

Hawaii Buddhist Women's News

HONPA HONGWANJI MISSION OF HAWAII FEDERATION OF BUDDHIST WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS

Honorary President: Yoshiko Umitani • President: Claire Tamamoto • Minister Advisor: Rev. Blayne Higa
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Message from the President: Claire Tamamoto

Aloha Fellow Dharma Followers:

It is with mixed feelings that I welcome the "Year of the Fire Horse." Hawai'i, just like our Buddhist Women's organization is a mixed plate of cultures and individuals. I stepped into this role as your Federation President with hesitation, hoping that "maybe" someone with more knowledge and experience would come forward and take the helm. However, that didn't happen and here we are.

And the time is NOW . . . as I have said to many people that I work with, "Thank you for volunteering without hesitation." I firmly believe that many hands, each doing a lot or a little, help to make the tasks easier and successful. So, please say "yes" when you are asked to help.

When I was first asked to join the Aiea BWA (many, many years ago), I remember responding sheepishly; "I'm not old enough yet." I was firmly reminded by our ladies that they were not always "old and gray." Many joined when they first got married. And the years flew by.

I promise you that as president, I am willing to learn. I encourage new and old members to come as you are and unlock the mystery of the BWA. It is more than an organization of sewing, cooking, cleaning and child rearing. Just for fun - I can do/did two of these things - guess which two?

The "Fujinkai" (ladies' group) got its beginnings in 1898 with the establishment of the Betsuin Fujinkai. It is on their shoulders that we stand today to continue the good and essential work of our temples and communities. Yes, we are smaller, older, and trying to continue to be relevant in today's world.

As we transition our organization, we should try to be ready to discuss and take a stand on the issues that challenge people in today's society: physical, mental, social and economic isolation. These challenges may be out of our comfort zone. However, these issues may be important to our successors, who are trying to see if the BWA is an organization in which they want to invest their time and efforts. Our successors must feel that they have a place in our organization, that their opinions and efforts matter, that we are willing to learn and move into the digital world.



We can learn and grow together. Together we will raise a strong and vibrant voice.

I would like to express a sincere thank you to Immediate Past President Linda Nagai. Since 2022, her leadership sustained our organization through COVID (modifying/adopting policies). She attended the 17th World Convention in Japan and accepted the flag for the 18th World Convention in Hawai'i. Linda will continue in her role as Convention Chair of the 18th World Convention hosted by Hawai'i on September 11 – 12, 2027 at the Hilton Hawaiian Village Waikiki Beach Resort. BWA members from Brazil, Buddhist Churches of America (mainland), Canada, Japan, and Hawai'i will gather around the

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Message from the President continued

theme: "Live Peace, Live Aloha, Live As One in the Nembutsu." Make sure you come and join us!

I hope many of you are attending or were able to attend our 15th State Conference and General Membership meeting on March 28 -29th. "Nurturing Nembutsu: Sharing Gratitude" was the theme with guest speaker Ms. Michiko Inanaga from BCA. We hope you found the workshops stimulating and the panel presentation enlightening.

Great news! The Student Exchange Program from Japan is back after taking a break since 2018. Two students will join us from August 6th to 14th, hosted by the Federation of BWAs along with the Island of Hawai'i, Honolulu, and O'ahu Districts. We are excited to reestablish this two-way exchange which nurtures future leaders through Jodo Shinshu Teachings, cultural activities and fellowship.

I also want to take a moment to draw on the Dharma for some inner peace. Many of us have recently been reminded of our basic teaching of impermanence. Over a three-week period, the Hongwanji community lost Dianne Sumida, Colleen Hanabusa, and Brian Tanimoto. Personally, the Tamamoto family also lost a close relative. For each of us, there were varying degrees of familiarity with those who left us and yet the loss is felt just the same. We are reminded of Rennyō's White Ashes, . . . "the transient nature of human existence, nothing in this world is more fragile and fleeting than our life . . . we shall come to fully appreciate the meaning of this life which is unrepeatable and thus to be treasured above all else." Namo Amida Butsu.

