

# Puna Hongwanji Mission



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# August 2020 Hi-Lites



## 2020 Honpa Hongwanji Theme & Slogan **Building Healthy Sangha** *(Embracing Generosity and Openness)*

### Puna Hongwanji Vision Statement

Puna Hongwanji Mission will be a dynamic and unique temple for Hawaii serving the spiritual needs of the community through Jodo-Shinshu teachings.

### Puna Hongwanji Mission Statement

Puna Hongwanji Mission is a community of people joined in the joy of a common faith in Amida Buddha to share the Dharma in our daily living.



## *The Hi-Lites Monthly Newsletter*

The Hi-Lites is published monthly by the Puna Hongwanji Mission. The articles and opinions expressed by the editors and individual contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of Puna Hongwanji Mission.

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## *With Deepest Sympathy*



Puna Hongwanji Mission extends its sincerest sympathy and condolences to the family and relatives of the following member(s) who recently passed away

*Chiyoiko Nariyoshi*

*Albert Nishimura*

## *Memorial Service (Nenki)*

Families, relatives, and friends of deceased members listed, please contact the temple if there are any corrections or omissions. Researched and compiled by Reverend Satoshi Tomioka.



**\*\*\*Memorial services in-person is permitted following health guidelines.**

**\*\*\*Please contact Rev. Tomioka for more information.**

## *August 2020*

1 yr.	Shirley Ann Shizue Kamimura	August 11, 2019
3 yrs.	Clifford Kinji Nagao	August 3, 2018
	Sadao Oshiro	August 9, 2018
	Suzuko Yamamoto	August 27, 2018
7 yrs.	None	
13 yrs.	Yoshinori Hirazumi	August 29, 2008
17 yrs.	Shizue Arima	August 16, 2004
	Suematsu "Ronald" Kuroda	August 17, 2004
	Umeno Nozawa	August 27, 2004
25 yrs.	None	
33 yrs.	Masako Tagawa	August 4, 1988
	Akira Shirota	August 22, 1988
50 yrs.	Nabe Shimabukuro	August 10, 1971
	Yuhachi Hayashida	August 12, 1971
	Ei Imada	August 15, 1971
	Kaname Tsutsui	August 25, 1971
	Etsuko Ota	August 25, 1971



## Ethics Statement

1. While photographing subjects in public places without permission is legally acceptable, we maintain sensitivity towards “camera shy” subjects and those that request photo ID anonymity.
2. We always seek permission when photographing subjects in private places (residences, care homes, etc.).
3. We provide appropriate photo credits of public domain, online or copyright material.
4. We provide appropriate and accurate context documentation when publishing all photos.
5. We strive to be accurate and comprehensive in the representation of subjects.
6. We do not intentionally contribute to, alter, or seek to alter or influence events by staged photos.
7. We insure that edited photos maintain the integrity of the photographic images' content and context and not mislead viewers or misrepresent subjects.
8. We strive to follow normal sensibilities and the highest ethical standards in all our reporting efforts.

The articles and opinions expressed by the editors and individual contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of Puna Hongwanji Mission.

Give us your feedback and suggestions

Sam Horiuchi

Tammy Molina

Newsletter Committee

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## Minister's Message

Obon season has come as usual, however, it seemed to be totally different this year due to COVID-19. Thanks to committed members, we were able to create a virtual Bon Dance on internet. If you have not yet watched, please go to YouTube channel on Internet typing “Puna Hongwanji Buddhist Temple” and look for a video of Bon Dance.



Usually, we also have a First Bon Memorial Service (Hatsu bon) in memory of departed loved ones who passed away within one year. Through this service, we remember and honor who have gone before us and celebrate our family ties with and through our loved ones. This is also the precious occasion for each of us to listen to the teachings of Amida Buddha, and the truth of impermanence, interdependence, and the preciousness of human life and each day, each moment. This year, First Bon Memorial Service will be primarily held for family of the departed loved ones and the family will be notified of which day and time to attend. Please read the information about Bon Service.

