

Jushin

樹心

Volume 10 Issue 2
April - May 2020

inside your Jushin

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Kaneohe Higashi Hongwanji
45-520 Keahala Road
Kaneohe, HI 96744
Tel (808) 247-2661

Resident Minister
Rev. Koen Kikuchi
Editor: Jim Dote

Temple email:
kaneohe@hhbt-hi.org

Temple website:
Temporarily Not Working

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2020 Board Members

Douglas Crosier, Karen Hayashida,
Walter Herring, Dennis Kajiura,
Julian Ng, CharlAnn Nakamoto,
Stanley Sato

Important Open Letter to Jushin Readers

Aloha,

For nearly 100 years, your Kaneohe Higashi Hongwanji Mission has quietly served the people and families of our windward communities, sharing the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha and Shinran Shonen.

We are very aware of our mission and dedicated to you, our Sangha.

Today, all of Hawaii and our Nation, face a growing pandemic. We are concerned for your health and urge you follow all public health laws and rules. Out of extreme caution, our temple will be physically closed for a period but we will try our best to reach out to you and let you reach out to us in various ways.

Put in perspective, historically, this Mission began in 1924 when Kaneohe was a growing village stopping-off-point between Honolulu and the plantations and farmlands along the Koolaus. Over these years our temple has continued sharing the teachings through the challenges of the Great Depression, natural disasters, economic calamities, and 9-11. World War II closed our temple along with all Buddhist temples in Hawaii, but we reopened as quickly as we could, built a new temple, and grew as a gathering place for the Sangha to hear the dharma, and as a gathering place for the community. And we will continue to be here for our Sangha.

We understand some of the concerns you may be faced with as your desire for Jodo Shinshu teachings or services won't disappear because of this pandemic. Please communicate with us. Our Sangha is of the utmost importance. ***On page 5 is a Sangha update form you may fill out, cut out, and send back in the enclosed envelope so we can add current information into our confidential mailing list.***

Please also take a moment to read the following letter that was issued by Resident Minister Koen Kikuchi and our Board of Directors on March 17, 2020, included on the next page.

In Gassho,

Karen Hayashida, Chairperson
Board of Directors

Rev. Koen Kikuchi
Resident Minister

45-520 Kaa'ahala Road
Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744

Phone: (808) 247-2661

Rev. Koen Kikuchi, Resident Minister
Karen Hayashida, Chairperson



Kaneohe Higashi Hongwanji

March 17, 2020

Dear Gojikai Members and friends of Kaneohe Higashi Hongwanji Mission,

As you are aware, the COVID-19 (Novel Corona) virus is spreading worldwide and the World Health Organization has now called this a dangerous, growing international pandemic.

The Board of Directors of the Kaneohe Higashi Hongwanji Mission and Reverend Koen Kikuchi are very concerned about the health and well-being of you and those you are close to.

For your health and safety, we have decided to immediately stop ALL our weekly services and any special events for the time being until such time that we can comfortably resume our weekly services and special events. We will let you know by way of a mailed letter, much like this. However, we hope to provide you with Shin Buddhism services during this uncertain time.

The following activities will be temporarily suspended until the end of April:

- Sunday Services in the temple
- Buddhist Educational Meetings
- Use of Sangha Room
- Use of temple facilities
- *April 11 – Plant Sale and Rummage Sale – this may be rescheduled to a new date
- *April 12 – Hanamatsuri Service at Kaneohe Higashi likely to be rescheduled

The following activities will be provided as needed and within the recommendations and guidelines of the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the State Department of Health:

- Bedside Service, if allowed, with certain precautions
- Funeral Service, if allowed, with certain precautions
- Memorial Service, limited to private family service, with advance notice
- Private consultations with Reverend Kikuchi – by telephone or email

Publication of our *Jushin* newsletter will continue. If you wish to play a CD recording of Shinran's Shoshinge chant and certain other epistles or readings by Reverend Kikuchi, please contact our temple by March 31, 2020. This regular audio CD may be played in any audio CD player.

