



# Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

## HEADQUARTERS UPDATE

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JANUARY 2021

### NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS FROM HIS EMINENCE GOMONSHU KOJUN OHTANI

#### New Year's Greeting



Happy New Year, everyone! At the beginning of this New Year, I would like to extend my best regards to you all.

Throughout the last year, the world suffered from the pandemic of COVID-19, which brought tremendous hardship to many people, and we still are not able to see when normalcy would return to our world. On this occasion, I would like to offer my deepest condolences to those who fell victim to the disease and express my sympathies to those who are currently undergoing treatment.

Meanwhile in the US, the media has widely reported systematic discrimination against African-Americans, social unrest and division among the general public brought on by the presidential election. It concerns me that many people have been left isolated in the midst of hardship.

'Dependent origination' is a universal truth that Buddha Sakyamuni presented. This fundamental Buddhist principle expresses that every thing, matter, and phenomenon arises from various causes and conditions. None of us lives by ourselves. We are living while being interconnected and mutually supported by one another. Considering the reality of a divided society, it is important that everyone deeply reflects on the principle of Dependent Origination that represents the true state of the world.

Even though having been introduced to the truth by Buddha Sakyamuni, ordinary people like us are still not able to accept it as it is. Therefore, to guide us to cope with the suffering caused by our own ignorance, Shinran Shonin clarifies Amida Buddha's compassion that always embraces us all. When the world is facing this unimaginable crisis, it is crucial that each of us experiences Amida Buddha's great compassion ourselves, and live each day to the utmost, having that joy and sensation in our hearts as the basis of our life.

I have been told that in this difficult time and situation, many of your sangha have been adopting new measures for sharing the Jodo Shinshu teaching that had not been previously considered. I find such efforts truly reassuring. It is my hope that your temples will continue serving as your spiritual home, and

therefore, I sincerely ask for your understanding and cooperation to allow them to be so. With my heartfelt appreciation for each one of you, I would like to conclude my new year's greeting.

January 1, 2021

OHTANI Kojun  
Monshu  
Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha

### 年頭の辞

新しい年のはじめにあたり、ご挨拶申し上げます。

昨年は新型コロナウイルス感染症(COVID-19)が世界的に大流行し、多くの方が犠牲となりましたが、いまだその収束が見通せません。ここに、新型コロナウイルス感染症によりお亡くなりになられた方々に謹んで哀悼の意を表しますとともに、罹患されている皆さまに心よりお見舞い申し上げます。

また、アメリカにおいては黒人差別の問題が提起され、大統領選挙も社会に混乱をまねき、社会の分断が指摘されています。このような中で、悩みや苦しみを抱えている方、孤独な状況に置かれている方も多くおられるのではないかと思います。

仏教を説かれたお釈迦様は、「物事は必ず何らかの原因があり条件があって生じ、存在している」という存在に関する普遍的な原理を「縁起」として示されました。私たちは、自分一人で生きているではありません。周りのすべての方々とつながりの中、お互いに支え合って生活しています。社会の分断が生じる現状にあって、この世界のありのままの姿である「縁起」の道理を深く心に留めたいと思います。

親鸞聖人は、お釈迦様の説かれたこの世界の真理をそのままに受け入れることができずに悩み苦しむ私たちに、阿弥陀さまのおはたらきが届いていると明らかにされました。思ってもみなかった出来事に見舞われている世界ですが、阿弥陀さまのおはたらきを聞き、それを依りどころとして日々の生活を過ごしてまいりましょう。

このコロナ禍の中、今までとは違った方法で浄土真宗のみ教を広く社会へ伝える試みもなされていると聞き、たいへん心強く思います。これからもお寺が皆さまの心の支えとなりますよう、お寺の活動にご理解とご協力を頂きますことをお願い申し上げます、年頭のご挨拶といたします。

2021年1月1日

浄土真宗本願寺派  
門主 大谷光淳

## BISHOP'S MESSAGE

### Nurtured by Amida Buddha's Light of Wisdom and Compassion



Our Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Theme & Slogan for 2021 is “Building Healthy Sanghas: Nurturing Empathy and Respect.” It is a timely slogan especially as we begin a new year. When we take a moment to reflect on the situation of our nation and our society with the Coronavirus Pandemic, racial discrimination and even the climatic changes that are occurring on a global scale, it is not hard to see what our world needs is more respect and empathy.