Every time Obon season comes, a story comes to my mind and reminds me of the significance and uniqueness of Obon in Jodo Shin Buddhism shared by my senior ministers. One day, a minister was on duty at night. At midnight when a minister was asleep, the sound of an emergency cell phone rang and woke him up. That was a call from a hospital asking for a bedside service for a patient. The minister prepared for a service and left the temple for the hospital. When he arrived and on the way to the nursing station to ask for the patient's room location, he met a mother holding a child in her arms. The child was quietly sleeping and he guessed the mother took the child out of a room for a sleep. He approached the mother and said “so pretty boy. How old?” The mother smiled and said “3 years old.” While they were talking, a nurse

found the minister and thanked him for coming for a bed-side service. Then, the minister asked for the location of the patient. It was not a nurse but the mother who answered, "Reverend, patient is in my arms. My child passed away." The minister saw mother's eyes were full of tears running down. The bedside service was respectfully conducted on that night surrounded by parents and family. Wake, funeral, first 7<sup>th</sup> day, 49<sup>th</sup> day and inurnment services were respectively officiated by that minister.

Since the parents' shock was immense and they were going through hardships, the minister had counseling and talk story with them occasionally. Obon season has come. That family observed their First Bon Memorial Service (Hatsubon) at a temple. A mother put a photo of her child on a table with a lei placed over the photo. When her turn came to offer incense, she moved forward and touched her son's photo crying, crying and crying. Then she said "I want to be with my son. He must be sad and feel lonely. I can't leave him alone. Since he passed away, every morning I talk to his picture, offer incense and rice. Whatever I do and wherever I am, I think of him. Why this happened to my son? I want to be with my son."

The minister listened to her and said "My words and sympathy may only touch the surface of your deep sorrow and indescribable emotions of losing your child." He continued, "Obon season has come. In this season, people show their appreciation and respect to those who have gone before us by visiting niches, offering flowers, cleaning graveyard. We remember and reflect with joyful gratitude on our departed loved ones and their continued guidance in our lives." The minister paused and said "You said you want to be with your son." Mother nodded. Minister continued "There is a place or realm called hell. In the hell, all existence are fighting each other with selfish desires and anger. Even a mother and a son are killing and fighting each other without knowing. Even in that situation, do you want to be with your son? When you die, where will you go?" This conversation with a minister became a turning point in her life. If her son was in the place called hell, and if she goes to a hell when she died, she can't be with her son as a mother.

Before listening to this minister's words, she read many books about Buddhism and attended

many seminars. Learning that virtue of merits is needed to send a deceased to a better place after life, she prayed a lot and had rituals, services, and offered incense wishing her son doesn't go to hell. Everything she did was for her son. However, the question "where will you go when you die" hit the nail on the head and led her to ask herself, "where will I go when I die?" This was the first time for her to regard rituals and service of Buddhism not for the deceased but for her own self. Then, she had to think about the way of going to a better place, not a hell and how she can go to the same place in the afterlife with her son.

At this point, the minister's words she had heard before came to her mind. "All living things in this life and world cannot avoid the end of life. In Shin Buddhism Tradition, when a person passes away, at that moment, immediately and spontaneously, that person is born in the Pure Land and become an awakened one, a Buddha through the Amida Buddha's Vow and virtuous working. Amida Buddha made vows to save all sentient beings who live in this world with unconditional Compassion and Wisdom. Your child was also embraced by Amida Buddha's Vow and now guiding and teaching you the truth of life. Since your child and our loved ones attained supreme enlightenment, rituals and offerings are not meant to accumulate virtues to send deceased to a better place, but as an expression of our gratitude and remembrance, and moreover and essentially, to show our deep appreciation and respect to Amida Buddha who have saved our beloved ones and embraces each of us in this life." The minister continued, "With and through our loved ones and memories of them, we listen to the teachings of Buddha. Before we think of them, before we pray for them, before we offer, before we worry about them, from our loved ones who attained the enlightenment, they think of us and guide us so that we can live a life full of true peace and true happiness in the midst of worries and sufferings. Our human life has a limitation and is finite, but in embrace of Amida Buddha whose life is infinite, our loved ones live in that Vow and are always with us. And we shall meet again in the Pure Land with the most beautiful appearance. That vow is Namo Amida Butsu. When we are awakened to the Vow that embraces our loved ones and each of us gently and warmly, we recite Namo Amida Butsu."