We care deeply about your well-being and apologize for this temporary inconvenience. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us by phone (808) 247-2661 or by email kaneohe@hhbt-hi.org and we will answer you as quickly as we can.

In Gassho,

Kaneohe Higashi Hongwanji Mission

Reverend Koen Kikuchi
Resident Minister

Karen Hayashida
Chairperson, Board of Directors

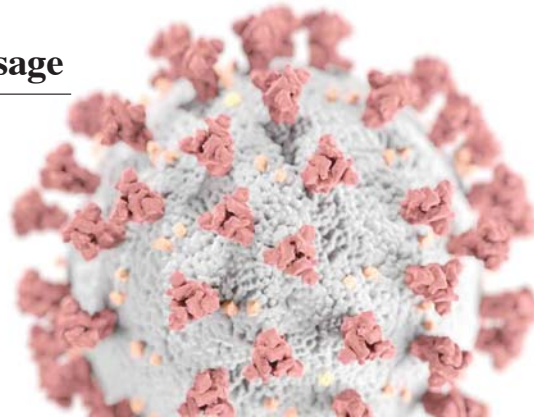
Closure to April 30 to Prevent Spread

Out of an abundance of concern and caution for the health and welfare of our 'ohana, Resident Minister Koen Kikuchi and the Board of Directors determined it

would be best to close the temple until April 30. The letter above was mailed originally to our paid membership and is being provided to our wider readership in this *Jushin*. Please be aware that our temporary closure impacts temple services and events listed in the letter.

Minister's Dharma Message

What Buddhism Teaches Us



Rev. Koen Kikuchi

Hello Everyone,

We are all suffering and afraid of COVID-19. We don't want to get the virus because there is no medicine yet to cure it. Even worse, elderly people often die because of the virus. Younger ones can be carriers, causing another's death, and sometimes even die themselves. We hope this pandemic will slow and quickly cease, and let us live our lives again.

I would like to share a letter written by Rennyō Shōnin in 1491. In Fascicle 4, Chapter 9, "On an Epidemic," he wrote:

Recently, people have been dying in great numbers, reportedly from an epidemic. It is not that they die primarily because of the epidemic. It is [because of] determinate karma that has been settled from the first moment of our births. We should not be so deeply surprised by this. And yet when people die at this time, everyone thinks it strange. It is really quite reasonable.

Amida Tathāgata has declared that he will unfailingly save those sentient beings who single-heartedly rely on Amida-ordinary beings in the last [Dharma] age and people like ourselves, burdened with evil karma, however deep the evil may be. At such a time as this, we should entrust ourselves to Amida Buddha all the more deeply and, realizing that we will be born in the Land of Utmost Bliss, relinquish every bit of doubt, steadfastly and single-heartedly acknowledging how gracious Amida is. Once we have understood this, our saying "Namu-amida-butsu, Namu-amida-butsu" - sleeping or waking - is an expression of gratitude conveying our joy and thankfulness [that Amida] really saves us in this way. This, in other words, is the nenbutsu of gratitude for the Buddha's benevolence.

Rennyō saw that many people were dying because of an epidemic. But, he wrote, the epidemic was not the cause of the deaths. He said, determined karma was the cause. The epidemic was not the cause of the deaths but rather the cause was karma.

What does this mean?

Imagine an ocean wave. We may imagine that the wind made the wave happen. But is the cause the wind? Because there was a wind, did it made the ocean form a wave? No. The cause is the ocean itself, and the effect is the wave. So, what is the wind? It is a condition of the ocean. This is a way of Buddhism thinking.

Minister's Dharma Message

What Buddhism Teaches Us

Continued from previous page.



“What Rennyō Shōnin wanted to say was that if we take refuge in Amida Buddha, we can feel calmness and not have to worry about those situations.” Rev. Koen Kikuchi

Imagine a candle flame. When a gust of wind suddenly extinguishes it, we think if there was no wind, the candle wouldn't have been blown out... but not necessarily. Imagine a campfire. If the wind blows, the fire gets bigger. The reason the candle went out is not the wind, but rather that the candle flame was too small.

