



JHO

June 2020



Kona Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

Building Healthy Sanghas: Embracing Generosity and Openness

COVID-19 Update

As of June 1, 2020, Hawaii County will allow the reopening of places of worship subject to Federal, State, and County restrictions and physical distancing. While we eagerly anticipate the day when we can safely gather in person again, our journey will not be quick or linear. We will base our decisions on good science, do our best to plan prudently for a couple of months at a time, and build flexibility into every plan.

Based on current guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and connecting this guidance with Buddhist teachings and values, the gradual reopening of our community activities will progress carefully and deliberately. We expect that progress will not be linear and we anticipate moving back and forth through stages of openness in response to this public health crisis.

Our Guiding Buddhist Values:

Lovingkindness. We will prioritize the welfare and wellbeing of our Sangha, and the safety of those most vulnerable to infection, as well as the general public health, based on a heart of compassion.

Interdependence. We will act with the understanding that our thoughts, words, and actions, affect not only ourselves but also the lives of others.

Benefiting self and others. We are all responsible for one another. We will “open up” as slowly as we need to ensure the mutual health and safety of everyone.

Operating Guidelines Effective June 1, 2020

- Temple office will be open for in-person business.
 - All visitors must comply with proper hygiene, mask-wearing, and physical distancing guidelines.
- Nokotsudo (Columbarium) will be open for visitation.
 - No more than two (2) persons shall be in the columbarium at any given time.
 - Offering of incense is not allowed.
 - All visitors must comply with proper hygiene, mask-wearing, and physical distancing guidelines.
- Continue holding online services and programs.
- Committees and other groups continue to meet online.
- Funerals and Memorial Services will be allowed in the temple main hall (Hondo)
 - No more than ten (10) people in the main hall (Hondo) at any given time.

- Everyone must wear a mask and maintain at least six (6) feet of physical distancing.
- Group Chanting of Sutra and singing of Gatha are not allowed.
- If desired, Kona Hongwanji can livestream funeral and memorial services for family and friends who are not able to attend in person due to the 10-person limit, are high-risk or kupuna, or are not able to travel.
- If desired, funerals and memorial services may be conducted virtually and live-streamed to all family and friends so in-person attendance may be avoided entirely.
- Rev. Blayne is available for End-of-Life Services.
 - Rinju Gongyō (service conducted at end-of-life)
 - Makuragyō (service conducted immediately following the passing of a loved one)
- Rev. Blayne is available for pastoral care and counseling.

When Visiting the Temple

The following hygiene rules must be observed by all persons visiting the temple for any reason:

- Wash with soap or sanitize hands when entering and exiting temple facilities.
- Wear face mask/face covering at all times.
- Maintain six (6) feet of physical distancing.
- Items used by multiple people are not permitted, e.g., Service Books, Gatha Books, incense container lids, shared nenju, etc.
- If you feel sick, stay at home!
- We strongly recommend that individuals bring their own hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes for personal use.

Kona Hongwanji strongly recommends that High-Risk* populations and kupuna continue to stay at home.

**The Center for Disease Control defines high-risk populations as people 65 years and older, living in a nursing home or long-term care facility, with chronic lung disease, severe asthma, serious heart conditions, who are immunocompromised, who have severe obesity, diabetes, chronic kidney disease, or liver disease. For details, please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html>*

During this difficult time, our Sangha has never been closed. We journey through life embraced by Amida Buddha wherever we are. We can go to the Dharma for guidance anytime and anywhere. We are Sangha through our actions, not by being in a temple. Caring for our community means a thoughtful and careful reopening. This is how we care for our family. Sangha is 'Ohana. Mahalo for your patience and understanding.

For assistance, please contact the temple office at (808) 323-2993 or konahongwanji@twc.com.

President's Message

I will start this month's message with happy news. I would like to formally welcome our new office clerk, Ramah Demello, to the Kona Hongwanji "family". Ramah started with the temple just before our previous clerk, Judy Amano, retired and has been quickly getting up to speed on our operations. The office remains closed to visitors, but hopefully, some of you have had a chance to speak with her on the phone and welcome her to our temple.

We have continued our food distribution events to assist our sangha members through the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic. We have had 3 successful events so far and are planning another one for June 6, 2020. Thanks to generous donations from some of our temple affiliates and individual sangha members, we may even be able to continue the distribution events beyond the upcoming one. We recently received a \$2,000 grant from the Hawaii Kyodan Committee on Social Concerns in support of this program. I would like to again extend my sincere appreciation to all our sangha members who have assisted with the events and/or made donations of time & talents to support this program. If nothing else, I have come to realize that we have some excellent cooks & bakers amongst our temple members.