After hearing the minister, the mother put her hands together and recited Namu Amida Butsu with tears, but not only sadness but also with joy of being embraced by the same Amida Buddha's Compassion and Wisdom. For the mother, she never forgets her son and will miss him forever. However, now she realized her son became an awakened one and guides her and teaches the truth of life and embraces her through memories, words, smile, warmth guided by Amida Buddha. Finally, she was assured that her son has been with her always and she shall meet her son again without fail in the Pure Land where his son will welcome her in the embrace of Amida Buddha's Vow.

"Even after years there are still times when tears come to your eyes. But in the embrace of Amida Buddha, also a smile and assurance. How grateful for Great Compassion!"

In this obon season, let us reflect with joyful gratitude on our departed loved ones and their continued guidance in our lives. Amida Buddha's Great Compassion never abandons us and never forsakes us whatever happens in our lives. Don't worry, be happy, I shall embrace no matter what. This is the calling from Amida Buddha, Namu Amida Butsu.



## **Puna Hongwanji Kyodan Highlights**

Synopsis of Kyodan Board of Directors' Online Meeting held on Thursday, June 18, 2020. Minutes were recorded by Robin Sato, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President.

### **Repair and Maintenance**

- Thank you to Gary Sunada for putting up the plexiglass barriers for the ministers podium and the MC podium. Gary did a wonderful job.

### **Approved Activities/Announcements**

- Any affiliate group that wants to start back up, please submit your plan to Jason Hashimoto and Rev. Tomioka.
- Minister's office hours will be by appointment only.

- The toban groups have been reactivated to clean the bathrooms only. The group size should be 2-3 people per week. Rev. Tomioka has agreed to take care of the rest.
- Celebrated three 2020 graduates. Shaylee Watson (Keaau High School) – Judo; Andy Agus (Keaau High School) – Taiko; and Marson Cabay (University of Hawaii at Hilo) – Taiko. They were given a lei of Big Island Delights treats.
- Two of four "Fellows" got accepted at Taiko Center of the Pacific from Puna Taiko. Congratulations to Puna Taiko members Marson Cabay and Tyler Ogawa for being accepted. They will have an opportunity to join Kenny Endo's performance group.

### **In Appreciation – Thank You Very Much**

- Thank you to Rev. Tomioka for posting sessions with children, Buddhism classes, weekly services, book club, etc.
- Thank you to those who continue to make donations to the temple. Even though we are closed, we still have expenses. Domo arigato to those who submitted their dues donations.
- Thank you to Clifford and Keri Furukado, Mike Fukutomi, and Rev. Tomioka for preparing the temple so that we could start the in-person services. Mike also set-up downstairs for the overflow if we need to have more room.
- Thank you to Clifford and Keri Furukado and the kitchen crew for continuing to do the member support/hot meal project. The food is always so delicious. Thank you also to all the donors who have been contributing towards the social concerns account. Thank you to the Keaau Village Association for your donation to the social concerns account.



## **Origin of Obon**

## Obon-gathering of Joy.

Part of the inspiration for Obon comes from the Ghost Festival of Chinese folk religion, as re-envisioned in a Buddhist context. The word Obon is the shortened form of urabon-e which means to suffer as if being hung upside down, and comes from of the Ullambana Sutra. The Sutra tells the story of Mogallana, one of Sakyamuni Buddha's ten great disciples, had the extraordinary sense perceptions-seeing after life. He saw his mother was in the hungry ghosts and how he suffered over the death of his mother and a fact of being in the hungry ghosts, feeling a deep sense of regret and sorrow. He believed that her devotion to him had been a barrier to her understanding the Dharma. To love, take care and protect her own son, she might have not paid attention to other child and people. Although Mogallana tried to save her from suffering in the hungry ghosts, he couldn't make it. The Buddha told him to make offerings to Sangha of disciples. And Buddha also told him to reflect upon mother's situation, and Mogallana, known for his deep insight, came to realize that his mother's devotion to him was based on an unselfish love. With virtuous merit and three treasure-Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, his mother was saved from the hungry ghosts. With this deep insight into his mother's life, he danced with joy as his regret and sorrow were transformed into appreciation and gratitude. It is said this is an origin of bon dancing.

