



JIHO

May 2020



Kona Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

Building Healthy Sanghas: Embracing Generosity and Openness

COVID-19 Update

We have been closely monitoring the Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation as the health and wellbeing of our Sangha is our top priority. In compliance with the Statewide Stay-at-Home Order, the temple will remain closed to all visitors for the time being (duration of the closure is subject to change as the situation develops). The following actions are in effect:

- The temple office will be closed for in-person service. For assistance, please contact the office at 808-323-2993 or email at konahongwanji@twc.com.
- The Columbarium (Nokotsudo) will be closed. Flowers placed in a vase and left on the nearby table will be offered by Rev. Blayne.
- Funerals and memorial services will not be scheduled until after May 15, 2020 (or later).
- Rev. Blayne is available for pastoral care, counseling, and bedside end-of-life services.

Please update your contact information using the enclosed form. Mahalo!

President's Message

As we all continue to deal with the effects of the ongoing Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation, I hope this message finds you and your families safe and well. During this period, please do make use of the online services provided by our temple and other temples to assist with your spiritual needs. I know I join all of you in looking forward to a time where things get back to some kind of normal, but in the meantime, if you find yourself in need of assistance, please contact the temple and we will try to assist as best we can.

I would also like to sincerely thank the members of our temple that came to help with our first food distribution event on April 11, 2020. We were able to provide boxes of food to quite a number of our sangha members during this uncertain period. We will be doing a second event on April 25, 2020, with the intent of again helping our members through this period.

In Gassho,
Joseph Gusman
Kyodan President

The Living Nembutsu

Rev. Blayne Higa

Over the past month, we have been through many ups and downs as we try to flatten the curve of the COVID-19 pandemic affecting our world. I know many of us have been disheartened by watching the news and reading on social media the various conspiracy theories and the non-scientifically based decisions being made by our national leaders and other individuals.

However, despite the displays of ignorance and fear, we have also seen people take responsibility for their lives and the lives of others by staying home as much as possible, wearing face masks out in public, and practicing good hygiene. We have also witnessed an awakening of compassion during this time of uncertainty. Helping people in need and caring for each other is what it means to be a disciple of Buddha and how we should act as a community of fellow travelers.



I am awed by the selflessness of Sangha. I am inspired by the power of compassion in times of difficulty. I am truly humbled by the working of the living Nembutsu.

A dedicated group of volunteers has been making calls to every temple member we have a working phone number for to check-in and to offer a friendly voice during this time of isolation. These calls demonstrate how important a simple, “Hello, how are you?” is to our overall wellbeing. This crisis has created an opportunity to be more mindful of having intentional and meaningful conversations with our loved ones.

Also, on April 11th, a small group of volunteers wearing masks and gloves packed boxes of food items which were distributed to our temple members. In a couple of hours, we managed to pack almost a hundred boxes filled with fruits, vegetables, bread, eggs, tofu, frozen chicken thighs, and other items. What began as a small project to support our members with just a small bag of produce quickly turned into a big box loaded with all kinds of wonderful items.



When word got around that we were doing this project, the outpouring of support was amazing. People donated bananas and avocados from their backyard; homemade pickled onions and sambazuke; boxes of fresh pineapple, tomatoes, apples, and lettuce; and delicious baked goods that were all shared with our members.

For two hours, people drove up as our volunteers loaded their cars. Several people also kindly picked up for those unable to drive and our volunteers made deliveries to the rest.

I am deeply grateful for the hardworking volunteers and the generous donors who came together to selflessly care for our community in this time of need.

As I write this, my eyes are misty and my heart is full. This is what it means to be Sangha. We are truly one ‘Ohana and I know we will get through this together.

Shakyamuni Buddha taught, “As the light of a small candle can spread from one another in succession, so the light of Buddha’s compassion will pass on from one mind to another endlessly.”

Let us continue to share our light brightening our darkened world. Compassionate activity is the Dharma in action. Sangha is truly the living Nembutsu.

Please take care and be well. Namo Amida Butsu.



Compassionate Care

The Dharma offers guidance and support for our whole lives, especially during times of difficulty. I am here to be a compassionate presence and companion to you on life's journey. I am available for pastoral care and counseling via phone or videoconference. I am also available for bedside end-of-life services and grief care. Please contact me at 808-323-2993 or for emergencies only at 808-383-9153.

Aloha, Rev. Blayne

Welcome New Members

Our warmest aloha to Geri Ann Aoki-Davidson and Carol Honda for becoming sustaining members. Welcome to our Sangha!

Please encourage family and friends to join our temple 'Ohana. New members are always welcome.

Assistance Available: A Few Key Resources

With the array of challenges that come with a pandemic and related stay-at-home orders, you may find the following community resources helpful.

- **Information:** For current coronavirus-related information go to the Hawaii State Department of Health website at <https://health.hawaii.gov/coronavirusdisease2019/>.
- **Food resources:** Hawaii's Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) has compiled an extensive list of food resources (food banks, food delivery services, farm link programs) organized by county. Find the "Hawaii Food Resources" PDF file linked prominently at hawaiiadrc.org. Or call the ADRC at (808) 643-2372.
- **211 hotline:** Aloha United Way 211 is "Hawaii's only comprehensive, statewide community information and referral service." For personalized help connecting to services or getting answers to your questions about COVID-19, you can call 211, email info211@auw.org, text (877) 275-6569. There's even an online chat option and searchable database at auw211.org.

How to Keep the Greater Good in Mind During the Coronavirus Outbreak

By Jill Suttie from *Greater Good Magazine* March 10, 2020

An excerpt offering four ways we can encourage more altruism for fighting the virus:

1. Look to the heroes

There will always be heroic efforts in a disaster—people who sacrifice themselves for the good of others. Think of the health care workers who are treating people infected with this virus at great personal risk. Or those infected with the virus who voluntarily isolate themselves for weeks to protect the public.

When we hear stories of these people, we feel what is called moral elevation—a warm feeling inside that inspires us, fueling optimism and a desire to act altruistically ourselves. While the temptation might be to focus on fear and everything going wrong, we can redirect our attention to those who are doing the right thing, which will lead us to be better citizens ourselves.

2. Stay calm and focused

It's easy to be lost in fear when disaster strikes. However, it doesn't help anyone to stir up panic about the situation, because we don't think as clearly when we are in emergency mode. You can see how this has played out already, as people have been stockpiling masks and creating a shortage that could affect the people who truly need them—those who are sick and need masks to avoid spreading the disease to the rest of us.

How can we stay calmer and make wiser choices? One way is to use whatever tools you have at your disposal for keeping a cool head—like practicing mindfulness, which has been shown to both lessen emotional reactivity and help us make better decisions. We might take a walk in the park or nearby woods and let nature soothe us. Or we could talk to a friend—a calm friend, that is—who can help us reduce our anxiety.

Of course, our normal ways of connecting socially—like singing together at a concert or going to large parties—may have to change. But whatever we can do to maintain an air of calm, and to spread it to those around us, the better. After all, our emotions tend to be contagious in our social circles, and we should do our best to keep fear and panic contained.

3. Show gratitude

One of the kindest things we can do is to say “thank you” to those who are doing what they can to fight the outbreak. As with my son's university, it doesn't hurt to send a message of thanks to people and organizations that are doing the right thing—whether it's a tour group that offers refunds for cancelled trips, the neighbor who delivers a spare mask to you, or viral experts who give you straight-up information on how to stay safe.

When we show gratitude toward others, we let them know that their actions matter, which encourages more of the same kind of behavior—not only toward the grateful person but to others. Creating a cycle of altruism is helpful when we are faced with a challenge that affects us all, helping to foster trust in each other and care for each other's plight.

4. Remember our common humanity and show compassion

When we are fearful, our first instinct might be to cast blame on others or to indulge in prejudice toward groups we see as responsible. News reports already show that some people of Asian descent in the United States are finding themselves shunned or the victims of racist profiling, simply because the virus appears to have originated in China. Though we might rationally know that no one person or country can be blamed for a viral outbreak, our minds still seek simple explanations.

Research suggests that when we recognize our common humanity and show compassion, we are more likely to pull together and to solve issues that may be complex in nature. You can start by giving yourself some compassion, which can help you become more willing to admit mistakes and take steps to correct them. This is important, as human error can be costly when there is a viral outbreak, and we need to work together to learn from our mistakes.

