

Jushin

樹心

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August – September 2020

inside your Jushin

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

Resident Minister
Rev. Marcos Sawada

Temple email:
kaneohe@hhbt-hi.org

Temple website:
Temporarily not working

Editors: Mary Matsuda, Jim Dote
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Guest Minister's Dharma Message

Rev. Takeo Maeda

Former Minister Kaneohe Higashi
Hongwanji 2003-2007

*(Editor's Note: Rev. Maeda and family visited
the temple on August 28, 2016 and gave a
guest lecture. His original 2016 Dharma
Message has been edited to fit the page.)*

Sunday, August 28, 2016



Aloha, I am very happy to be here and see you. How have you been? The last time I visited here was five years ago (2011). Also, it's been nine years since I left Kaneohe Higashi Hongwanji (2007) to return to Japan.

I am very grateful to you. I was only 25 when I became your resident minister. And now, I am a father, with three children, a resident minister in our family temple, working very hard, and look, with some white hair, too. In my every day – after temple duties and care for our three sons with my wife – only after they go to sleep I begin my nightly temple work at home. So I usually go to sleep at 1 to 2 am.

When I look back my years in Kaneohe, I realize that I was really young and learned a lot. All the experiences in Kaneohe are very, very special and treasures for me. I am very glad I spent time with each of you... even though it was a short time, our encounter will last me my whole life. Thank you.

Today, it is unusual that I am here now, talking with you. I was here before, so I can be here today. If I was not your resident minister, I could not have conducted Sunday Service at this temple nor could I talk with you. Also, you are fine and alive, I am also fine and alive, so that is why we could come to Sunday Service (today). So now, an unusual thing is happening. So many events are unusual and we take our life for granted. But there are so many factors that just happen to make things occur. Nevertheless, why can't we be able to appreciate each day, each encounter?

We don't know (if) when we say goodbye to someone, it will be our last goodbye. If we realize that, we can appreciate each moment. I hope you enjoy your life to the fullest. And please try to tell me goodbye before you leave this life, okay? Then I will try to travel here to see you. I will try to tell you, too, before I leave this life.

Who knows the future? Every day is a new day that I have not experienced yet. Who knows what is happening... next? To imagine makes (it) exciting and enjoyable. The moment of imagination is full of excitements. That is the way of living our lives to the fullest, I think. Thank you!

I am very honored to be here - very glad to meet you, dear friends - once again. I am glad and honored to meet your new members, too. Please take care - of yourself, your families, of this temple.

Namandabutsu.

Higashi Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

Fall Virtual Ohigan Service

Date: Sunday, September 20, 2020

Time: 10:00 a.m. Hawaii Standard Time

Dharma Message: Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi
(West Covina Buddhist temple)

Place: Higashi Hongwanji Mission's
FaceBook page (address appears below)



The Higashi Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii and its Board of Directors cordially invite you to attend its virtual Fall Ohigan Service, which will be held on Sunday, September 20, 2020.

The Kaneohe Higashi Hongwanji's Fall Ohigan will be determined shortly.

Higan, meaning the Other Shore (of awakening), is a service conducted on the vernal and autumnal equinoxes. At these times of the year, we endeavor to strengthen our commitment of the Buddhist life.

Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi was born in Toyama, Japan. Both her parents and brother are also ministers. She first visited the U.S. in 1996 at the Institute of Buddhist Studies at Berkeley, CA for her master's thesis. She subsequently received her Masters of Arts degree from the University of Shizuoka in 1997. She received the Tokudo and Kyoshi in the Higashi Honganji Shinshu Otani Ha tradition and was ordained in 2000. Rev. Miyoshi returned to the U.S. in 2001 to again study at the Institute of Buddhist Studies, and graduated with a Masters in 2004. She worked at the Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple as an office staff member and minister. She is married to Rev. William Briones, Rinban at Nishi Honganji Los Angeles Betsuin. Rev. Miyoshi returned to Shinshu Otani Ha headquarters in 2008 and received her Kaikyoshi (Overseas Status). In 2014 she transferred to the West Covina Buddhist Temple in Southern California.

www.facebook.com/higashihongwanjimission/live/

The service will be broadcast live at 10 a.m. Hawaii Standard Time on the Higashi Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii FaceBook page, and can be viewed even if you do not have a FaceBook account.

Message from Bishop Kenjun Kawawata

On an Epidemic

I hope all members and friends are doing well and staying safe in this COVID-19 pandemic. Normally during July and August, the Obon season is full swing, but this year, (your) Obon dance was canceled due to the corona-virus pandemic. We also have to live an unusual life now.

Epidemics and natural disasters have been common occurrences throughout history. At the time when Shinran Shonin was born, it is said that there was a plague epidemic and Kyoto city was in chaos due to the fighting between the Genji and Heike clans, with the stench of rotting corpses left behind. Although it's not like the olden times in Kyoto here in Honolulu, we've been facing same the kind of situation as when Shinran Shonin was born. We are afraid of getting COVID-19, which has become our anxiety of life and death.