Ichigo Ichie (one time, one meeting). Don't let the moment pass. Check out the Hawaii Buddhist Women's Associations website: hawaiiowa.org. Come and see our rich history, activities and upcoming events.

In gratitude,
Claire Tamamoto

Student Exchange Program Returns: Report from the Federation of BWAs Student Exchange Committee

Student Exchange Committee

Chad Tsuyoshi Okawa and Lauren Kana Suzuki represented the Hawaii Federation of BWA as participants in the BWA Student Exchange Program, which was hosted by the Buddhist Women's Federation of Japan from July 3-10, 2025.

During the first half of their trip, Chad and Kana participated in the same activities as YBICSE (Young Buddhist International Cultural Study Exchange). They stayed at Monbou Kaikan near Honzan, visited Honzan, attended the morning service, and explored some historical sites within the Hongwanji premises. They took a trip to Hiroshima to visit the Peace Memorial Museum and Hiroshima Betsuin. They listened to an atomic bomb survivor's testimony at Hiroshima Betsuin. They also toured Nara, Mt. Hiei, Otani Mausoleum, and Kyoto Women's University for fellowship with college students.

During the second half of their trip, Chad and Kana took part in the official BWA Student Exchange Program activities, which included a homestay in Toyama Prefecture. They stayed at the home of Ms. Momoyama, a member of the BWA Federation of Japan, in Toyama City. According to Kana's report, they participated in various cultural activities, including wearing a kimono, attending a tea ceremony, picking cucumbers and tomatoes, and enjoying Japanese barbecue. Four Fujinkai ladies also met with them to do a washi paper-making workshop, with some traveling hours by car, just to spend a few hours with the exchange students. Both Chad and Kana mentioned that their host family was very kind and welcoming.

Before the homestay portion, they had an official audience with Lady Ruzumi Ohtani at Honzan. Chad performed three Gatha pieces (Ondokusan, Asoka no Sono, and Seiya) while playing the Shinobue (Japanese flute) in front of her. Kana and Lady Ohtani discussed Jodo Shinshu teachings. She also talked about the preparations for the upcoming World BWA Convention in Hawaii in 2027.

They had a wonderful time in Japan and safely returned to Hawaii. We hope this experience will have a positive influence on their lives and encourage them to become more involved in BWA activities at their respective temples.



July 1, 2025, Daniel K. Inouye International Airport

Note: Written reports from Kana and Chad about their experiences in Japan are available on the Federation's web site www.hawaiiibwa.org for your review. If you prefer to have a printed copy of the students' reports, please contact Jo desMarets at Purpleldy2@aol.com.

Respectfully submitted
Karen Kikukawa and Yoshiko Umitani
Student Exchange Committee co-chairs

MAUI UNITED BWA

Gwen Hiraga



Since the publication of Fall 2025 Newsletter, MUBWA units have participated in the Peace Day event held at Makawao Hongwanji on September 20, 2025. Other activities and events include the General Membership and Fall Assembly on November 8, 2025, and the Alzheimer's Walk on November 16, 2025 at the Queen Kaahumanu Center. The 2026 MUBWA Officers were installed in November 2025.

Wailuku Hongwanji BWA held its 120th Anniversary Celebration on September 21, 2025 with a special service and luncheon. MUBWA President Sharon Nohara and Unit representatives (Aileen Cockett, Charlotte Wilkinson

and Carol Yamamura) participated in the service.

The 2025 Tadaichi Fukunaga Dana Award recipients were recognized and presented plaques at their respective temple's Sokai in January. All recipients (Susan Emura, Sandra Hirata, Sharon Nagoshi, Phyllis Nakamura, and Susan Osako) are BWA members. Congratulations to these outstanding women!

In 2024, Maui United and Kauai United volunteered to make ribbon lei for the 18th World Buddhist Women's Convention in 2027. On Maui, Jean Heselden chairs the lei making project to provide these "gifts of Aloha" for convention attendees. Members continue with the lei making project.