Of course, all of these guidelines don't supplant the importance of practicing good hygiene. We need to continue to frequently wash our hands and avoid touching our faces, so that we can lessen the chance of infecting ourselves and others. But we also should remember our social hygiene—looking for the heroes, staying calm ourselves, being grateful, and remembering our common humanity. In this way, we can help to make the world safer for all of us.

Read the full article at:

https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_to_keep_the_greater_good_in_mind_during_the_corona_virus_outbreak

Supporting Community Organizations

The Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii recently made donations to community organizations helping individuals impacted by the pandemic. This is in addition to our annual contribution of the same amount to the various food banks across the state. We believe food security is an essential and basic need in our community.

- \$2,000 Hawaii Food Bank
- \$1,000 The Food Basket: Hawaii Island Food Bank
- \$1,000 Maui Food Bank
- \$500 Hawaii Food Bank—Kauai Branch
- \$500 Kauai Independent Food Bank
- \$1,000 Honokaa Hongwanji “Feed the Keiki Program”

Funding for community giving is made possible through the Social Welfare Fund administered by the Hawaii Kyodan Committee on Social Concerns. This is the power of your Dana (Selfless Giving) at work. Mahalo for your support of the Annual Social Concerns Fund Drive!

Golden Chain of Love

I am a link
in Amida Buddha's Golden Chain of Love
that stretches around the world.
I must keep my link bright
and strong.

I will try to be kind and gentle to every living thing
and protect all who are weaker than myself.

I will try to think pure and beautiful thoughts,
to say pure and beautiful words,
and to do pure and beautiful deeds,
knowing that on what I do now
depends not only my happiness or unhappiness
but also that of others.

May every link in Amida's Golden Chain of Love
be bright and strong
and may we all attain
perfect peace.

Everyone is interconnected.
Everyone is equally deserving of love and care,
and our compassion must reach out to embrace all life, everywhere.
I will reach for courage and resilience when times are dark.
I will do what I can to protect my own health, to stay safe,
and to provide for those who depend on me.

I will be considerate of others' needs, take only my fair share,
and be a good steward of resources and of the environment.
I will follow precautions like social distancing so that I can protect those
in my community who are most at risk. I will make sure that our society
respects and provides for those who are less privileged than I am.

I will encourage my mind to focus on finding practical solutions,
even on a small scale, and release anxiety about events outside my control.
I will look for ways to support and encourage others in challenging times.
I will share helpful and accurate information with my community, and offer
comfort and compassion to myself and to all who feel anger, frustration, or fear.
I will seek ways to take actions that benefit others,
even if that means staying home.
I will make these choices because everything I choose to do today
will affect my future journey through this life,
and will also affect the health and well-being of my family,
my community, humanity, and the Earth.

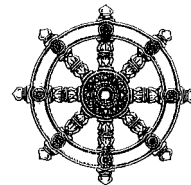
Let us work together to help all beings
be comforted, calm, safe, and well,
so that we can build a world
governed by peace, compassion, and respect for all.

This reflection was written by Dr. Benjamin Bruch, a humanities instructor at Pacific Buddhist Academy and a member of Hawaii Betsuin. He has graciously shared it with the Hongwanji community, crediting his colleague Trelawney Grenfell-Muir for her invaluable input. Mahalo to Dr. Ben for sharing his deep reflection. May it enhance our appreciation of the "Golden Chain of Love" and the strength and guidance we can draw from this beloved gatha in challenging times.



KONA HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

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2020 Membership Update Information

Date _____

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Birth Date _____ Kumiai _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Residence Address: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Occupation: (current or previous) _____ Retired: ___ Yes ___ No

Able to volunteer in _____ area(s) of church activities

Spouse's first name: _____ Spouse's last name: _____

Spouse's birth date: _____ Cell phone: _____ Work phone: _____

Spouse's Email address: _____

Spouse's occupation: (current or previous) _____ Retired: ___ Yes ___ No

Will your spouse be a member of Kona Hongwanji? Yes _____ No _____

Minor Children: _____ Birth date: _____ M or F Member? _____

Children: _____ Birth date: _____ M or F Member? _____

Children: _____ Birth date: _____ M or F Member? _____

Children: _____ Birth date: _____ M or F Member? _____

In case of emergency:

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Home phone: _____ Cell phone: _____ Work phone: _____

Email Address: _____