



# The Messenger

## Nurturing Nembutsu: Sharing Gratitude Calendar of Events

### July 2026

05 Sun 9:00am Sunday Service  
 12 Sun 9:00am Sunday Service  
 19 Sun 9:00am Sunday Service  
 26 Sun 9:00am Sunday Service - Dharma  
 Speaker Denise Okouchi

### August 2026

02 Sun 9:00am Sunday Service  
 09 Sun 9:00am Obon Service  
 16 Sun 9:00am Sunday Service  
 23 Sun 9:00am Sunday Service  
 30 Sun 9:00am Sunday Service

## Why Are You Receiving an Obon Donation Envelope Now?

You might wonder why we are sending this Obon donation envelope now, since our Bon Dance was in June.

While our Hatsubon and dance took place in June, our annual Obon Service will be held on August 9th at 9:00 a.m. Our Obon service is a time to honor and remember all those who have passed. We invite you and your family to join us for this meaningful service.



## Happenings at Wahiawa Hongwanji A Pair of Sisters are Winners!

The Oahu Buddhist Education Committee sponsored a poster contest highlighting the HHMH slogan for this year, “Sharing Gratitude.” We received posters from Aiea Hongwanji, Mililani Hongwanji, and Wahiawa Hongwanji. A pair of sisters from Wahiawa Hongwanji were winners. In Division I – Preschool – Kindergarten, Baylie Oshiro won Second Place with a certificate and a cash prize of \$20. In Division II – Grades 1 – 2, Skylar Oshiro won First Place with a certificate and a cash prize of \$25. The cash prizes were donated by the Oahu District BWA, and we are grateful they support our poster contest. We hope we will have more participants from Wahiawa Hongwanji next year. The award-winning posters are circulated among the temples and displayed during Bon Dances. It has already been displayed at Wahiawa and Ewa Hongwanji. Next, they will be on display at Waipahu Hongwanji, then Aiea, Pearl City, and Mililani Hongwanji. If you have not seen them yet, check them out at the future Bon Dances in the district.

# Minister's Message - The Messages Hidden in the Hands of the Buddha



We are currently in the season of Obon. For us, Obon is a very special and cherished time of year when the spirits of our ancestors and loved ones who have passed away return to visit us. As you clean your family altars and visit graves, many of you might be whispering in your hearts, "Welcome back," and "Thank you for watching over us."

During this Obon season, when you stand before a family altar or visit a temple and face a statue of the Buddha, which part do you usually look at first?

Most people probably look at the Buddha's serene and gentle face. However, there is a deep, warm message hidden in the Buddha's "hands."

In Buddhism, the various hand gestures of the Buddha are called Mudras (or Inso in Japanese). This might sound like a difficult technical term, but you can think of them simply as a form of "sign language" or "messages from the heart." Without using words, the Buddha speaks to us through the shapes of his hands. Today, let us look at a few of these beautiful signs together.

The first gesture is one where the Buddha sits with his hands resting gently in his lap, one on top of the other, with the tips of the thumbs lightly touching. You often see this shape when people practice meditation. This is called the Dhyana Mudra (the Gesture of Meditation).

This hand gesture is a message saying, "Let us calm our minds and look within ourselves." In our daily lives, our hearts often become restless and noisy with busy work, chores, and endless news. Through this gesture, the Buddha is gently reminding us: "Even if just for a brief moment, step away from the noise of the world, and face your own heart in quiet peace."

The second gesture is one where the right hand is raised gently at chest level with the palm facing outward, while the left hand is lowered with the palm open toward us. The Great Buddha of Nara, which is very famous in Japan, takes this exact form.

The raised right hand is called the Abhaya Mudra, and it means, "Do not be afraid. It is okay, you are safe." The lowered left hand is called the Varada Mudra, meaning, "I hear your prayers. I am always on your side."

This combination of the upper and lower hands is the Buddha's ultimate "sign of reassurance." When we feel anxious, lonely, or overwhelmed, the Buddha uses these open palms to embrace us, telling us, "I am right here with you, so you don't have to be afraid."

And there is one more gesture that I especially want you to know during this Obon season. It is the shape where the Buddha creates a small circle by touching his thumb and index finger together. This is called the Raigo Mudra (the Gesture of Welcoming).

This gesture represents a sacred promise: "I will guide you to a warm and beautiful world, anytime and anywhere." It shows the Amida Buddha ready to welcome us into the Pure Land—a place completely free from suffering and sorrow, filled only with warmth and peace.

