confident, free-spirited, independent, warm-hearted, and optimistic. Venus was born in the year of the Water Dog, and I was born in the year of the Fire Pig. Even though each Chinese zodiac year represents certain characteristics, we are all guided by our upbringing by our parents as well as our interactions with family, friends, and people around us. The idea of which side of the coin exerts a stronger influence – nature or nurture – is difficult to measure.



Since learning about Jodo Shinshu, I have found that what happens in your life in many ways are causes and conditions of your life and what course you decide to take marks the outcome you will experience. Therefore, reflection plays a large role in deciding the best avenue to pursue regarding your decision-making. Remember being grateful for everything you have plus helping others are two mainstays that are foundational in your life.

Venus and I are both grateful to the Sangha for your support the first year we navigated this new role. We will continue seeking your advice and guidance as we carry on in the activities for 2026. We will celebrate the 6 major events: Hoonko, Spring Ohigan, Gotan'e, Obon, Fall Ohigan, and Eitaikyo. The other events are Hanamatsuri and Bodhi Day. We hope you will attend these events as well as the weekly Sunday services.

We have relied a lot on our volunteers: members, friends of Wahiawa Hongwanji, and Wahiawa organizations like Wahiawa Fresh, Rotarians, Lion's, and NCTAMS. In 2026 we will continue to ask for your support.

Finally, if you have any ideas you would like implemented, or suggestions for changes that would help the organization run smoothly, please let us know. Your suggestions are always welcome.

In Gassho,  
Venus and Carolyn  
Co-Presidents

## Thank You for Your Support of the Social Concerns Fund

Mahalo to everyone who has already contributed to our Social Concerns Fund. Your generosity reflects our shared commitment to compassionate action in our community. If you have not yet had an opportunity to give, it is not too late because every contribution helps.

Recently, the Committee on Social Concerns made emergency donations from our Social Welfare Fund to address food insecurity across Hawai'i. The federal government shutdown and disruption of SNAP benefits have placed additional strain on many local families. In response, \$2,000 was donated to each of the following organizations: Hawai'i Foodbank, Maui Food Bank, Hawai'i Foodbank Kaua'i, Kaua'i Independent Food Bank, and The Food Basket, Hawai'i Island's Food Bank.

These nonprofit organizations are a vital part of our social safety net, helping to keep our communities strong during challenging times.

The fundraising campaign runs from November 1, 2025, through August 31, 2026. Please make checks payable to WAHIAWA HONGWANJI MISSION, which we will forward a combined donation to the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your continued support and compassion.

# Mochi Making

So much gratitude! Thank you to everyone who helped make mochi and to everyone who supported us by purchasing!



## Jr. YBA Happenings

### SAVE THE DATE!

Winter Federation Meeting: Saturday, January 24, 2026  
– Sunday, January 25, 2026.

Young Enthusiastic Shinshu Seekers (YESS) Camp:  
Friday, April 3-5, 2026 in Kona. Theme: Star Wars.

We welcome any youth who are entering 6th grade through 2 years after high school graduation are welcome to join Jr. YBA! You do not need to be a member of a temple so bring your friends!

Please contact a Jr. YBA member or Aunty Arynn Ishikawa

(advisor) at [arynn.m.ishikawa@gmail.com](mailto:arynn.m.ishikawa@gmail.com) or [jrybafoahu@gmail.com](mailto:jrybafoahu@gmail.com) if you have questions or for more information.

Follow us on Instagram! @jrybafoahu and @hawaiifedjryb

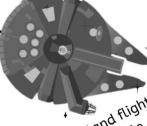


**YESS CAMP**

**EPISODE 42: THE DHARMA AWAKENS**

**April 3-5, 2026**

**Kona Hongwanji Buddhist Temple**

 Neighbor Island flight subsidies available

- Form unlikely alliances
- Restore balance to the galaxy
- Explore unknown spaces
- Learn the Force of the Dharma
- Fun lightsaber duels

**RECRUITING AGES 13-23**

**FINAL DEADLINE: 3/25/26**

[tinyurl.com/yesscamp42](https://tinyurl.com/yesscamp42)

Join the rebellion. Contact us at [yesscamp@honpahi.org](mailto:yesscamp@honpahi.org) for more information.



## ***The Family Memorial Service (Hoji)***

Buddhists consider the memorial service a significant occasion to remember the deceased with feelings of gratefulness and love. For Jodo Shinshu followers, the significance of a memorial service is not for appeasing or consoling the spirits of the deceased, but is, rather, the opportunity to pay tribute to and recall cherished memories of the departed while listening to the Buddha-dharma. In other words, the Hoji is not for the sake of the deceased, but is, indeed, for the sake of the living. In remembering the deceased, we acknowledge the influence of the deceased on our lives. (From *Jodo Shinshu – A Guide*, p. 142.)

Extended members of a family and sometimes close friends will gather at a temple or home in memory of a deceased member of the family. Following the service, the family may go out to lunch or dinner or serve a potluck at the home, renewing and strengthening family ties. An important byproduct of this custom has been the reinforcing of family ties with members beyond one's immediate family and a sense of continuity from generation to generation.

Memorial Services are held on the 1st, 3rd, 7th, 13th, 17th, 25th, 33rd and 50th years of passing. After the 1st year memorial anniversary, to figure out memorial service years, start counting from the year of death. Example, for a death in the year 2024, the first memorial anniversary would be in 2025, and the third memorial anniversary in 2026 (to figure out 3rd year anniversary, start with death year 2024 and add 2 more years to get year 2026). Below is the 2026 Memorial Service Schedule. Year 2026 is the Memorial Year for those who passed away in:

<b><u>Memorial Anniversary</u></b>		<b><u>Year of Death</u></b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Year	Isshuki	2025
3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	Sankaiki	2024
7 <sup>th</sup> Year	Shichikaiki	2020
13 <sup>th</sup> Year	Juusankaiki	2014
17 <sup>th</sup> Year	Juushichaiki	2010
25 <sup>th</sup> Year	Nijuugokaiki	2002
33 <sup>rd</sup> Year	Sanjuusankaiki	1994
50 <sup>th</sup> Year	Gojukkaiki	1977

### **Important Information Regarding Nenkai (Anniversary) Celebrations**

This year, Wahiawa Hongwanji Mission will be focusing its Nenkai celebrations on families with a deceased member anniversary in 2026. Reverend Hashimoto will personally send invitations to these families approximately one month in advance of their loved one's anniversary.

To ensure you receive an invitation, please make sure Wahiawa Hongwanji Mission has your family's most up-to-date contact information, including the name and address of your Point of Contact.

You can easily update your information by contacting our office:

- Phone: 808-622-4320
- Email: [office@wahiawahongwanji.org](mailto:office@wahiawahongwanji.org)

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation.