



# Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

## HEADQUARTERS UPDATE

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**JANUARY 2025**

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



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

## 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。

昨年も世界各地で地震や洪水、山火事など様々な災害が起こり、多くの方が被災されました。災害によって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、被災された皆さまに心よりお見舞い申し上げます。皆さまが一日も早く、日常の生活を取り戻されますことを願っております。

また、2022年2月に始まったロシア連邦によるウクライナ侵攻はいまだに続いており、2023年10月以来の中東における武力衝突でも多くの犠牲者が出ています。私たちは仏教徒として、「すべての者は暴力におびえ、すべての者は死をおそれる。己が身にひきくらべて、殺してはならぬ。殺さしめてはならぬ。」（『ダンマパダ』第129偈）というお釈迦様のお言葉を大切にいたしましょう。

この世に生を受けた私たちは、いかなる理由があろうとも等しく人権が保障され、命が脅かされるようなことがあってはなりません。しかし、現実には世界各地で紛争やテロが勃発し、また貧困や政治的・宗教的な対立により、生存の権利が脅かされている人々が数多くおられます。平和主義を掲げる仏教徒であり念仏者である私たちは、お釈迦様のお言葉を深く心に刻み、世の安穏を願われた親鸞聖人のお心を体して、国際社会の平和と安全に大きく貢献することが求められています。

浄土真宗のみ教えをいただく私たちは、阿弥陀さまのおはたらきによって、自分自身の真実の姿を知らされます。それは、自身の思いや欲望にとらわれ、お釈迦様が明らかにされた諸行無常や諸法無我といったこの世界の真実を、そのままに受け入れることができずに悩み苦しむ凡夫の姿です。

しかし、そのような私を救いの目当てとして阿弥陀様ははたらき続けて下さっています。私たちは等しく阿弥陀様から願われた者同士、互いに敬い合い助け合って、困難な社会の課題にも果敢に取り組んでいくことができます。本年も、阿弥陀さまのおはたらきを聞き、仏教徒として一日一日を大切に歩んでまいりましょう。

2025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 TOSHIYUKI UMITANI



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, allowing 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

## 新年のご挨拶

本派本願寺を代表して皆様へ新年のご挨拶を申し上げます。日頃より本派本願寺の活動にご参加ご協力を賜っておりますこと、この場をお借りして、厚く御礼申し上げます。今年も皆様と共にお念仏の道を歩んで参りたいと思っております。引き続きのご支援を何卒よろしくお願い申し上げます。

さて、本派本願寺では毎年、スローガンを選定しております。今年のスローガンは英語で、**Nurturing Nembutsu: Cultivating Awareness** です。日本語に直すと難しいですが、私なりの味わいで訳しますと、まず、**Nurturing Nembutsu** というのは、「お念仏に育まれる。導かれる。」ということです。そして、お念仏に育まれ、導かれる中で、気付かされることがある。その「気づき」(Cultivating Awareness)のご縁を大切にしましょうという意味合いのスローガンです。

お念仏とは南無阿弥陀仏のことです。南無阿弥陀仏というのは、阿弥陀如来の限りない智慧と慈悲のお心が声となって現れてくださったものです。阿弥陀如来の「すべての人々を救いとりたい」という深い願いが声となって私たちの元へ届いている姿が南無阿弥陀仏です。誰一人として取り残されることはありません。この真実に気づく時、私たちはたとえどのような境遇にあろうとも、阿弥陀仏の無限の智慧と慈悲に包まれるぬくもりを感じ、安らかな気持ちで、新たな一歩を踏み出す力が与えられるのです。

私自身の普段の生活を振り返ってみますと、無意識のうちに、ついつい自分中心に物事を考えたり、他人を批判したりすることがあります。仏教では「無明」という言葉があります。「明かりが無い」という漢字を書きますが、まさに暗闇の中のように、物事をありのままに、明らかに理解することが出来ない、他者や世界を正しく見ることが出来ずにあります。これが我々の迷いや苦しみの根源と言われている訳ですが、そのような私であっても、いやそれどころか、そのような私であるからこそ、「光暁かぶらぬものはなし」(親鸞上人「浄土和讃」より引用)、阿弥陀如来の光明、お慈悲の光は、私の心の闇を照らし出し、私の命を育み、導いてくださっているのです。その働きが、今年のスローガンである **Nurturing Nembutsu** が示しているものと味わっております。お念仏は私の心の拠り所です。阿弥陀如来の温かい光に包まれている真実を聞かせていただく中で、私の心は育まれ、私の口から喜びと感謝のお念仏がこぼれ出てきてくださるのです。