An ongoing project is with "A Cup of Cold Water Maui," a mobile outreach ministry providing water and basic life necessities to the unsheltered with love, compassion and dignity. KHBWA, WHBWA and Lahaina members assist with the preparation and delivery of Peanut Butter and Jelly sandwiches monthly for the unsheltered. Sandwiches are prepared and delivered weekly by either KHBWA or WHBWA.

Upcoming events in April are the Central Maui Hanamatsuri, MUBWA General Membership and Spring Assembly, Eshinni & Kakushinni Services at the temples. In May, we have the Fujimatsuri and Maui Matsuri. Units started prepping the ti leaves for leis to be donated to the Maui Veterans Cemetery for Memorial Day.



HAWAII ISLAND UNITED BWA

“REFLECTING ON THE PAST, LOOKING TO THE FUTURE,” was the theme for Kona Hongwanji BWA's 125th Anniversary Celebration. On September 27, 2025, they welcomed dozens of BWA and other Big Island temple members to share this memorable occasion. That sunny day brought together many old and new friends, and was topped off with an array of delicious food and rousing entertainment for everyone to enjoy!

The beautiful morning service officiated by the Reverend Blayne Higa included the scattering of Bodhi leaves by both ministers. Bishop Toshiyuki Umitani

gave a poignant Dharma message on how fortunate we are to have Shinran Shonin's teachings show us the way to inner peace, by simply entrusting ourselves in Amida Buddha and gratefully reciting the Nembutsu. Our awareness is further awakened through tolerance and understanding for we are all accepted as we are.

It was in 1900 that 18 women established the first Kona Hongwanji Fujinkai group, and sponsored the first Sunday School program there. Rev. Gyoshin Sato's wife, Natsuno, became the first president. Under her

enthusiastic leadership, their first project was the purchase of an altar and accessories for the inner temple. Numerous projects were undertaken to support

E. Okano

their temple and community. In 1960 the fujinkai was reorganized as the Buddhist Women's Association, and in 1972, action was taken to have the minister's wives serve as Honorary Presidents thereafter. Several members served as presidents throughout the years, but Linda Nagai has been the perpetual one still serving from 2015 to today. Her dedication to BWA is unending for she was also our Hawaii Federation President.



Honokaa hosted our General Membership Meeting on October 25 when we welcomed 12 new members with gifts: Sandra Osborne (Hilo); Luana Ogi, Terra Freeman, Carol Plummer, Georgia Cawley, Christina Cohen, Jeramia Cohen, Janet Snyder, Art Rogers (Honokaa); Helen Nagata, Elaine Sugiyama (Kona); and Jeri Kunzer (Puna). Two Centenarians, Helen Oishi (Kona) and Fumie Yanaga (Puna) were honored with Certificates of Appreciation for their years of dedicated service. Our Dana donation of \$500+ was given to the Alzheimer's Association Aloha Chapter.

The ensuing Buddhist Education Seminar hosted by Kona featured Dr. Miki Tomita Okamoto of Maui, who worked closely for over a decade with Nainoa Thompson to share the message of malama honua (Caring for Our Island Earth). She explained how the word “Aloha” conveyed many aspects of Buddhism like deep gratitude, interdependence, humility by emptying yourself and unity with patience and understanding. At the 18th WBWC in 2027, attendees will have the opportunity to participate in her workshop, “Buddhist Values and Living Aloha.”



KAUAI UNITED BWA

Karen Nishimoto



The KUHBWA Fall Conference was hosted by **Lihue Hongwanji** on October 26, 2025. Georgjeanna Plummer of the Alzheimer's Association was the guest speaker and shared information on brain health. We enjoyed a nutritious lunch, learned new games and socialized with friends - all enjoyable activities to help maintain healthy brains. **Lihue**

(101 years) witnessed much of this history and were recognized for their many years of membership and service. These vibrant ladies were delighted when presented with sekihan prepared by Reverend Yagi especially for them.

The KUHBWA was grateful for the many opportunities to support the Kauai community in 2025. The Alzheimer's Association, Kauai Independent Foodbank and Hawaii Foodbank Kauai were all recipients of monetary donations from the Dana Fund.

