



# Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

## HEADQUARTERS UPDATE

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May 2025

### MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP

*Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani delivered the following Closing Remarks at the Pacific Buddhist Academy Commencement Exercise, which took place on Sunday, May 18, 2025, at the Moanalua Performing Arts Center. Nineteen students graduated from PBA this year.*

#### **PBA Commencement Exercise Closing Remarks**

First of all, on behalf of the ministers and members of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, I would like to express my heartfelt congratulations to the Class of 2025.

We are gathered here today as one community to honor the Pacific Buddhist Academy Class of 2025. This is a day of profound transition and celebration, marking not only the culmination of years of learning but also the beginning of new journeys yet to unfold.

Over their time at PBA, these extraordinary graduates have been nurtured within a spiritual environment grounded in the timeless values of Wisdom and Compassion. They have grown not only in intellect but also in heart. They have learned not only to solve problems but also to understand and empathize with others. They have discovered not only what they are capable of but who they truly are.

This day is a celebration of their dedication, perseverance, and transformation. Yet it also reminds us of the deep interconnection of all things—that no one walks this path alone. Each achievement has been made possible by the workings of countless others: the steadfast support of family, the tireless dedication of teachers, the shared journey of friendship, and countless others, many of which we may not fully be aware.

The Buddha's teachings guide us to live with Wisdom—to see clearly that life is a tapestry intertwined with infinite causes and conditions—and to live with Compassion—to respond with gratitude, humility, and loving-kindness in all that we do.

Wisdom invites us to look beyond ourselves and honor the larger whole of which we are a part. Compassion calls us to live with open hearts, embrace diversity, and be a person who can relieve suffering and bring joy to the lives of others.

As our graduates step forward into the future, may they carry with them the light of these teachings. May they walk their path with clarity and confidence, think critically, speak with honesty and kindness, and serve with purpose and humility. May they become beacons of hope and healing in a world that longs for understanding and peace.

As this commencement nears its close, let us place our hands together in Gassho, and join our voices and hearts in gratitude, reciting the Buddha's Name in reverence for the immeasurable Wisdom and Compassion that embraces us, now and always.

Namo Amida Butsu.

Toshiyuki Umitani, Bishop

### MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR GENERAL OF JODO SHINSHU HONGWANJI-HA BISHOP GIKO SONOKI FOR 2025 PBA BACCALAUREATE

Graduates of the class of 2025, Congratulations!

Graduation marks the end of one of many chapters in one's lifetime, while at the same time it is also the starting point as you embark on a new goal. As you look back on your days at the Pacific Buddhist Academy, cherishing the many fond memories such as classes, Artist Showcases, Sports Festival, field trips, and unforgettable encounters with your friends, you are now about to leave the nest of PBA.

Please do not forget that you have come this far and have such bright futures ahead, thanks to the warm support and sincere guidance from your families, teachers, and the precious time you have spent with your friends.

At PBA, you have encountered Buddhism and particularly Shinran Shonin's teaching, which allows you to be aware that no one can live alone, and that each one of us is interrelated and mutually supported. That way of living can be realized only when we try to feel others' sufferings and sorrows as our own.

Interacting with many, there must have been times when opinions have clashed. Also from this time forth, you will encounter many happy, sad, as well as difficult events and in dealing with them, you may be driven to become selfish as being overwhelmed with fear or hatred.

Conflict arises when one insists on their own legitimacy without recognizing other views. On the other hand, by acknowledging one another despite having different values, we are able to avoid forcing others to go through painful experiences and create a society in which everyone can live in peace and harmony.

I hope you continue following the Buddhist teaching you encountered while at PBA, placing your palms together as you express your feeling of gratitude and share in the joy and sadness of others without caring only for yourself. As you each cultivate a bright future with your own youthful vitality, I close by once again extending my congratulations to you.

May 16, 2025

Governor General SONOKI Giko  
Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE FOR 2025 PBA BACCALAUREATE

Congratulatory message to the **Pacific Buddhist Academy Class of 2025** on behalf of  
the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani, Head of School Josh Hernandez-Morse, ministers, teachers, parents and most importantly, the Pacific Buddhist Academy graduating class of 2025, good evening. It is my privilege to offer congratulations on behalf of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii to you, the Pacific Buddhist Academy Class of 2025. The Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii as the parent organization of the Pacific Buddhist Academy is proud to partner with the Pacific Buddhist Academy.

I enjoyed reading the personalized senior messages written for each of you in the latest issue of “What’s New at PBA”. The stories spoke of your personal, academic and spiritual growth and the nurturing relationships that you developed while here at our school. I’m happy that the Pacific Buddhist Academy has contributed to the development of the confident young adults that we see today.

Two thousand five hundred years ago in India, a clan called the Kalamas asked the Buddha for advice as he passed through their village. Whose teaching should they follow? How would they recognize the best teaching for them?