皆様も私も共に阿弥陀如来から願われ包まれているのです。そう気づく時、私は自分自身の至らなさや愚かさを恥じつつも、少しでも自分の周りにはいる人たちが心おだやかに過ごせるようなお手伝いが出来ればと思っております。

今日の世界では、戦争や環境破壊、地球温暖化、人種差別、性差別など、困難な課題が山積しております。自己中心的で閉鎖的な考え方があふれてきているように感じてなりません。こうした中で、私たち一人ひとりがまずは自らの生き方を振り返り、「気づき」(Cultivating Awareness)の心を養うことがますます重要になってまいります。我々のいのちは本質的に周りの人たちの命と繋がりがあっていきますから、我々がどのように行動し、考え、発言をするかということは、他の人たちや周りの環境に大きな影響を与えます。同じお慈悲の光に包まれている者として、心を開いて、思いやりの心をもって、人々の苦しみや悲しみに寄り添っていければと思います。

多くのお陰様をいただき、新しい年を迎えることができました。今年もご家族やご友人の方々と、ぜひお近くの本願寺へお参りください。お寺では日曜礼拝、ご法事、その他にも色々な活動が行われております。皆様のご参拝を心よりお待ちしております。まだお寺へお参りをされたことのない方でも、ぜひ一度お参りをいただき、手を合わせることの素晴らしさや喜びを感じていただけましたら幸いです。本派本願寺の各寺院で皆さまとお会いできるのを楽しみにしております。皆さま一人ひとりにとって、喜びと平和に満ちた一年となりますよう念じております。阿弥陀様のみ光が常に私たちを育み、導いてくださることに感謝しつつ、お念仏と共に日暮らしをさせていただきます。

南無阿弥陀仏

海谷 聡之

ハワイ本派本願寺 開教総長

## NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE FROM KYODAN PRESIDENT DR. 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 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 (850<sup>th</sup>/800<sup>th</sup>/135<sup>th</sup>) in September, held at the Ala Moana Hotel.

There were sad occasions as 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

## 2025 HONPA HONGWANJI MISSION OF HAWAII THEME AND SLOGAN

The year 2025 is the first year of our five-year theme of “Nurturing Nembutsu” with the slogan being “Cultivating Awareness.”

### **2025: Nurturing Nembutsu: Cultivating Awareness**

2026: Nurturing Nembutsu: Sharing Gratitude

2027: Nurturing Nembutsu: Living Aloha

2028: Nurturing Nembutsu: Embracing Everyone

2029: Nurturing Nembutsu: Expanding Community

The founder of our tradition Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, Shinran Shonin emphatically taught that the Nembutsu, the name of Amida Buddha, verbalized as “Namo Amida Butsu” is an expression of gratitude, a manifestation of the attainment of the entrusting heart or shinjin, which is the decisive cause for our birth in Amida’s Pure Land. Moreover, according to Shinran Shonin as quoted in the Tannisho, only the Nembutsu is true, real and sincere, because the Nembutsu is the timeless, boundless reality that is beyond the confines of deluded thinking in the realm of samsaric existence.

The Nembutsu, vocalized in response to the Buddha’s inner voice, makes us aware of who or what we truly are as foolish, deluded human beings, utterly incapable of awakening to our true selves as enlightened beings through our own self effort. The Nembutsu is our way of expressing and sharing gratitude for Amida’s benevolence in offering us a way to transcend the pain and suffering of all sentient beings. Amida Buddha’s compassion is all-embracing, meaning everyone, regardless of racial, social, and cultural differences, is included; not one sentient being suffering in the world of delusion is ever excluded.

The name of the Buddha, expressed in Namo Amida Butsu, in sincere gratitude is the spiritual nurturing that awakens us to the universality of our suffering and limitations in samsaric existence. This nurturing, in response to the Buddha’s call, brings us to place the teaching of the Buddha at the center of our thoughts and fosters a desire to live in peace, harmony, tolerance, and genuine caring, embracing everyone of our fellow travelers not only in the Pure Land way but also in the community we are living in with its many differences in the ways to spiritual fulfillment and awakening, very much like living the Aloha spirit that has always been a part of our Hawaiian culture.

Every moment of our lives is within the nurturing call of Amida Buddha. In contemplating Amida Buddha through the recitation of the Nembutsu, we are enabled to break through the boundaries of our thoughts and words and open our minds to experience our true nature and reality as is.

Namo Amida Butsu

Rev. Toshiyuki Umitani  
Bishop

Rev. Sol Kalu (Former assistant)  
Office of Buddhist Education

*\*The Theme and Slogans were created by representatives from the following organizations/committees: Commission on Buddhist Education, Buddhist Study Center Program Committee, Ministerial Training Committee, State Ministers Association, and the Headquarters.*