## KONA HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE



## E - JIHO April 2020



Theme & Slogan 2020:

**Building Healthy Sanghas: Embracing Generosity and Openness** 



#### **KONA HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE**

P. O. Box 769 \* Kealakekua, Kona, HI 96750 Phone: (808)323-2993 \* Fax: (808)323-9815 e-mail: konahongwanji@twc.com



March 16, 2020

Dear Kona Hongwanji Members and Friends,

We hope this message finds you taking comfort in the Buddha's wisdom and compassion in these uncertain and anxious times. We have been closely monitoring the Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation as the health and wellbeing of our Sangha is our top priority. At the recommendation of Temple leadership, we have decided to <u>suspend all in-person services and activities effective immediately until April 30, 2020.</u> We will evaluate where things stand in mid-April with the hope of resuming services in May.

This decision was made keeping with the guidance and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) regarding COVID-19 and communities of faith. The CDC recommends that those individuals who are at higher risk for this virus to avoid crowds and to practice social distancing. This group includes older adults and those with heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease.

The temple office and columbarium will remain open during normal business hours.

Funerals and memorial services may be conducted at the discretion of the minister.

Please contact the office for any religious/spiritual assistance such as bedside services or pastoral care and counseling.

During this time of uncertainty and fear, we should take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha and deepen our reliance on Amida Buddha's compassionate vow. Should you find yourself in need of spiritual support, please do not hesitate to contact the minister.

Thank you for your understanding and patience as we walk the path of the Nembutsu together guided by the light of Amida Buddha's wisdom. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact us.

In Gassho,

Joseph Gusman

Rev. Blayne Higa Resident Minister

Mayer no lot

ASSISTANCE OF THE MINISTER, contact Rev. Blayne Higa at 323-2993 or Emergency only (808)383-9153 or Joseph Gusman at 896-4988 or 324-0708. To schedule services or activities, call the church

office at 323-2993 Monday thru Friday – 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Closed on weekends and holidays. If unable to contact the office clerk, leave a message on the answering machine.

E-MAIL ADDRESS: Church - konahongwanji@twc.com

## **Calendar of Events**

# Services and Activities are suspended until further notice

## **MEMORIAL SERVICES FOR APRIL and MAY 2020**

First Year (2019)	April May	09 18 7	STANLEY MITSUO KUNITOMO DESIREE JADE SHIRAKI TOKIYO TANAKA
Third Year (2018)	May	3 29 31	HENRI-ANN K. NAGATA YUKITO TAKAMOTO FUKUE "BETTY" SHIRAKI
Seventh Year (2014)	April May	15 3	SAKAE NISHIMOTO FRANCES FUMIKO UCHIMA
Thirteenth Year (2008)	April May	14 20 10 28	SUSUMU MIZOSHIRI THELMA SACHIKO KIRIHARA HELEN FUMIKO AOKI THEODORE TOSHIHARU FUJII
Seventeenth Year (2004)	April May	15 29 3 5	RUTH MICHIKO NISHIHARA KIYOKO MARUTANI KIMIE FUKUSHIMA SHIZUE SAKANASHI
Twemty-Fifth Year (1996)	May	4 25	TOSHIKO YANAGI TERUO KAMIGAKI
Thirty-Third Year (1988)	April May	19 7 26	SHIGEO KUNITAKE ZENJI EGE CLYDE TOSHIO INOUYE
Fiftieth Year (1971)	April May	08 11 1 13 22	CHESTER KAZUSO YAMAMOTO TOJIU NISHINA AKINO KAWAGUCHI TAKEO YAMASAKI TOKIO IZUNO

^^^^^

I'm sure one of the main concerns on everyone's minds these days is the ongoing Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation and the effect it may have on our daily activities. Elsewhere in this issue of the Jiho you will find a letter from Reverend Higa and I outlining what steps have been taken by the temple to address this matter. The details of the actions can be found in that letter along with the basis for our decisions. The health & safety of our members will always be of utmost importance to your temple leadership. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns about this matter.

Take care of yourselves and your families. We will do our best to monitor the situation and make changes to the actions we've taken as necessary. We will also do our best to keep you informed of any changes that may occur.

In Gassho,

^^^^^^^^^^

# The Nembutsu in the Midst of Coronavirus Rev. Blayne Higa

We often chant the Sanbutsuge (Hymn in Praise of the Buddha) during our services. This sutra is a poem from the Muryōjukyō (Larger Sutra) in which Amida Buddha as Bodhisattva Dharmākara praises his teacher and makes his forty-eight vows establishing the Pure Land. These vows promise to create a perfect world where no suffering or evil exists and guides all beings equally without exception to ultimate awakening. Amida Buddha vows to attain supreme enlightenment; to save all who are suffering; and to declare universal salvation through the Name, Namo Amida Butsu.



I resolve that, when I become a Buddha, I will fulfill this vow in every possible way, And to all beings who live in fear I will give great peace.



