

Hawaii Kotohira Jinsha Hawaii Dazaifu Tenmangu

Volume II January 2006



Welcome the Year of the Dog

Happy New Year! The dawn of a new year overflows with hope as we look ahead with determination and faith to grasp and make the most of 2006.

The year of the Dog is said to bring both happiness and dissent. The Dog year brings harmony to home life, patriotism to one's country and unwavering loyalty to causes you support.

On the other hand, there are major confrontations as the Dog's intensity will cause upheavals, calamities, clashes, conflicts, squabbles, fall outs and rebellions of all sorts. Being a Fire Dog year, 2006 can bring volcanic eruptions, landslides, earthquakes and other natural disasters.

Human rights will be on the agenda for 2006. We will become more idealist in our views, shedding some materialism by doing charitable acts or otherwise championing some worthy projects. It is a year in which we will shift away from the pursuit of the almighty dollar and become a little more reflective, a perfect time to reassess our sense of values.

Parents can expect to pull their offspring out of a scuffle or two this year. In like kind, these same parents may have to exercise herculean self-control at the workplace when the office bully flexes their muscles. Loyalty in relationships becomes more important than ever this year and best results are achieved by taking the high road in any given situation and when worry is transformed into advance thinking and planning.

This year will focus on spiritual meaning and answers and more people will be drawn to religious events and discussions. We can go about business as usual and nothing should concern us so long as we remain focused and stick to the righteous path.

Positive and Negative Directions for 2006

- Wealth energy is in the NORTHEAST direction during 2006
- Avoid breaking ground and expect obstructions and potential problems in the WEST during 2006.

What to avoid in 2006:

- Guilt-trips (would have/ should have/ could have)
- Self Pity (poor ole me - I'll just sit here in the dark by myself)
- Pride (cutting off one's nose to spite the face)
- Hanging on to dead-end anything (from relationships to clutter)
- Excessive worrying, panic, anxiety

What to hold on to in 2006:

- A cause or special purpose
- Old friends who have stood the test of time
- Your Principles
- The Family Circle



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Sensei Rick Beal

Damien
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Marshall's Shell Service

Mely's Kitchen



Hatsumode 2006



We have received a letter from a supporter voicing their concerns about the recent Hatsumode New Years blessing. As we feel there may be other supporters of the shrine that have the same concerns, we would like to share this letter anonymously with our readers. Our response to this letter is on the next page.

We invite our readers to submit any questions relating to Shinto, the shrine and Japanese culture. We would also appreciate any suggestions and ideas you may have for the shrine.

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Email: kotohira@gte.net

Thank you very much

January 5, 2006

Board of Directors
Kotohira Jinsa - Daizafu Tenmangu
Mr. Shinken Naitoh, President
1239 Olomea
Honolulu, HI 96817

Gentlemen:

I am writing to you because I am bothered and disappointed at Hawaii Kotohira Jinsa-Daizafu Tenmangu for making a mockery of the traditional New Year's "omiya-mairi" which has been a tradition for thousands of years.

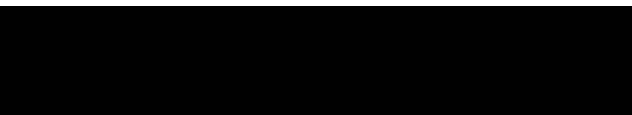
I have been coming to Kotohira Jinsa since my parents brought me as a child. I have always believed that it is important to keep their tradition alive in my children, teaching them the importance of making an offering to the temple as well as receiving the blessing of the temple.

I was extremely offended when I came on new Year's morning with my children and grandchildren to make our offering and to receive the temple's blessing, only to be greeted by the Cherry Blossom Queen. If I am not mistaken, she is not qualified to conduct the blessing ritual. I did not know what to tell my grandchildren when they asked if the Cherry Blossom Queen was also a priest.

I understand Kotohira Jinsa's desire to appeal to the public, however I do not believe that it should be done at the expense of those of us who have been coming to your temple for generations. I feel that handling of such a deeply rooted tradition to a "celebrity" for Public Relation purpose cheapens the Temple and everything we believe in. It seems to me that Kotohira Jinsa doesn't care about the loyal generations of families that have been coming for years, but rather is now focused on "putting on a good show".

I am deeply concerned with what I witnessed on New Years. I would appreciate if someone could please respond to me and explain why it happened and if this is something that will continue. If you feel that nothing wrong was done, perhaps my family and those we know are coming to the wrong temple.

Very truly yours,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

Dear Concerned Supporter,

We would like to thank you for your letter and for your many years of support of Hawaii Kotohira Jinsha – Hawaii Dazaifu Tenmangu.

Shinto's uniqueness lies in a religious tradition that is preserved and perpetuated by faithful and generous stewards of the community. This is consistent with the Shinto belief system, a practice deeply rooted in tradition, preserved and perpetuated by the selfless service of volunteers contributing to the cause of the religion. The blessings of the *kami* (gods) need to be given to people who come to the shrine, but the *kami* needs a conduit to do that. Volunteers serve the *kami* and the community by volunteering to be that conduit.

True Shinto "priests", unlike priests in other religions, do not hold any special status, other than as a "conduit" for the *kami*. Although Shinto priests are highly trained in the ceremonies and educated in the arts and the history of the religion, they are nonetheless "ordinary" people, with no special powers. Priests serve to preserve and perpetuate the traditions, just as other people do. That is why Shinto priests do not preach, and do not profess to "know better" than its congregation -- Shinto priests are ordinary people, albeit highly educated and trained.