The Lonesome Grave Project was another opportunity to bring KUHBWA members, families and friends together to support the community. After a short service, the Kauai

Veterans Cemetery was decorated with greenery and flowers to honor the service and sacrifice of veterans.

There are some essentials that everyone needs and members of our community are no different. The

KUHBWA's Bare Necessities Drive was held to help meet this need. The West Kauai, Kapaa, and Lihue temples, along with Lihue Hongwanji Preschool, generously donated toiletries, clothing, bedding and more. The support shown for our Kauai families was overwhelming and greatly appreciated by those in need.

Some members of our Lihue Hongwanji Sangha received a treat in December. Barazushi and manju were placed in take out containers and topped with a decorated gingerbread ornament. They were delivered to members who are homebound or are ninety years of age. This special delivery is always gratefully received.

The Installation of Lihue Hongwanji Women's Association officers and the first meeting of 2026 were held on February 15. Members enjoyed a luncheon at Puakea Grill and look forward to another year of working together and sharing gratitude.



Hongwanji held its 125th Anniversary Celebration on November 2, 2025. It was an honor to have Bishop Umitani deliver a speech filled with many interesting facts about the temple's history. Lynette Mizuo also shared many facts in an entertaining left-right game. LHWA Associate members and centenarians Natsuko Daida (103 years) and Akiyo Matsuyama

Lonsome grave volunteers



Natsuko Daida (103 years)



Akiyo Matsuyama (101 years)



West Kauai bare necessities

OAHU UNITED BWA

Tamayo Matsumoto



Oahu United officers



L to R: June, Susan M, Diane, Joyce, Susan K, Yumi, Tamayo, and Janet. Rev. Eric Matsumoto on dais.

Oahu United President and Advisors



Oahu president June Asato with Bishop & Mrs Umitani, Oahu Ministers, Federation past president Linda Nagai and Federation President, Claire Tamamoto

MILILANI



At our annual membership dinner/meeting in December, members came together to renew their memberships, enjoyed a yummy spread of potluck food, karaoke by members with surprising talent, a visit from Santa with gifts for everyone, and joyful singing. This is a time when we invite potential new members. We welcomed one new member, Helen Hasegawa, who was

on a trip to Japan during and could not attend the event.

For our Ho'onko service on January 25th, members prepared zenzai, which is said to be a favorite of Shinran. This is a treat that everyone looks forward to eating.

Our BWA Dana Day was observed on

February 8. Special guest speaker was Mernie Miyasato-Crawford, who provided insight on how Project Dana is evolving to improve its ability to provide services. Mililani members, who are Project Dana volunteers, were recognized. We also held a food drive collecting \$703 in monetary donations and 204 pounds of nonperishable foods for the Hawaii Foodbank.

OAHU UNITED BWA continued WAIPAHU



We paid a surprise visit to our Adult Day Care Center (ADCC) in December bringing holiday filled gift bags for staff & special snacks for clients. They were all appreciative of our visit & gesture. BWA members (front row) and Adult Day Care Center staff in the back row..

AIEA



Our New Years outing was on January 18 at Royal Palace Chinese restaurant. Thirty-six BWA members and supporters joined and had a fun time.

Onenju & Shikisho bags



Aiea BWA is making Onenju & Shikisho bags. These items will be sold at the State Conference this year.

Aiea BWA cancelled its annual Craft Sale due to another commitment on those dates, but....



Waipahu BWA visited 6 honorable members last December & this January. We were honored to engage in enjoyable conversations with them along with some families. L to R: Janet Kaya, associate member Ms. Ellen Ujimori, and President Mrs. Kumika Soga.

Looking forward, WHM will be holding a bazaar/rummage sale on Saturday, March 21. Hours will be from 8:30 am to 12:00 pm.

Forty placemats sewn by the BWA ladies were presented to the Lotus Adult Day Care Center on December 11. The next project for the BWA ladies is to make more walker bags. L to R: Elaine, Helen, Lotus Manager Darline with placemats, Mavis and Doreen.



