

HŌ - ON  
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ほう おん

The Buddhist Church of Oakland has initiated a new structure to perform the regular ongoing tasks associated with programs and activities of the temple. We have called this new structure **HŌ-ON Service Teams (H-O-S-T's)**. This structure will allow us to provide the necessary assistance needed to share the Nembutsu teachings which is a primary mission of our role as a Jodo Shinshu temple. It will also encourage each of us as Sangha members of the Buddhist Church of Oakland to create a welcoming and comfortable place for old and new members alike where we can gather and listen to the teachings of Shinran Shonin.

**HŌ-ON** is written with the two Japanese kanji above. **HŌ** is the character for “repay, return, recompense” and **ON** is the character for gratitude, or a debt of gratitude. As a Buddhist concept it is about repaying one’s indebtedness to Amida Buddha and all sentient beings. It is from this sense of repaying with gratitude, that we have named our new service teams. This sentiment is also expressed in Shinran Shonin’s wasan: Ondokusan (In Gratitude).

The debt of gratitude  
I owe to Amida’s great Compassion,  
I will proclaim until  
my life disintegrates into dust,  
The debt of gratitude  
I owe to my Dharma teachers,  
I will express until  
my bodily form is finally shattered.

It is our aspiration that the Oakland Sangha will use this new structure of HŌ-ON Service Teams as an opportunity to learn about and to incorporate into our daily lives this practice of gratitude and giving back. We also hope that highlighting this Buddhist concept will help each of us achieve a greater understanding of Shin Buddhism’s path of gratitude and humility.

There are eleven (11) HŌ-ON Service Teams (H-O-S-T's) who will be responsible for performing the regular ongoing tasks for each month of the year. Every year the HŌ-ON Service Teams will shift to a new month based on an established protocol, with no Team ever being assigned two months in a row. However, each Team can request assistance, if necessary, from members of the Team in the month prior and in the month after to perform the tasks within their given month.

A listing of each HŌ-ON Service Team, their leader(s) and team members follows after Tab 1 in the binder. Regular ongoing tasks include greeting, cleaning, food preparing and set-up, collating, and supporting activities and programs as needed. A full listing of monthly tasks by month are included after Tab 3 in the binder.

In gassho,

The Board of Directors of the Buddhist Church of Oakland