The Larger Sutra provides wise counsel *“People in the world...should truly respect and love each other, refraining from hatred and envy. They should share things with others, refraining from greed and miserliness. They should always be friendly in speech and expression, refraining from quarrel and dispute.”* Unfortunately, it laments, *“...people in the world...do not believe that performing good deeds brings good results, or that seeking the Way leads them to attaining it.”*

However, all is not lost in that the Great Compassionate Light of Amida Buddha illuminates, nurtures and unconditionally embraces the spiritually foolish being who cannot completely break free from blind passions and attain enlightenment on one's own. In the Larger Sutra it says *“Sentient beings who encounter this light have the three defilements swept away, and they become soft and gentle in body and mind. They leap and dance with joy, and the good mind arises in them. When those suffering pain and travail in the three evil realms see this light, they all find respite and become free of afflictions. After their lives have ended, they will all gain emancipation.”* Thus, I believe, the late Jodo Shinshu Scholar Rev. Jitsuen Kakehashi was able to say, *“When we look at the world with an ordinary mind, it is distinctly divided into things we love and things we hate, but with the mind of the Tathagata, we are made to know that everyone is equally the Tathagata's indispensably important child. From that standpoint, we realize that we are all brothers and sisters and fellow human beings. Then slowly but steadily, we come to reflect on our self-centered thoughts, reject our blind passions and make efforts to see things and live our lives in a way that can be approved by the Tathagata.”* In this way, thanks to the Working of Other Power, we begin to slowly live in a new awareness and are assured the attainment of Enlightenment at the end of this finite life with our birth in the Pure Land.

His Eminence Gomonshu Kojun Ohtani says, *“By listening to the Primal Vow and how it was established by Amida Tathagata, we are enabled to become conscious of our own ignorance and self-oriented inclinations, and through such awareness, we naturally become gentle in word and deed in our efforts of minimizing our egoistic way of thinking.”* *“Even though our efforts may pale in comparison to the Buddha's Compassion, we are at least guided in the proper direction by the Buddha Dharma.”* Let us take to heart his words.

To conclude, I would like to share His Eminence's “Our Pledge.” The original was written in Japanese and his expressed wish was that it be translated by each locale in a way that would resonate with the people of that region. Thus, this is Hawaii's Version (which can also be sung as it has also been put to music by BJ Soriano). In a few short verses, it captures the essence of a healthy Hongwanji Sangha which recites

the Nembutsu in awareness, joy and gratitude of Great Wisdom and Compassion, and emphasizes respect and empathy.

#### Our Pledge

Reaching out to others,  
I will share a smile and gentle words.  
Just like the Buddha, who always calls out with Aloha.

Breaking away from my greed, anger and ignorance,  
I will try to live in peace and harmony.  
Just like the Buddha, who shares tranquility and kindness with all.

Moving forward from self-centeredness,  
I will share a life of joy and sorrow with others.  
Just like the Buddha, whose caring heart always embraces us.

Realizing that I live because of others,  
I will strive to live life to the fullest with an attitude of gratitude.  
Just like the Buddha, who promises to embrace us all.

Thank you, Happy New Year and Namō Amida Butsu.