For Hongwanji Shin Buddhist Tradition, outdoor folk dancing (bon odori) is done in memory of the deceased and not to welcome back the spirits of deceased or to generate merit for them. In the embrace Amida Buddha's Wish, our loved ones attained enlightenment and free from all sufferings and attachments. Guided and inspired by Buddha's Compassion and Wisdom, our loved ones are always with us and lead us to a life of gratitude and harmony. Thus, the bon is also called Gathering of Joy (Kangi-e) in grateful remembrance of all those who have influenced our lives. We remember and honor those who have gone before us and celebrate our family ties with and through our loved ones.

(references- "Jodo Shinshu a guide" Hongwanji, "Shin Buddhist Service Book" Buddhist Education Center)



## VIRTUAL BON DANCE

Covid-19 has cancelled a lot of our events and many other events. After doing a virtual Memorial Day, we started discussion on how we could still have a bon dance during our normal weekend of July 3 and July 4, 2020. A small group which consisted of Rev. Tomioka, Paul Sakamoto, Jennifer Kurohara, and Robin Sato brain stormed on what we could do. We knew it we would have to go to an online format. Paul said he and the Taiko group could help and listed the bon dance songs they knew. Then we encountered a roadblock as we had to consider copy right issues now that we would feature it on YouTube and Facebook. That didn't stop Paul as he went ahead and did lots of research and reached out to others who gave him permission to utilize the songs.

During our meeting, Rev. Tomioka mentioned in his discussions with another bon dance committee he is on they were thinking of a coronavirus dance. Paul took the challenge and a collaboration with Puna Taiko members, Paul and Betty Masteron composed the drumming and the flute music, while the choreography was done by Sharyse Molina. Sharye's movements reminds everyone about social distancing, wearing a mask, hand washing, and working from home. It is a reminder that staying healthy and safe is not just an individual effort, but one that requires compassion and cooperation from all of us. "Genki Ondo" was created as a wish for people to continue their cooperation and vigilance. In Japanese translation Genki (元気) means fine, healthy, and energetic.

There are two videos available on our Facebook and YouTube pages with the two evenings of Bon Dance. If you haven't had an opportunity to watch the video, please take the time to watch it. Our bon

dance made the Hawaii New Now evening news and they did an interview with Paul. Paul was contacted that the American Bon Consortium will be featuring Genki Ondo on their last episode for the summer.

Thank you to everyone involved that made this virtual bon dance a success. We hope to see you all in person next year at bon dance. Stay safe and healthy.

## DHARMA SCHOOL BEAT

In normal times, the Dharma School would be sponsoring our Baccalaureate Service at the temple to recognize and honor our graduating seniors from high school and college. But these are not normal times so, although we had a short recognition and presentation of a “goodies” lei in late May and June for our 3 graduating seniors, we would also like to do that today.

A graduate of Keaau High School is Shylee Wasson who is a member of Puna Hongwanji’s Judo Club. Also graduating from Keaau High School is Andrea Agus. Andy is a member of Puna Taiko. She has returned to play taiko after a brief vacation and will hopefully continue playing in the future. Andy and Shylee are good friends.

Marson Cabay graduated from University of Hawaii, Hilo Campus and is a member of Puna Taiko. He plans to move to Honolulu to continue his schooling in the culinary field and one day have his own restaurant. Having earned the title of “Chef of Puna” makes him a natural for this career. He will also continue honing his taiko skills with one of his legends, Kenny Endo.

The class of 2020 will be remembered as one that has been denied so much but we are sure that they will achieve so much more. Thank you for representing Puna Hongwanji so admirably. We are so proud of you! We hope that you continue with judo and taiko but if not, remember that our temple will always welcome you to our events and our services or just to visit and talk stories sometimes.

Congratulations, Seniors!



Congratulations Marson!



Congratulations Shaylee and Andrea!