The Buddha said in the Kalama Sutta - do not blindly accept religious teachings (even his). Instead, examine the teachings. Use the knowledge you have gained and your own experience. Listen to the wise person, but do not accept blindly, instead use constant questioning and personal testing to find the truth for oneself.

- Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing (anussava),
- nor upon tradition (paramparā),
- nor upon rumor (itikirā),
- nor upon what is in a scripture (piṭaka-sampadāna)
- nor upon surmise (takka-hetu),
- nor upon an axiom (naya-hetu),
- nor upon specious reasoning (ākāra-parivitakka),
- nor upon a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over (ditṭhi-nijjhān-akkh-antiyā),
- nor upon another's seeming ability (bhabba-rūpatāya),
- nor upon the consideration 'The monk is our teacher (samaṇo no garū)'
- **Kalamas, when you yourselves know 'These things are good; these things are not blameable; these things are praised by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to benefit and happiness,' enter on and abide in them.**

Buddha reminds us to use personal experience and critical thinking rather than blind faith. Critical thinking based on fact. In today’s society, fact and fiction are often mixed and there is excessive reliance on the internet (by the way, I admit that I used the internet to find the Kalamatta Sutta).

Also very important, Buddha asks us to consider the happiness of others, not just ourselves (. . . these things lead to benefit and happiness). Remember The Golden Chain of Love: *I am a link in Amida Buddha’s Golden Chain of Love . . . I will try to be kind and gentle, think pure and beautiful thoughts, say pure and beautiful words and do pure and beautiful deeds, **knowing that on what I do now depends not only my happiness or unhappiness but also that of others.***

So, Best Wishes, Pacific Buddhist Academy Class of 2025. Go and do your best for yourselves, your family and your community.

Aloha.

Namo Amida Butsu.

Dr. Warren Tamamoto  
President, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii



*Pacific Buddhist Academy Class of 2025*

### MINISTERIAL ASSIGNMENTS

**Rev. Shawn Yagi**, currently serving at Lihue Hongwanji Mission as its Resident Minister, will be assigned to Kapaa Hongwanji Mission as its Oversee Minister as of June 1, 2025. Rev. Yagi will continue his assignment to Lihue Hongwanji Mission as its resident minister.

**Rev. Shingo Furusawa**, currently serving at Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin as its Associate Minister, will serve as the Liaison Minister of the Windward Buddhist Temple as of August 1, 2025. Rev. Furusawa and the Honolulu District Ministers will provide the WBT with religious support. Rev. Furusawa will continue his assignment to Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin as its associate minister.

### LIVING TREASURES OF HAWAI'I™ NOMINATION FOR 2026

Living Treasures of Hawai'i recognizes and honors individuals who have demonstrated excellence and high achievement in their field of endeavor and the larger community, who through continuous growth and selfless giving have made a significant positive impact on our local society.

The program was inspired by the Living National Treasures (Ningen Kokuho) of Japan. In 1976, Bishop Yoshiaki Fujitani instituted the program within the Hongwanji at the suggestion of Paul Yamanaka, a local business executive. Initially established to honor those committed to perpetuating our islands' distinctive cultural and artistic heritage, the recognition was expanded to consider persons across sectors and communities who are making Hawai'i a better place. A [complete list of honorees](#) since Living Treasures was established in 1976 is available.

The Living Treasures of Hawai'i™ Committee has updated the nomination form and process and is ready to accept submissions for 2026. Information and the nomination form is available at the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Headquarters Office located at 1727 Pali Highway, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 or on our website <https://hongwanjihawaii.com/living-treasures/>.

The completed nomination (nomination form with any letters of recommendation) must be received by the Living Treasures Committee no later than the close of business on August 1<sup>st</sup>. The presentation will be made in February of the following year. For additional information, please call our office at (808) 522-9200.

## 62<sup>ND</sup> HAWAII STATE LAY ASSOCIATION CONVENTION

You are cordially invited to the 2025 Hawaii State Lay Association Annual Convention. Please extend this invitation to your temple members and leaders and encourage them to join in and participate in a gathering of fellow Jodo Shinshu practitioners.

Theme: LET'S BE THE AUTHORS OF OUR FUTURE!"

When: September 12-13, 2025

Where: Fri. - 5:30 PM – Jikoen Hongwanji Social Hall  
Sat –8:30 AM -Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin

Cost: Regular Registration Fee: \$75.00  
Zoom Registration Fee: \$45.00

Registration Deadline: July 16, 2025

2025 Lay Convention Website: (Under Construction)  
<https://sites.google.com/view/hsla2025convention/home>

For more information, please see the attached flyer.

