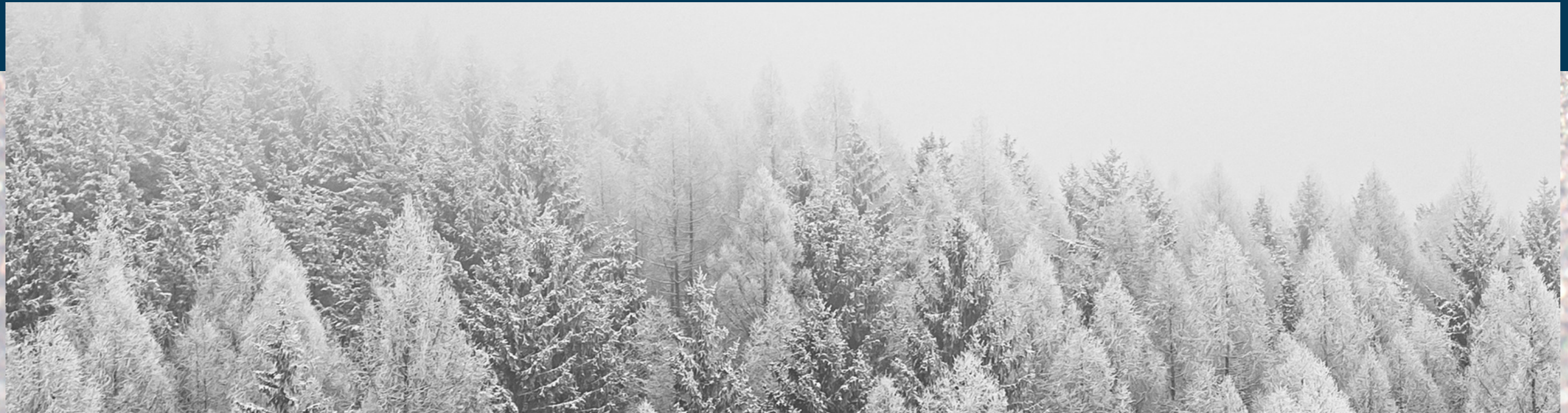


# DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

*The Office of Equity and Inclusion*



## **THIS MONTHS ISSUE WILL COVER:**

- Hanukkah
- Bohdi Day
- Kwanzaa
- Ōmisoka
- The Center Updates

Works cited:

[infoplease.com/culture-entertainment/holidays/kwanzaa](https://infoplease.com/culture-entertainment/holidays/kwanzaa)

[bodhiday.org](https://bodhiday.org)

[history.com/topics/holidays/kwanzaa-history](https://history.com/topics/holidays/kwanzaa-history)

## ***Important Dates:***

- HANUKKAH - DEC 18TH-26TH
- BOHDI DAY - DEC 8TH
- KWANZAA - DEC 26TH - JAN 1
- ŌMISOKA - DEC 31ST



The Office of E&I hopes everyone had a restorative break at the end of November. We also want to remind our campus community to check in with your colleagues. There are many historical events happening across the world and many of friends and coworkers are a part of those communities. Say hello, ask how they are doing, and just connect whenever you can. As for the Center, we have been very busy this month. While we did have to reschedule our Hip Hop event (rescheduled to January) we had many other wonderful collaborations! If you missed it, The Center worked with the Cascadia Art Club to host a winter crafting event so students could have some much needed relaxation time in between classes. We had over 35 join us to make gingerbread dog houses, snow globes, and snowflakes. A big thank you to the Cascadia Art Club for the collaboration and co-hosting the event. If anyone else would like to plan an event together, the Center is always open for opportunities to collaborate! Let's continue to build an inclusive community for everyone on campus! Also a huge thanks to Yukari, Joy, and the Jewish Affinity Group for contributing to this month's newsletter.





From Joy Keren and the Jewish Affinity Group:  
Chanukah (or Hanukkah) is the Jewish eight-day,  
wintertime “festival of lights”.

Chanukah is a commemoration of Jewish survival  
that began over two thousand years ago, when  
invading Greeks tried to force the people of Israel  
to convert to Greek culture. Against all odds, a  
small band of Jews (called the Maccabees) defeated  
one of the mightiest armies on earth to reclaim the  
Holy Temple in Jerusalem. When they sought to re-  
light the Temple's Menorah (a candelabra), they  
found only enough oil for one day. However,  
miraculously the oil lasted for eight days until new  
oil could be procured. It's like your phone is at 12%  
but lasts without a recharge - for 8 days!







As a modern celebration, we light the menorah candles, adding one each night for the eight nights of Hanukkah. Families typically celebrate with games, special prayers, and it's a Mitzva (a good deed), to consume delicious fried foods. Often gifts and donations are given. Hanukkah is a powerful commemoration, connecting Jews with their history and a reminder that while we might shine individually, our collective light can drive away all darkness.





Yukari Zednick, International Programs Director:  
"Oh-misoka" means New Year's Eve, December 31st, in Japanese.

Multiple Asian countries celebrate Lunar New Year as one of the most important holidays in a year. Following the lunar calendar, this holiday typically falls in January or February every year and it is celebrated for multiple days. In 2023, it begins on Sunday, January 22. Unlike them, Japan celebrates the Gregorian calendar's New Year's Day on January 1st, and it does not celebrate the Lunar New Year, although lunar calendar's influence can be seen to mark the changes in seasons in everyday life in Japan.



New Year's Day in Japan is very similar to Thanksgiving or Christmas holiday in the US. This is the most important, significant holiday for Japanese. School winter break starts around Christmas and lasts until around January 7th. Many businesses close from December 28th to January 3rd to give workers time off. Leading up to the New Year's Day, people tidy up their home, prepare special New Year's Day traditional food, and travel to spend time with families. This is one of the busiest times to travel by car, train, and air.

Another seasonal activity that takes place at the end of December is deep cleaning called "Oh-Souji" which literally means "big cleaning." Unlike spring cleaning in the US, Japanese traditionally deep clean their home at the end of December to start New Year's Day fresh - physically and psychologically.

On "Oh-misoka" day, while traditional home meal preparation is underway for New Year's Day, families gather in a cleaned house in an anticipation for a fresh New Year. People watch special TV programs that are aired only on this day, eating hot buckwheat (soba) noodles for dinner or late night snack to wish everyone's longevity and to cut bad luck from the previous year.





## Bohdi Day

This day is the celebration of when Siddhartha Gautama achieved Enlightenment. There are actually 2 days that this day can be celebrated, one is based on the lunar calendar while the other is based on the gregorian calendar. Siddhartha is seen as Buddha by some and then also Vishnu by others.

People celebrate the day by meditating, chanting, and performing kind acts towards each other.

## KWANZAA

Kwanzaa – marks the ‘first fruits’ harvest and was created in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, professor and chairman of Black Studies at California State University to further unite the African American community. Kwanzaa begins on December 26 and ends January 1. Although observed in a variety of ways, the theme is unity and includes dance, storytelling, poetry, and traditional meals. This colorful event is a way to discuss and share events that celebrate and remember African American history and cultural values.