Why do you think the Buddha has so many different hand gestures?

It is because our human sufferings, worries, and sorrows are completely different from one person to the next.

To someone who is terrified of tomorrow, the Buddha raises his right hand to say, "Do not fear." To someone who is lost and confused about how to live, the Buddha quietly folds his hands to say, "Look within your heart." The Buddha changes his hand gestures to deliver the perfect kind of comfort for whatever we are going through at that exact moment. It is a beautiful expression of boundless compassion, showing that no matter who you are or what state you are in, you will never be abandoned.

Continued on the next page

**Wahiawa Hongwanji Mission Office Hours: Tuesday, Friday & 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.wahiawashinbuddhists.org](http://www.wahiawashinbuddhists.org)

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

Continued from previous page

As I mentioned at the beginning, we are now in the season of Obon.

On Obon evenings, we light small welcome fires or float lanterns to gently guide the spirits of our ancestors back home. Just as those lanterns illuminate the dark paths, the hands of the Buddha have been continuously lighting the way for us—and for our beloved ancestors—across generations.

This Obon, when you face the Buddha at your home altar or at a temple, I invite you to take a close look at his hands.

You might think, "Ah, right now, the Buddha is telling me, 'Everything is going to be okay.'"

Or you might feel, "My loved ones who passed away are surely resting in peace, guided by those same warm hands."

If you can receive these silent messages from his hands, I am certain that the face of the Buddha before you will look even more serene, gentle, and closer to your heart than ever before.

Wrapped in the warm and comforting gestures of the Buddha, I wish you all a deeply peaceful and meaningful Obon season with your loved ones.

Namo Amidabutsu.



In Gassho,  
Rev. Kojun Hashimoto

Rev. Hashimoto and Tokudo Minister's Assistant Rod Moriyama were thrilled to welcome students and President Toru Ando from Ryukoku University, Rev. Hashimoto's alma mater. After a wonderful temple tour, everyone joined together for an evening of bon dancing. Thank you for visiting and sharing in our community traditions!

## Project Dana Presentation by Madisyn Sims - June 7th

We were delighted to welcome Madisyn Sim from Project Dana as our guest Dharma speaker for a service conducted by Rev. Rod Moriyama, while Rev. Hashimoto attended a graveyard service in Waialua. Madisyn shared how her organization's vital mission supports Hawai'i's kūpuna and caregivers, inspiring us all to put compassion into action.



## Hatsubon Service - June 6th

In deep gratitude and remembrance: Rev. Hashimoto with the families who gathered together for this year's Hatsubon service. Together, we honor the memory of our loved ones and the lasting impact they left on our lives



# President's Corner

## Generosity & Appreciation



It is hard to believe Wahiawa Hongwanji's 2026 Bon Dance has already come and gone! Months of careful planning and preparation by the Bon Dance Committee culminated in a successful and memorable event. We are deeply grateful to our committee chairs and volunteers whose dedication and teamwork ensured that every booth and activity ran smoothly throughout the weekend.

We also extend our heartfelt appreciation to our members and friends for their generous donations. Contributions included 265 pounds of rice, 21 pounds of Turbinado sugar, 132 cans of Spam, 8 bags of kinako, 4 gallons of shoyu, 73 pounds of sugar, 26 cans of tsubushian, 200 sheets of nori, 2 bags of furikake, and 29 cases of water. These donations played an essential role in supporting the Bon Dance Bites and Mochi Booth provide delicious food for our guests and community.

The Country Store was filled with an abundance of generously donated handmade crafts and treats. Shoppers enjoyed homemade cards, potholders, happi coats, composition book covers, Wet Ones holders, hanging towels, scrubbies, and microwave bowls. The store also featured a variety of delicious goodies, including cookies, li hing gummies, Chex party mixes, baked manju, and butter mochi. Adding to its charm were beautiful plants and flowers, including orchids and hanging heliconia, which delighted many visitors.

A special mahalo goes to the men and women from NCTAMS (Naval Computer and Telecommunications Area Master Station) in Whitmore. From the very first day of preparation, they stood alongside us – helping to clean the temple grounds, erecting the yagura and lighting, hanging the chochin, decorating the grounds, and staffing the booths during Bon Dance, and assisting with the final cleanup. Their hard work, positive attitudes, and willingness to help wherever needed were truly invaluable. They remained until every task was completed, always working with care and a smile.

