



Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

HEADQUARTERS UPDATE

1727 Pali Highway, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: (808) 522-9200 Fax: (808) 522-9209

Web: www.hongwanjihawaii.com Email: hqs@honpahi.org



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NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS FROM HIS EMINENCE GOMONSHU KOJUN OHTANI

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

In view of the Russian invasion of Ukraine that began in February 2022, as Nembutsu followers who have deeply inscribed in our hearts and minds Shinran Shonin's message of "May there be peace in the world," we firmly stand against the military infringement of the other nation's sovereignty, and also aspire for immediate return of peace in Ukraine.



Over the last year, COVID-19 continues to be a global pandemic. I would like to offer my deepest condolences to those who fell victim to the disease and express my sympathies to those who are undergoing treatment. I would also like to express my respect and sincere gratitude to the doctors, nurses, and other frontline medical professionals who have been engaging in the treatment of infected people, as well as all essential workers who have made it possible for us to continue with our lives.

The pandemic has forced us to learn firsthand that we will continue to be confronted by unexpected situations even in modern times despite technologies both in science and medical fields being highly developed. Sakyamuni Buddha, who passed on the Dharma to us, made clear that there is no life nor entity in this world that lasts forever. This truth, the principle of impermanence, has never changed even in this time and age approximately 2500 years since his time. Another fact that does not change is our inability to accept this truth as it is, and because of this, we continue struggling.

This is the very reason why, regardless of the pandemic, we can rely on the Jodo Shinshu teaching clarified by Shinran Shonin, which guides us as a spiritual foundation that enables us to move forward even when being overwhelmed with difficulties. A gathering at the temple with Amida Buddha as its center provides a great opportunity to receive the Dharma as well as an occasion in which people can support and reassure one another as fellow practitioners who follow the same teaching.

I hope you will continue to share the teaching within the greater society through various ways and your temple will or continue to serve as a place where people can gather and find comfort in its activities. I humbly ask for your understanding and cooperation in support of your temples. I would like to conclude my new year's greeting with my heartfelt appreciation to you all.

January 1, 2023

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。

まず、2022年2月に始まったロシア連邦のウクライナ侵攻に対して、私たち念仏者は親鸞聖人がお示しくださった「世のなか安穏なれ」のお言葉を改めて深く心に刻み、武力による他国の主権の侵害を強く非難するとともに、一刻も早くウクライナに平和が訪れることを願ってやみません。

さて、昨年も、世界では新型コロナウイルス感染症の流行が続きました。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すべての方々に、謹んで哀悼の意を表しますとともに、罹患されている皆様、後遺症を患われている皆様に心よりお見舞い申し上げます。また、医師や看護師をはじめとする医療従事者の方々、ライフラインの維持に努めておられる方々に深く敬意と感謝を表します。

新型コロナウイルス感染症の流行は、科学技術が発達し、医療も進歩した世の中にあっても、私たちの予想できない事柄が現実にかかるということを知らしめました。仏教を説かれたお釈迦様は、この世を諸行無常であると示されました。約2500年たってもそのことに変わりはありません。そして、この真理をそのままに受け入れることができず、悩み苦しむ私たちの姿も変わることはありません。

それ故にこそ、新型コロナウイルス感染症の流行以前も以後も変わることなく、親鸞聖人が説かれた浄土真宗のみ教えが、日々悩み苦しむ私たちの生きる支えとなります。阿弥陀如来を中心とするお寺の集まりは、み教えを聞く場であると同時に、同じみ教えを依りどころとする私たちがお互いに支え合い助け合って、安心して集うことのできる場でもあります。

皆さまには、今後も様々な工夫を凝らして、広くみ教えを伝えられることで、お寺に多くの方が集まり、その誰もが心穏やかに過ごせる場所となりますことを願っております。そして、引き続き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。

2023年1月1日

浄土真宗本願寺派
門主 大谷光淳

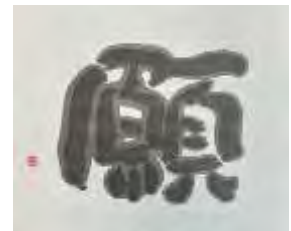
NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE FROM BISHOP ERIC MATSUMOTO



My New Year's Resolution is...

Let me take this precious opportunity to wish you a sincere "Happy New Year!" More than any other time of the year, the start of the year is a time we are filled with hope and expectation for a brighter and better year.

While, we may have personal desires and goals for myself, let us not forget to also have more inclusive aspirations and goals which embraces all others. In the words of Mitsuo Aida, whose calligraphy piece for Gan (or Negai in vernacular Japanese) is reproduced here, he says very different from personal wishes centered only on oneself are wishes such as: may there be no wars, aspiring for peace and harmony in the world, and may our human contrivances not contribute further to the contamination of our natural environment of the land, sea, and air. When we sincerely embrace these sorts of wishes, they are referred to as "Gan" (or aspirations or vows). If held deeply in our hearts, even the tiniest aspiration will be reflected in our eyes and faces. May we embrace vows and aspirations within our means and contribute to a brighter prospect for our future.



When I look at Mitsuo Aida's calligraphy above, I am reminded of Amida Buddha's 48 Vows especially the Great Compassion of Amida Buddha which promises "If those who entrust themselves to my Vow should not be born [in my (Pure) land], I shall not become Buddha." which expresses Amida Buddha great aspiration by conditioning the Buddha's own Supreme Enlightenment with the Enlightenment of all others including you and me. Could there be a greater wish or aspiration? Please reflect on this matter.