During this time of uncertainty and fear, we should take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha and deepen our reliance on Amida Buddha's Compassionate Vow which is always embracing us. Shinran believed that when we entrust in the Vow and say the Nembutsu, wisdom and compassion follow us throughout our lives just like our shadows do. This is Amida's promise to hold us especially in times of loneliness and anxiety.

The Nembutsu is a practice for our whole lives in every moment. We can always touch the heart of reality through Namo Amida Butsu whether at work or at home or wherever we may be. If you have a home altar, take a moment each day to quietly reflect as you light a candle and offer incense while repeating the Buddha's Name. You can do this even if you don't have a home altar. Wherever you are, simply take a moment to breathe and to think on the Buddha by saying Namo Amida Butsu. Within the Nembutsu, we can embrace the unknown with confidence and compassion. Within Namo Amida Butsu we realize that we are part of a greater human Sangha that is facing this pandemic together. Namo Amida Butsu takes in our suffering and breaks open our hearts to the suffering of others. The Nembutsu enables us to embrace our full humanness.

This is the promise of the Dharma. The Buddha's Teachings help us to understand and to manage life with greater kindness, compassion, and equanimity. In the Pure Land Path of Shinran, the Nembutsu is a promise from Amida Buddha to embrace never to abandon. The Nembutsu is a blessing that we constantly receive every single day of our lives. Namo Amida Butsu holds us in both our joys and our sorrows and transforms our ignorance into wisdom, our greed into generosity, and our anger into love. Namo Amida Butsu can help us meet life's challenges with greater courage, comfort, and peace. Namo Amida Butsu empowers us to realize that we are enough and are worthy of compassion. Living the Nembutsu is our way of actualizing the world of awakening. Within Namo Amida Butsu we can find harmony and balance in our often-chaotic world.

Please take all necessary precautions to keep yourself healthy during this crisis. We should base our responses on good science not conspiracy theories and we should always take refuge in the Buddha's Teachings. The Dharma guides us never to shy away from honestly facing the pain of the human condition and at the same time, we learn not to shy away from the beauty and value of life in all its forms and experiences.

While in-person services and activities have been suspended, the temple will remain open for personal reflection and contemplation. Should you find yourself in need of spiritual support, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am here for you. We will get through this together. May Amida's light of wisdom and compassion give you comfort and peace. Namo Amida Butsu.



Mrs. Lois Toyama, President of the Hawaii Federation of Buddhist Women's Associations was our guest speaker for our Eshinni/Kakushinni Day Service on March 1<sup>st</sup>.



On March 10<sup>th</sup> we welcomed the Fourth Graders from the Hongwanji Mission School during their annual Big Island trip. They had a wonderful time with our preschool students.





On March 8<sup>th</sup>, we hosted the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Buddha Day Celebration sponsored by the Hawaii Association of International Buddhists (HAIB). The service featured wonderful performances and a Dharma Message by Rev. Satoshi Tomioka. The beautiful Hanamido was decorated by members of the Jr. YBA.

\^^^^^^^^^

## 3/15/20 Dharma talk - j. tsue

Hello and Good Morning, it's good to see everybody,

DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE ZEN MASTER WHO ORDERED A HOT DOG? (he said he'd have one with everything...)
And DOES ANYONE KNOW THE SECRET OF THE CELERY?
(Well, there is no secret to the celery - I just thought I'd ask.

I'm just trying to divert your attention away from the serious issues.

I realize we are all concerned about the virus →→ but life goes on, so let's not worry too much.

Just try to be a little extra careful. Try to be helpful where you can. Wash hands often. Try not to touch around your face. And call your doctor if you feel ill.

Today its Sunday - so I will start with a Dharma cat story. There was a cat who walked into a freezer. Nobody knew he was in there until they found him quite a while later. They tried to revive him – CPR, shaking him, hot coffee – but it was no use. He was frozen stiff. Somebody said that gas might work ... they got some gas, poured it into the cat and waited . . . Suddenly the cat JUMPED UP, SPUN AROUND A FEW TIMES, and then ... fell over dead. (ran out of gas...)

What could we learn from this story? Was it:

- A) the wrong KIND of gas?
- B) feed your cat so he does not raid your refrig. ?
- C) make sure you have enough gas fill the tank.

Answer: None of the above.

It was too late for that cat. He had passed on – went to the other shore. He was a cat, he was *born that* way to be a cat, and to pass away – one way or another - as a cat. That is the gist of the story.

BORN THAT WAY .... To hear that phrase gives a certain comforting feeling. We were all born a certain way and we can't escape it. For myself I was born *this* way  $\Rightarrow \Rightarrow$  the following:

I seem to have been born with a very large tendency to avoid stress and seriousness. The way I handle this is - I try to keep things light by doing and saying unserious things whenever I can. When I was little, my mom used to call me her "corny johnny" and her "absent-minded professor". I'd be doing all these silly, nonsense. So, apparently, it started early. And, at this point in time, I still do not handle stress as well as other people. So I develop "MANYANA LISTS" to avoid or put off things I don't want to do or face. The problem with that is - The Manyana list gets *loong* after awhile - things start piling up. It DOES become stressful after all.