In gassho/anjali,  
Eric Matsumoto, Bishop

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### President's New Year's Message



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 enter the New Year. The year 2020 was a year to remember, mostly from the effect that the COVID-19 pandemic had on all of us. We experienced lockdowns, isolation from family and friends, and job loss or insecurity. And most difficult of all, some of us lost family or friends to the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you have kept up with the news, you know that there is a very good chance that 2 or 3 pharmaceutical companies will have vaccines available for the Coronavirus before the end of this year. The good news is that the first two vaccines appear to be very effective in preventing COVID-19 disease. Also, you can be sure that the FDA is looking very carefully at the safety profile for each vaccine. As vaccine availability increases, there is good reason to believe that we may be looking at an optimistic scenario of returning to a more “normal” lifestyle by the summer or fall of next 2021. Let’s hope that the vaccines continue to show effectiveness with a good safety profile and that enough people will step up and get vaccinated!

Through the difficult times caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, our collective Sangha responded by sewing masks for others, helping with daily chores such as shopping or cleaning, sharing meals, delivering produce, and by calling or messaging others. Ministers shared the Dharma through YouTube, Facebook and other electronic media. Small in-person services were held as permitted by law in spite of the risk to our ministers’ health.

Our actions through this pandemic confirms that our Sangha is vibrant, caring and compassionate. Although we were separated physically, we connected with others through individual and collective acts of kindness.

As we look forward to the New Year of 2021, let us reflect upon what we are grateful for-life, family, friends and a supportive community. Let us wake up each morning grateful for Amida Buddha’s Compassion, which surrounds each one of us.

*“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

## 2021 HONGWANJI SLOGAN

### Nurturing Empathy and Respect

We are in the second year and slogan for our five-year theme: **Building Healthy Sanghas.**

2020: Building Healthy Sanghas: Embracing Generosity and Openness

**2021: Building Healthy Sanghas: Nurturing Empathy and Respect**

2022: Building Healthy Sanghas: Connecting with Others

2023: Building Healthy Sanghas: Sharing Joy Together

2024: Building Healthy Sanghas: Sharing Nembutsu Moments

The third jewel of Buddhism, the Sangha, is our Dharma centered family and community that are our fellow travelers on this journey of life. As such, in a **Healthy Sangha**, every member is a precious companion to be **respected** and treasured. This is because in Shin Buddhism, in deep self-awareness, we understand that we are ordinary human beings with both strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, in this interdependent reality, we journey through life supporting each other with our strengths and giving and accepting help from each other and working through our weaknesses. And all of this happens within the ever abiding loving and supportive presence of Amida Buddha. Ultimately it is the working of Amida Buddha that brings us together as a Sangha and our grateful response is to strive to **empathize and respect each other**. And in this way, we honor the perfect wisdom and compassion embodied by Amida.

Rev. Kevin Kuniyuki

Director, Office of Buddhist Education, and the HHMH Commission on Buddhist Education

## THE NEW GOVERNING BOARD OF JODO SHINSHU HONGWANJI-HA

The Hongwanji Sokyoku has announced the members of the new Governing Board of Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha effective on December 22, 2020 at the Special Session of Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha diet. There are no changes from the last Governing Board.

Governor General	Bishop Chiko Iwagami
Governor	Reverend Kuson Takeda
Governor	Reverend Rigaku Mitsuoka - in charge of International Department
Governor	Reverend Zensho Ashikaga
Vice Governor	Reverend Shoshin Kumona
Vice Governor	Reverend Kenyu Takaya - in charge of International Department

## **2021 LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY SCHEDULE**

### February 11, 2021 (Thursday)

9:00am Hawaii Kyodan Board of Directors Meeting  
1:30pm State Ministers Association Meeting  
5:30pm Rap Session

### February 12, 2021 (Friday)

8:30am Legislative Assembly Opening Service  
10:00am Plenary Session  
5:00pm Recess for day

### February 13, 2021 (Saturday)

8:30am Morning Service/Officers Installation  
9:30am Resumption of Plenary Session  
11:00am Adjournment

\*The schedule is subject to change. All meetings and events will be held virtually via Zoom.