I believe this is what Rennyō Shōnin wanted to say by his letter. The epidemic was not the cause of the deaths, but since we were born in this world, we will die because of many conditions which are interconnected in a complicated way.

We arrogantly set a goal of living to around an “average age.” So, if something serious happens to us “much younger than that average age,” we feel disappointment and despair. We are disappointed that our expectations were not met.

The truth is, we will never be liberated by “cause-and-effect” thinking unless we change to “cause-and-condition-effect” thinking. Unless we see ourselves truly and deeply, we will never attain true happiness.

What Rennyō Shōnin wanted to say was that if we take refuge in Amida Buddha, we can feel calmness and not have to worry about those situations. What does “taking refuge in Amida” mean? It means not swimming against the flow of the river, instead, just opening one's arms and letting oneself float with it. But our lives mostly do run against the flow of the river, and we always feel hardship, worry, suffering, and weight. The only way to escape is to let go and go with the flow.

This is the meaning of Amida and Namu Amida Butsu.

We can let go of the idea of “cause-effect.” If we can't let go, then we end up thinking that every bad situation must be somebody's fault. The virus appeared in this world, so who should we blame? The Chinese? Asians in general? Italians? All Europeans? Americans?

What does it matter?

What Buddhism teaches us is that, just as we were born into this world, the virus appeared in this world through many conditions. Instead of spending this precious time finding fault with others, we should spend this time focusing on how to live our lives here and now. We can only do what we can do. And we don't have to panic.

This is what I learned from people's reaction to the present crisis and from Rennyō Shōnin's letter to his followers.

Gassho, Koen Kikuchi

SANGHA UPDATE FORM

(Your information is only for Kaneohe Higashi Hongwanji and will not be shared)

Number of Persons in Household:

___under 18 years of age ___1-18 ___19-39 ___40-59 ___60-74 ___75-90 ___90+

My Best Telephone Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

I Use The Following Electronics and Types of Communications:

___Smartphone ___Computer ___Tablet
 ___Skype ___FaceBook ___Instagram
 ___Other Social Media _____

What information on Buddhism interests me most, or, what Buddhism question do I have:

Please print and cut this top section of the page out and mail it back, arigato!

Please cut this out and mail it back, arigato!

Hanamatsuri

Although our March 17 letter (page 2) tentatively “postponed” Hanamatsuri Service, Sensei Kikuchi wants to innovate by holding our Hanamatsuri on Sunday April 12, and ask that you email your “selfie” photo holding a flower or standing beside a painting of a flower.

He will print your image and decorate a table in front of the altar with your photo.

“In this way, YOU (well, just



your picture) will be HERE celebrating Buddha’s birth,” Sensei said with a big smile!

Correction on Memorial Years

In the last issue of the *Jushin* we mistakenly typed the year 2008 twice. Our reader in Osaka pointed this out and we appreciate it. The corrected year is circled.

This year, 2020, we observe memorial services for loved ones whose passing occurred in the years shown below. Please consult with Rev. Koen Kikuchi for an appropriate time to schedule a memorial service.

YEAR	MEMORIAL SERVICE
2019	1st anniversary
2018	3rd year anniversary
2014	7th year anniversary
2008	13th year anniversary
2004	17th year anniversary
1996	25th year anniversary
1988	33rd year anniversary
1971	50th year anniversary

Source: 2020 Higashi Honganji District Calendar

Many Ways We Are Reaching Out to YOU

In times such as these we should also attend to our spiritual wellness.

Undaunted by Hawaii’s stay at home orders, on Sunday, March 29, Sensei Kikuchi streamed a full Sunday service live on FaceBook. He was assisted by his wife, Mai. And the chorus heard singing Ondokusan along with Sensei and

Mai, was none other than their lovely children, Ren, Kokoro and Hana. The video will be posted on YouTube, search for “Kaneohe Higashi Hongwanji.”

During this period, Rev. Kikuchi will be available for bedside service and private funerals as allowed by government guidelines.