Now for the not so happy news. Taking our guidance from government directives and temple leadership, the Board of Directors has voted to cancel the temple Bon dance for this year. While not at all an easy decision to make, the health & safety of our temple membership always remains our priority. The current situation does not lend itself to being able to host the Bon dance in a manner safe for our membership and the community at large. Planning is still ongoing to determine if we can find some way to have a HatsuBon service this year. Stay tuned for updates from your temple leadership in the coming months.

Please keep yourselves safe during these trying times. Please contact the temple if you find yourself in need of spiritual or other assistance as we go forward.

In Gassho,

Joseph Gusman

Kyodan President

I'm not ok and that's ok **Rev. Blayne Higa**

What we have realized over the past few months is that we will only get through this pandemic if we all work together. This is a time for us to live the truth of interdependence recognizing that our thoughts, words, and actions affect not only our lives but the lives of others.

We may not be able to control the events that are happening but we can choose to respond with kindness and compassion. Let's all live with aloha for each other.

As the COVID-19 pandemic wears on, we need to acknowledge the personal and collective grief that we are all experiencing. The world that was is no more. The life that we knew has changed. The underlying problems we have as a society have been magnified.

I grieve for the over 100,000 lives lost so far.

I grieve for lives that have been upended and plans that have been disrupted.

I grieve that racism is increasing in our country.

And I grieve that socio-economic inequality has deepened.

Grief is a natural part of the human condition. It is a reaction to the truth of impermanence, that all things in this world are subject to constant change. However, the Dharma teaches us that this immutable truth should not be feared because it is an opportunity for both personal and societal transformation.



During a crisis, it's so easy to despair but when we lean into our faith and entrust in the Buddha's light, we can awaken to the goodness of the human heart in every moment. We can see opportunities for growth and transformation. And we can cultivate a realistic hope for the future.

In a verse from the *Hymns of the Pure Land Masters*, Shinran Shonin shares how this life of awakening is made possible through the working of Amida Buddha. He says:

*My eyes being hindered by blind passions,
I cannot perceive the light that grasps me;
Yet the great compassion, without tiring,
Illumines me always.*

Shinran believes that Amida's great love and compassion tirelessly protects us and how being grasped never to be abandoned is a true blessing.

This is the power of the nembutsu which enables us to face the challenges and uncertainties of life with greater awareness, courage, and compassion.

Since this began, I've been reflecting a lot about how Amida's wisdom and compassion works in my life and how understanding my grief has been a catalyst for spiritual growth.

The following verse is a reflection on how my not being ok has been transformative and lifegiving during this time of uncertainty.

May it offer you some comfort and hope that it's ok to not be ok.

I'm not ok.

I'm not ok I had to close the doors of the temple to protect my Sangha.

I'm not ok I can't give a hug to someone grieving the loss of their loved one.

I'm not ok because I feel like I'm not doing enough.

I'm not ok the most vulnerable in our society have become worse off.

I'm not ok corporate greed is prioritized over people's lives.

I'm not ok Asian Americans are being attacked for the color of their skin.

I'm not ok those institutions charged with protecting us are spreading confusion and fear.

I'm not ok we are trusting the words of a willfully ignorant and self-serving President over doctors and scientists.

I'm not ok some pastors and churches are still holding large communal worship falsely claiming, "religious liberty."

I'm not ok some selfish people are endangering the welfare of others by not staying at home.

I'm not ok that people are dying alone.

I am made ok by realizing that temple is not just a building but a community of people who care for one another.

I am made ok by witnessing simple acts of human kindness.

I am made ok by being part of the evolution of what it means to be Sangha.

I am made ok when a temple member asks me how I'm doing.

I am made ok by slowing down to realize what is most essential in life.

I am made ok awakening to the beauty that is always present.

I am made ok by the sun rising and setting each day.

I am made ok when I chant the Hymn of True Entrusting each morning.

I am made ok by hearing Amida's voice of compassion in my solitude.

*I am made ok realizing I don't have to be perfect to care for others.
I am made ok knowing we can change our world if we try.
I am made ok knowing that within the embrace of the sacred no one dies alone.*

*Not being ok makes me continually strive to make things ok.
Not being ok makes me appreciate my full humanness illuminated by the Buddha's light.
I'm not ok and that's ok.*

Namo Amida Butsu.

Please remember that the Nembutsu holds us in both joy and sorrow and is a light for us in dark times and dark places. Please take care and be well. Namu 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

Hawaii Island United BWA Scholarship Recipients

Congratulations to Saizen Ochi of Hilo and Kayla Miura of Kamuela, our two Hawaii Island United Buddhist Women's Association Scholarship recipients for 2020.