## 2026 HONGWANJI CALENDAR PHOTOS CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii (HHMH) Calendar Committee invites members, Dharma friends, and affiliates to provide photos for the 2026 Hongwanji Calendar that capture our Theme and Slogan: **"NURTURING NEMBUTSU: SHARING GRATITUDE."**

- You may submit several photos for consideration by the Calendar Committee for the 2026 Hongwanji Calendar.
- We do welcome cell phone photos. Photos will need to be able to be clearly enlarged.
- Preferably, please submit pictures in landscape format (horizontal), like this flyer.
- For **EACH photo, please include a brief caption expressing the 2026 slogan** and your name/temple for photo credit.
- If you have questions, please leave a message for Yumi Suzuki at the Hongwanji Headquarters Office at (808) 522-9200 or email: [hqs@honpahi.org](mailto:hqs@honpahi.org).
- For photo submissions, please submit directly to Alan Kubota at [lenscapeshawaii@gmail.com](mailto:lenscapeshawaii@gmail.com). He will respond directly to any technical questions.

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2025**

## YESS CAMP 41

YESS Camp 41 was held on April 18-20, 2025, at Camp Erdman on Oahu. There were 34 participants (15 campers, 9 counselors, and 10 staff). The theme was Mālama Amida with four guest speakers; Rev. David Fujimoto spoke about self-care, Christopher Wong spoke about conservation and taking care of the land, Emi Hashi spoke about taking care of friendships, and Bishop Umitani spoke about how Amida takes care of us. Throughout the camp, campers and counselors played games and mixers, performed skits, had a campfire, engaged in deep conversation, had intimate counselor-led services, did morning stretches, removed invasive species/planted native plants around the campgrounds, had an energetic Wicked-themed dance, shared feelings at the candlelight ceremony, ate good food, and discussed the Dharma. It was a busy yet fun and enjoyable weekend, with many new friendship connections formed. We hope to



continue on the tradition of YESS Camp, and provide young people aged 13-23 the chance to connect with the Dharma in their lives, for many more years to come.



### **KAHUKU HONGWANJI SCHOLARSHIP**

The Kahuku Hongwanji Mission closed its doors in February 2013 after serving its membership for 111 years. To maintain the legacy of the Kahuku Hongwanji Mission and to develop the future generations of the Hongwanji, Kahuku Hongwanji Mission established a scholarship to support students at the college level.



#### **Eligibility:**

- The applicant must be a student attending or registered for enrollment in an accredited university, college, or a post-high school program in the State of Hawaii.
- The applicant must show interest in Buddhism, and be active in a Hongwanji program, either at the Hawaii Kyodan level or at a branch temple.
- The applicant must be a full-time student and registered for a minimum of 12 college credits per semester.
- The applicant, at the time of the application, must have a required minimum high school, college, or university in Hawaii GPA of 2.5.  
(\*Those who registered for enrollment and not yet received Hawaii college/university GPA must submit their GPA after the first semester.)
- The applicant must submit the application form with an essay on “Dharma and My Life”.

**Application Deadline:** July 31<sup>st</sup> of the year of application

**Scholarship Amount:** \$2,000.00 each / two recipients

For more information of this scholarship, please contact the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Headquarters at (808) 522-9200 or email at [hqs@honpahi.org](mailto:hqs@honpahi.org).

## THE 51<sup>ST</sup> BUDDHIST STUDY CENTER SUMMER SESSION

### **BSC Summer Session – August 4-8, 2025** **6-8pm - Held In-person and via Zoom**

The 51<sup>st</sup> Annual Buddhist Study Center Summer Session features Rev. Dr. Enrique Galvan-Alvarez in an interactive learning series entitled:

#### **“The Path Comes to Meet Me”** **Awakening to Namo Amida Butsu**

Professor Galvan-Alvarez is a Hongwanji Kyoshi minister and leader in the United Kingdom and Spanish Shin Buddhist European community.

Come learn how to bring joy into the flow of ordinary life. For more information and registration, visit <https://bschawaii.org/summer-session/> or contact the Buddhist Study Center.

Rev. Dr. Enrique will also offer lectures at each district.

- July 30 (Wednesday) - Kauai online from the BSC at 6:30-8:00 pm. Theme: "Buddha, Dharma, Sangha" and "The European Sangha"
- July 31 (Thursday) - Maui at Kahului Hongwanji at 10:00 am. Theme: "Buddha, Dharma, Sangha" and "The European Sangha"
- August 1 (Friday) - Oahu at Mililani Hongwanji at 6:30-8:00 pm. Theme: "The Past, Present, Future of Jodo Shinshu in Europe"
- August 2 (Saturday) - Hawaii Island at Hilo Betsuin with Session I from 10:00-12:00 pm. Theme: "Encountering the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha: My Journey into Buddhism" and Session II from 1:00-3:00 pm. Theme: "Namo Amida Butsu: Where the Three Treasures Come to Meet Me"
- August 3 (Sunday) - Holualoa Hongwanji service at 10:00 am. Kona Hongwanji at 4:00 pm. Theme: "Walking the White Path: Living the Jodo Shinshu Path in Difficult Times"