Wahiawa Hongwanji is sincerely grateful for the generosity, enthusiasm, and spirit of service demonstrated by everyone who contributed to this year's Bon Dance. Through the collective efforts of our members, volunteers, donors, community partners, and friends, Obon 2026 was a wonderful success and a meaningful celebration of remembrance, community and fellowship.



In Gassho,  
Venus and Carolyn  
Co-Presidents



# Jr. YBA Happenings

We just got back from another fun and enjoyable 69 th Jr. YBA State Convention in Hilo, June 19-21, hosted by the United of Hawaii. It was a busy weekend with the auction, workshops and our general membership meetings. We passed the federation budget resolution and also an appreciation resolution to recognize one of the Hongwanji's leaders. Name is withheld to maintain the element of surprise in the event this person does not know yet.

Congratulations to our very own YUMA KAMURO who won the prestigious award of Jr. YBA of the Year which recognizes the Jr. YBA member who demonstrates excellence in leadership and participation through their time in Jr. YBA. We are also so proud of TAYLOR KUNIMITSU who won first place in the Art Contest! Her entry was very unique. In the form of nail art, she was inspired by the beach scene in the movie Lilo and Stitch. The detailed design captured the theme "Sangha Means Family" by showing the interconnectedness of sea life as a family and a reminder that "no matter the species or size, families can appear in many different ways, showing how it is important to remember that everyone is connected." In addition to Jr. YBA of the Year, YUMA also won first place in the Oratorical Contest.

We'd like to thank our members who held Federation Offices: Diandra Thomson, Vice President and Taylor Kunimitsu, Secretary. Both young ladies did a wonderful job the last couple of years in addition to their studies and participating in Jr. YBA meetings and activities. Our new Federation Officers for 2026-2027 are as follows:

President: Maslyn Kaneshiro Takeuchi (United of Honolulu)

Vice President: Wesley Kosaka (United of Maui)

Secretary: Miyaka Nishihira (United of Honolulu)

Treasurer: Riann Shiro (United of Hawaii)

Congratulations to all our new Officers! Our United will have elections for new officers at our next meeting in July.



2026

## SUMMER SESSION

26, 27, 28, 29  
July

at the Buddhist  
Study Center



<https://honpahi.link/bccss26>

### RETHINKING BUDDHIST EDUCATION

#### BUDDHISM AND FAMILY CULTURE

9:00 AM - 11:30 AM  
at Jikoen Hongwanji

WEEKEND SESSION  
JULY 26

#### ENTERING THE MAHAYANA MULTIVERSE

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

WORKSHOP 1  
JULY 27

#### SHIN BUDDHISM AS BASIC BUDDHISM

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

WORKSHOP 2  
JULY 28

#### BUDDHISM IS SIMPLE, BUDDHIST STUDIES IS COMPLICATED

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

WORKSHOP 3  
JULY 29



**REV. DR. AARON SHŌKEN PROFFITT**  
Buddhist Priest (tokudo), Jōdo Shinshū  
Hongwanji-ha  
Associate Professor of Japanese Studies,  
University at Albany, SUNY

FEATURED  
SPEAKER

# Missed Out on Bon Dance Shirts? Limited Stock Available!

Did you miss your chance to grab an official shirt at this year's Bon Dance, or do you just want an extra for a friend? You're in luck! We have a limited selection of shirts left over and available for purchase. Inventory is highly limited, so check out the available designs and sizes below to grab yours before they're gone!



## YOUTH Gray Dancers

**\$15**  
Youth S  
Youth M  
Youth L  
Youth XL

## ADULT Gray Dancers

**\$20**  
Adult S  
Adult M  
Adult L  
Adult XL  
Adult 2XL



## Blue – Yagura

**\$25**  
Adult S  
Adult M  
**Adult L currently unavailable**  
Adult XL



## Black – Sakura (Womens sizes Only)

**\$28**  
Women's S  
Women's M  
Women's L  
Women's XL  
Women's 2XL

### How to Order

To secure your shirt, please **email** the temple office at [office@wahaiwahongwanji.org](mailto:office@wahaiwahongwanji.org) by **July 18, 2026**

In your email, please include:

- Your name
- The design(s) and size(s) you want

Once we receive your request, we will reach out to confirm your order, arrange your payment, and schedule a convenient pick-up time. Supplies are first-come, first-served, so don't wait!