OAHU UNITED BWA continued

Pearl City

On Sunday, November 30, 2025, the Pearl City BWA observed its annual BWA Memorial Service, Rededication and Initiation Ceremony. Since no BWA member passed away since last year's service, all previous members who passed away over the years were honored and remembered with gratitude for their past contributions, while current members rededicated themselves to another year of service and support to the temple. In his Dharma message, Rev. Soga thanked the BWA for their hard work and remarked that they are the backbone of all temples. The Initiation Ceremony was held to welcome new members, Adria Numata and Cheryl Lohman, who were presented gifts from



the BWA by President Joan Masaki. Following the service, everyone enjoyed refreshments donated by BWA members and friends, and watched a video of our



past events prepared by Miles Tamura. The video of pictures selected from our old club scrapbooks provided a nice tribute to our departed members whom we honored that day.

HONOLULU UNITED BWA

Dianne Ida



The Honolulu United officers for January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2027:



- President: Wendie Yumori (Hawaii Betsuin)
- Immediate Past President: Lois Ohta (Moiliili)
- Vice President: Marcie Moribe (Jikoen)
- Recording Sec'y: Cynthia Alm (Hawaii Betsuin)
- Corresponding Sec'y: Dianne Ida (Hawaii Betsuin)
- Treasurer: Gayle Hirohata-Goto (Hawaii Betsuin)
- Auditors: Dorothy Colby (Moiliili)
- Dorene Toma (Jikoen)
- Federation Director: Judy Muramoto (Jikoen)
- Honorary President: Mrs. Yoshiko Umitani
- Minister Advisor:
- Rimban Yuika Hasebe (Hawaii Betsuin)

L to R: Lois Ohta, Dorothy Colby, Marcie Moribe, Wendie Yumori, Judy Muramoto, Dorene Toma, Yoshiko Umitani, Dianne Ida



HONOLULU UNITED BWA continued



HAWAII BETSUIN

Hawaii Betsuin BWA had its first General Membership meeting on Feb. 15th. We welcomed one new member. Note our honorary 4-legged member, Murasaki.



The Hawaii Betsuin BWA did a last minute field trip to Capitol Modern for a "Celebrating Mu'umu'u Month" event on Jan. 24th, which included a fashion show by Mamo Howell. We enjoyed a quick lunch at Marugame Udon on Fort Street. Mall.

JIKOEN

For the Shinnen Enkai New Year's General Membership Meeting and Luncheon, January 25, 2026 - Jikoen's new officers were installed at the meeting, two of whom live on the mainland and joined the meeting via Zoom. Jikoen BWA member Marcie Moribe performed a traditional Okinawan dance with her mother and sister during the luncheon.

Jikoen BWA Dana Day Service, February 8, 2026 - Jikoen's guest speaker, Project Dana's Intake Coordinator Clare Wu, shared

about Project Dana's history, community service projects, and volunteer opportunities.



Sandy Toma prepared special displays to honor Jikoen members who served Project Dana in the past and the 2025 Dana Awardees. In this picture, Rev. Mariko Nishiyama stands with Clara Wu and Student Intern Dylan Davis between the displays.



HONOLULU UNITED BWA continued



MOILIILI



We held our installation of 2026 officers and directors in November 2025. We are grateful to our members who take on the leadership of our group as we continue to move forward after celebrating 100 years of our BWA at MHM!

Our officers are: President: Susan Okano
 1st Vice President: Lynn Nakata
 2nd Vice President: Cynthia Ogasawara
 Rec. Sec'y.: Claire Shimizu
 Asst. Rec. Sec'y: Lily Masuda
 Corresponding Sec'y: Noriyo Morikubo
 Treasurer: Anne Kawabata
 Assistant treasurer: Donna Higashi
 Auditors: Susan Morishige and Dorothy Colby



C.A.R.E. Day at Moiliili Hongwanji BWA This year, on Feb. 8th Moiliili BWA made a tasty vegetarian offering for our temple elders that included mushroom rice, seasoned vegetables, kuromame, matcha kanten and orange slices. We delivered the lunch to elders who are homebound, but also share it with our active temple elders. It is always so nice to visit and catch up with BWA members who we don't get to see regularly.