Further, let us make manifest our Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Theme & Slogan for 2023 which is "Building Healthy Sanghas: Sharing Joy Together." As Shinran Shonin rejoiced in one of his poems, *The light of compassion illumines from afar; Those beings it reaches, it is taught, Attain the Joy of the Dharma, So take refuge in Amida, the great consolation.*

Do not keep that joy and happiness of the Nembutsu hidden within you. Culturally, for many of us, being reserved and somewhat stoic is a culturally emphasized trait, but when it comes to the Joy of Buddha-Dharma, "No enryo (Don't hesitate)" would be my recommendation. Let it flow from the depths of your being outward and allow it to be known to others. This is, one way, we are able to share our joy. Needless to say, this "Sharing Joy Together" is not limited to our close circle of family and friends, but it does start with them.

To conclude, once again, I hope you detached Gomonshu's "Our Pledge" from last year's Hawaii Kyodan Calendar and have it where you and others can see and recite it daily as it shares how we can live our life together. As I express my best wishes to you for a happy, joyous and meaningful New Year, please join me in awareness, joy and gratitude of Great Wisdom and Compassion which guides, nurtures, and embraces us (eventually transforms with birth in the Pure Land of Enlightenment), to recite Namo Amida Butsu or The Buddha's Name Which I Call (in gratitude) in response to Namo Amida Butsu or The Buddha's Name That Calls Me (to entrust). Namo Amida Butsu. Thank you and, once again, "Happy New Year" from Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii's Office of the Bishop.

In gassho/anjali, Rev. Eric Matsumoto, Bishop

NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE FROM KYODAN PRESIDENT WARREN TAMAMOTO

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, 2023. The COVID-19 situation in the USA has improved over the past year with the development of effective and safe vaccines and antiviral treatments. However, over 1 million Americans (and much more worldwide) have died since the pandemic started in 2020. The COVID-19 virus still results in serious illness and death for susceptible people. Therefore, we must continue to be cautious and respectful of others. Simple guidelines that we can follow include vaccination, staying home when sick, handwashing and wearing masks when close to others. Please try to be safe as we re-open our temples.



As we move into the new year, we will reflect often on our theme and slogan for 2023, **“Building Healthy Sanghas: Sharing Joy Together”**. As we reflect, let us remember the concept of **ondobo-ondogyo** as a guide to our thoughts and action. Shinran used this phrase to explain that we are all fellow travelers, or companions on the Nembutsu path. Shinran saw himself as an ordinary person, a *bombu* (foolish person) walking the Nembutsu path along with his Dharma friends. In Shinran’s view, we are all equal. As fellow travelers, we share each other’s joys and sorrows, each other’s burdens and celebrations. In **ondobo-ondogyo**, there is a profound sense that we are equal and interdependent. Also, with the spirit of **ondobo-ondogyo** there is a natural experience of gratitude as we give support, and we are in turn supported by the presence of our fellow travelers.

As we look back on our journey for the past few years, let us express our appreciation to our ministers and temple leaders for their dedication, resilience and creativity in sharing the Nembutsu teachings with our community under difficult circumstances. And, let us continue on our journey in joy and gratitude for Amida’s universal and unconditional compassion for all.

With Gassho,

Warren Tamamoto MD
President, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii



2023 HONPA HONGWANJI MISSION OF HAWAII THEME AND SLOGAN

We are in the fourth year of our five-year theme: “Building Healthy Sanghas” with our slogan for 2023 being “Sharing Joy Together.”

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

According to the *Dhammapada*, “To live a single day and hear a good teaching is better than to live a hundred years without knowing such a teaching.” strikes a deep chord when I read His Eminence Kojun Ohtani’s *Gratitude for the Jodo Shinshu Teaching*,

“Namo Amida Butsu.

‘Entrust yourself to me. I will liberate you just as you are.’

This is the calling voice of Amida.

My blind passions are embraced in the Buddha’s awakening,

So the Buddha calls to me ‘I will liberate you just as you are.’

Gratefully responding to the Buddha’s call, I find that I am already on the path that leads to the Pure Land.

And the Nembutsu flows freely from my thankful heart.

Living with the Dharma as my guide

Softens my rigid heart and mind.

Gratitude for the gift of life I have received

Frees me from becoming lost in greed and anger,

And allows me to share a warm smile and speak gentle words.

Sharing in the joy and sadness of others, I shall strive to live each day to its fullest”.

The deep joy that I experience of being accepted as I am and forever embraced by Amida Buddha’s all-inclusive Wisdom and all-embracing Compassion sustains me through thick and thin and, naturally, there arises the wish that others too, can come to know and experience this joy and happiness. I nod in acknowledgement of the saying “Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared.”

More than ever, let us continue to live the Nembutsu by responding in gratitude to Amida Buddha by “Sharing (the) Joy (of Namo Amida Butsu) Together” by talking about Amida Buddha to others and reciting Namo Amida Butsu making manifest the saying “As the light of a small candle will spread from one to another in succession, so the light of Buddha’s compassion will pass on from one mind to another endlessly.”

Bishop Eric Matsumoto, Buddhist Study Center Interim Director, Office of Buddhist Education, and the HHMH Commission on Buddhist Education