So I am trying to work this out. I find the principles of the Golden Chain and the 8 Fold Path help me in maneuvering through my day to day issues. It would be much more difficult without these guide posts showing the way. I guess I'm a slow learner but I'm hanging in there with the rest of you struggling people. But we will get better. We only need to listen and learn and keep the faith – just like the Buddha has Faith in all of us and is there for us, all the time. So no worries there.

Besides Manyana Lists I do have one PERSONAL PET PEEVE - something that really bothers me. And that is . . . Dark and zombies and that kind of thing. You might think this is funny coming from an adult

person like me. And it is funny.... in the daytime. Daytime I'm fine. It doesn't bother me. But in the dark, that's a very different story. I realize this is pretty hard to understand - I think it's mostly due to my fairly huge imagination.

So what to do about that kind of fear? I say, "Namanda, Namanda, Namanda", many, many times and it helps get me by. I say it or think it at other non-stressful times also; it's a comforting feeling there.

The Chicken Dharma Story -

A few weeks ago, I watched a chicken crossing the road up by Manago Hotel. This was a special event - the chicken was actually crossing the road USING the crosswalk! Calmly walking across within the lines and all the cars waiting for him to finish crossing. That was one very smart chicken!

So then the question naturally becomes -- Why did the chicken NOT cross the road ??

Because there was no crosswalk?? Maybe - but the real answer is →→ HE DID NOT CROSS

BECAUSE . . . . HE WAS CHICKEN!! That chicken had a chicken common sense built in and basicly, he chickened out.

For myself, I think I could use more of that common sense. My Dad used to say, "that boy has no common sense". He was probably right, because I was doing a lot of dumb silly stuff back then. But when it came down to the more serious issues, I was "nada". (I didn't quite have it, so to speak.)

At this point in time, I have more common sense for living compared to before, but I find I still could use more of it. This is why I find Jodo Shinshu is like a gentle Guideline for me – making simple common sense for living in this world. It's also a comfort to me because it doesn't require one to try extra hard in any special way. It's acceptable to make mistakes and fail now and then. It says to "try". You don't have to be the perfect person. It's there in the Golden Chain and the 8 Fold Path - just try, and keep on trying. It feels open because it's not so complex and deep and heavy. You don't need to be almost a scholar to understand it. I find it a comforting simpler way of living - a down-to-earth practical and calmer way.

For sure, there is more that I could learn. Right now, I call myself a Punk Buddhist - basic and rudimentary - still prone to making lots of mistakes. A punk Bodhisattva if any. But gradually I am learning more - its not just listening or reading, To me, it's feeling it with your whole body and mind; all of yourself. That's where I am - still learning.

Thanks for your patient listening, I wish you good health. ALOHA.

^^^^^^

### **CONDOLENCES**

Mrs Elsie K. Watanabe of Kealakekua passed away on February 25, 2020 at the Buenavista Care Home at the age of 86.

Kona Hongwanji extends our deepest sympathy and condolences to the family and relatives of those members who recently passed away. May the wisdom and compassion of Amida Buddha surround you and your family with loving memories of your loved one in the years to come.

^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^



## Welcome New Members

Our warmest Aloha and Mahalo to Nathan Kurashige, and son and daughter-in-law, Ryan and Jeni Kurashige, with their 3 year daughter, Mia from Holualoa for joining our Sangha in becomiing new members to Kona Hongwanji Buddhist Temple. Nathan loves growing plants and has a farm while his son Ryan is a plumber and Jeni is an RN.

New members are always welcome.

# COVID-19





## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

# What are the symptoms of COVID-19?









# How is COVID-19 spread?



Through coughing and sneezing



Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands



Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands



Because COVID-19 is new, we are learning more each day about the transmission patterns and incubation periods.

If you have traveled to a <u>country with widespread community</u> <u>spread of COVID-19</u>, stay home or in your hotel room for <u>14 days</u> after leaving that country and monitor your health for symptoms

- Avoid group settings, including work and school.
- Have another family member/friend, who didn't travel, run necessary errands for you, such as picking up food or medici
- Avoid using public transportation, taxis, or ride-shares if

For a list of countries with widespread sustained community transmission visit www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers.

## How can I protect myself and our community?

### Everyone in our community

- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth, especially with
- Get your flu shot to reduce the chance of developing symptoms that can be confused with COVID-19. Everyone ages 6 months or older should be vaccinated against the flu.

### If you have traveled to an affected area and feel sick

- Stay home and avoid contact with others except for seeking care
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing. Throw the tissue in the trash.
  If you need medical care, call ahead to your healthcare provider or an emergency room and let them know about your travel history. If you need emergency medical care, call 911.
- If you have difficulty accessing medical care or have questions how to care for yourself at home, call 211.

2:1:1

Get Connected, Get Help."

For more information about COVID-19. call our partners at Aloha United Way 2-1-1.

Or visit our website at:

health.hawaii.gov/docd/advisories/novel-coronavirus-2019.

This document was produced by the State of Hawaii Department of Health, Updated 3/4/2020.