Whenever Obon season comes, I always remember Rennyō Shonin's letter, *On an Epidemic*. Reading the letter is one of the traditions at Obon service at my uncle's temple in Tokyo, where I trained in Jodo Shinshu rituals following graduation from college. I would practice reading the letter the night before the Obon service.

Rennyō Shonin, the 8th Abbot of our Jodo

On an Epidemic

A letter of Rennyō Shonin

June 4, 1492

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 birth. 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 Tathagata has declared that he will unfailingly save those sentient beings who single-heartedly rely on him – 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.

Respectfully,

(From Rennyō by Minor L. & Ann T. Rogers)

Shinshu tradition 550 years ago, is considered the second founder of Jodo Shinshu. His revival of Shinran Shonin's teachings led to Jodo Shinshu becoming the largest Buddhist sect in Japan.

Rennyō Shonin began to write the Ofumi letters when he was 47 years old and continued to write the Ofumi until the of age 84, just one year before he passed away. He wrote 210 Ofumi letters and sent them out to members of

Continued on page 3.

Important Schedule Information

Aloha Members and Jushin Readers,

A new resident minister has been assigned but the arrival date has not been set. During this interim, we appreciate the continued ministerial assistance of Rinban Kenjun Kawawata and the Hawaii Betsuin for our members' needs.

If any of our members need assistance please call the temple at 247-2661 and leave a message. If immediate assistance is needed, our recorded message has a contact telephone number. Our email is operational, however, it may not be checked daily. Our website is not operational at this moment.

As of August 21 (date of this writing) please telephone our temple at 247-2661 on the Saturday before the Sunday you wish to attend and listen to our prerecorded message to verify if a service will be held.

By the August 19th order of the Mayor of Honolulu, effective from August 20 to September 16, 2020, there is to be no indoor singing, (we also assume no chanting), or playing of wind instruments during spiritual gatherings. Singing or playing of wind musical instruments may occur if the singers are an organized compensated group, are separated from the audience by plexiglas dividers, and must follow other restrictions. Spiritual gatherings are still permitted but limited to only 5 persons including the minister.

Please note that with the latest COVID-19 order from the Governor and Mayor of Honolulu, we would try to remain open to the best of our ability as conditions change. We are following necessary COVID-19 requirements issued by the US Centers of Disease Control (CDC), State of Hawaii (Governor), and the City and County of Honolulu (Mayor). We are guided by the health and safety orders issued by Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell on August 20, 2020, until it ends or is amended:

Mayor Kirk Caldwell's Emergency Order 2020-24

"Act Now Honolulu, No Social Gatherings"

Effective August 20, 2020 to September 16, 2020



With Aloha from Kaneohe

Kaneohe bids Kantoku Rev. Hidesato Kita aloha and farewell as he officiated the temple's August 16th service, days before he left for his new assignment in Japan. Although his official capacity was as administrative minister, he has always been helpful and kind, helping us from yard clearing, bon dance setup, special events and Sunday services.

Message From Bishop Kawawata

Continued from page 2.

Oko groups.

In *On an Epidemic*, Rennyō Shonin says, "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."

Sakyamuni Buddha clearly pointed out that the cause of human sufferings is birth. If we were not born in this world, we would never experience many difficulties and sufferings of aging, sickness and death. These difficulties are unavoidable because I have received this life as a human being. This is not say we must live in selfish desperation just because death has been decided. We are living with many bonds of family, friends and people in the world of interdependence.

It's important, therefore, to seek that how we should spend this given life and make it our main issue of life. Each individual has choices for his or her individual life. We must also remember that our individual actions and karmas affect others. Once we accept all the realities, ties, and death as part of our own life, then, a new step in our lives will begin.

Accepting changes and death are very important. In this urbanized daily life, however, we may have forgotten or ignored true human nature. It is important to accept aging, sickness and death in our own lives.

When Sakyamuni Buddha attained his awakening, he came to realization, "I am impermanence, My body and mind are always changing and moving." He realized the changing nature of existence and death is his life, too. But we always ignore or pretend to forget the true human nature in our everyday lives. We put a lid on our inconvenient or unpleasant issues. We just decide to not see it. And we just don't want to admit the truth. In Buddhism it is called "ignorance," or "darkness."

Rennyō Shonin's letter, however, teaches us there is the light of wisdom, the teaching of the Buddha, that breaks through the darkness of our lives and shows the way.

Let us continue to listen to the Buddha dharma and rely on the light of wisdom in this pandemic situation.

Thank you in gassho,
Rinban Kenjun Kawawata

This message by Bishop (Rinban) Kenjun Kawawata appears in the August 2020 issue of Wa, the newsletter of the Hawaii Betsuin. It appears in the Jushin with permission and appreciation in discussing such a timely topic.