The value of the blessings certainly do not rest on who the conduit is (the gods are not discriminatory) -- blessings given by the Cherry Blossom Queen are as meaningful as blessings given by the highest priest of the Shinto religion. As such, nowhere in Hawaii will you find an ordained Shinto priest blessing visitors at New Years. Every shrine in Hawaii depends on the selfless services of members and volunteers to conduct this practice of New Years blessings which is unique to Hawaii.

In Japan, Hatsumode is simply a visit to the shrine during the first 3 days of the new year. One rings the bell, drops their offering in the box and prays individually. No priest or shrine volunteer provides any further blessings with sacred religious implements.

However, in Hawaii, Hatsumode has taken on a unique dimension created by our Issei forefathers. Persevering extreme hardships and struggling to find its place within American society, the Issei immigrants sought further reassurance of divine protection through more personalized forms of blessings with religious implements. That unique aspect of Hatsumode continues to be practiced only in Hawaii.

Brooke Hasegawa, the Cherry Blossom Queen made a significant contribution to the shrine and the community by serving the gods of the shrine unselfishly. Her volunteer services were unsolicited and her position as a Cherry Blossom Queen unannounced until she arrived at the shrine. She could have asked to just come and greet the people and take pictures, but she did more than that. And in doing so, she has contributed to the preservation of the traditions, and has made a significant contribution to the Japanese American community. The shrine's existence depends on the support of the community, like the support that the Cherry Blossom queen demonstrated.

The Shinto tradition has survived in Hawaii for many years, thousands of miles away from its place of origin. One of the goals of this newsletter is to educate people, and to dispel any misunderstandings relating to the Shinto tradition and Japanese cultural practices. It is also a way in which we can effectively communicate with, and personally respond to our many supporters.

We are truly grateful for people like this concerned supporter who genuinely cares about the future vitality of Hawaii Kotohira Jinsha – Hawaii Dazaifu Tenmangu. They have demonstrated that they see themselves not just as an individual preserving the Japanese traditions, but one who is a part of a collective body of stewards with a compelling vision for the future of our shrine and the Japanese American community.

At Hatsumode, it is impossible to create a meaningful, personalized experience for each visitor. Perpetuation of our culture is not just a once-a-year visit. It is a journey, emulated in the hearts of all those who embrace and respect their roots. As such, we invite all of our supporters to join us in the many observances of the Japanese traditions at the shrine.

Sincerely,

Hawaii Kotohira Jinsha – Hawaii Dazaifu Tenmangu

Shinken Naitoh, MArch, JD, Ph.D.
President and Chairman of the Board

Reverend Masa Takizawa
Chief Priest

JCCH Ohana New Years Festival

JCCH ushered in the Year of the Dog with its annual New Year's 'Ohana Festival. This fun-filled event featured mochi pounding, multi-cultural foods and Japanese dishes, craft vendors, multicultural entertainment and cultural demonstrations of this multi ethnic island state.

The festival's food booths served up everything from *okonomiyaki*, prepared by Hiroshima Kenjin Kai to KC Drive-In's waffle dogs.

Visitors could also learn the art of origami, receive omamori from the shrine's booth and learn about bonsai and calligraphy from various cultural booths.

MAHALO

Bob Harada
Emi Igarashi
Kai Igarashi
Pam Igarashi
Brandon Lee
Marilyn Naitoh
Shinken Naito
Axel Obara
Richard Sakai



SHRINE CALENDAR 2006

February

- 12 General Membership Meeting
Tsukinami-sai Monthly Service
Shinnen Enkai

March

- 5 Tsukinami-sai Monthly Service

April

- 2 Tsukinami-sai Monthly Service
- 29 Clean-up & Mochi Pounding
- 30 Spring Thanksgiving Festival

May

- 7 Tsukinami-sai Monthly Service

正月の由来 Origins of the Japanese New Years

睦月について (Mutsuki January)

旧暦時代の一年十二ヶ月の和風月名は多彩で季節感豊かです。『睦月』はその代表的な和風月名で旧暦一月の異名です。その由来はいろいろありますが、もっとも有力な説は、室町や鎌倉時代の文献に、「正月は身分の上下無く、老いも若きも互いに往来し拝賀し、親族一同が新年の良き日を祝うという睦び月の意味でムツビツキがムツキになった」という説がもっとも有力な説です。

The ancient Japanese name for the first month of the year is *Mutsuki*. During the Muromachi and Kamakura periods (1185 - 1573) Shogatsu or New Years was said to be a celebration for all classes of people, for the old and young, for clans to unite in harmony and celebrate the auspicious occasion. *Mutsubitsuki* or month of harmony eventually became *Mutsuki*, to mean the first month of the new year.

正月の由来 Origins of Shogatsu (New Years)

正月とは一年の最初の月、また新年の祝い、行事もさします。「正」が年の初め、年の改まる意味があるとされます。かなり昔正月は、半年ごとに先祖の魂を迎えて祭る行事とされました。仏教が浸透し始めると、盃蘭盆は先祖供養の仏教行事、そして正月は、歳神様を迎え新年の豊作と家内安泰を祈る月として執り行われるようになりました。

Shogatsu means the first month, the beginning of a new year. Shogatsu was originally an ancestral ritual celebrated twice a year at the beginning of the year and mid-year to welcome the souls of departed ancestors. The mid-year ancestral festival is still observed as *Bon*, however, the festival at the beginning of the year evolved into *Shogatsu* or the welcoming of the Toshi-gami or new year gods.

元旦 Gantan (New Years Day)

一年の初日の旦 (あさ) のこと。「旦」は地平線から昇る 太陽の象形文字。

Gantan is the morning of the first day of the new year. The kanji characters for *tan* is said to symbolize the rising sun.