Saizen has been attending Dharma School at Hilo Hongwanji since 2014 where he has assisted and participated in various activities. He received his Dharma II Award, Motoyama Award, and was also recognized for perfect attendance. He has served in various leadership positions in the Jr. YBA and has participated in volunteer projects at the temple. Saizen is active in school activities. He is a talented ukulele player and has shared his joy for music by entertaining the elderly at various care facilities in Hilo, as well as other members of the community. After graduating from Waiakea High School, Saizen plans to attend the University of Hawaii in Hilo and pursue a field in Japanese Studies, and also plans to continue on the path of music. He is the son of Stacy and Suzanne Ochi of Hilo.

Kayla has been a Dharma School student for about 10 years, both at Hilo Hongwanji and currently at Kamuela Hongwanji. She has actively participated in temple activities, being MC at services, ringing the kansho, helping with temple clean-up, and being a student speaker at Mother's Day services. She has volunteered at temple fund-raisers and has participated in Quiz Bowls. She was a Jr. YBA member for 3 years, and has attended several YESS Camps. Kayla has been volunteering at the elderly housing in Kamuela for 5 years, helping seniors with their household chores. At Honokaa High School, Kayla is the Senior Class President and was her Junior. Class Treasurer and National Honor Society Vice President and Secretary. Kayla is graduating at the top of her class. She plans to attend the University of Portland to pursue her studies in Clinical Psychology. Her parents are Colin and Lisa Miura of Kamuela.

Kona Hongwanji BWA Scholarship Recipient

Congratulations to Jana Masunaga, daughter of Gail and Margaret Masunaga. Jana has been attending Dharma School since 2003. She has been an MC for Sunday services since 2012, she is a member of the Jr. YBA serving as Secretary, Vice President, and Treasurer. Participated in the Quiz Bowl, United Jr. YBA Conventions and assisted in Temple Clean-up and annual mochi making. She is also an active member of the Busy Bee Buddies 4-H Club and 4-H Federation from 2006 and serving in many leadership roles. She is also a member of the Konawaena PAAC Club, Leo Club, Math League, National Honor Society, Tennis Team, also serving in many leadership roles in those organizations. She participated in the J.A.S.H. Japan Wizard Competition from 2017-2020. She has also practiced Dana, by assisting in many community projects activities such as the Hawaii Special Olympics, Project C.R.I.B., Kinder KAMP, Ironman, Konawaena Leo Club Community Outreach Project, Planner, Kona Lions Club Project Dignity, A Dream come True Ice Cream Social, Feeding the Homeless, Community Tree Plantings, ARC Kona Bazaar, Konawaena KEA Club Beach Clean-up and Meet n' Eat. Jana will be attending the University of California, Irvine, majoring in Biological Sciences, then transferring to the school of Medicine at the University of California Irvine or the University of Hawaii. Her career goal is to become a Dermatologist, finishing her Medical Residency either California or at the Queens Medical Center in Honolulu. We wish Jana much success in her endeavors and hope to see her back in Hawaii, tending to the residents of Hawaii in a much-needed area of Dermatology.

Weekly Sangha Talk Story

Rev. Blayne has been hosting a weekly virtual talk story session for Sangha members to connect and to share how life is going during the pandemic. The Sangha Talk Story happens every Thursday evening at 7:00pm over Zoom. If you would like to participate, please email Rev. Blayne at bhiga@honpahi.org to be sent the meeting link each week.

Online Summer Session with Rev. Dr. Duncan Ryuken Williams

Interlinked: Understanding the Origins and Evolution of American Buddhism

The Buddhist Study Center will offer its 46th Annual Summer Study Session as a free online class series on **June 22-26, 2020 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. (HST)** featuring the noted scholar, Rev. Dr. Duncan Ryuken Williams, author of *American Sutra*, a ground-breaking book published in 2019.

The study class series will cover the Foundations of American Buddhism, Buddhism in Hawaii during World War II, Religious Freedom and Buddhism during World War II, American Buddhism and Ecology, and Buddhist Social Engagement in a series of five two-hour lecture over five nights.

The study class series will be available online through a link available at the Buddhist Study Center website, <http://bschawaii.org>. Pre-registration is not required and the lectures are free and open to the public. Donations to the Buddhist Study Center are gratefully accepted in the spirit in which they are given. Detailed information and the full syllabus are available at <http://bschawaii.org>. For more information, please call the Buddhist Study Center at (808) 973-6555.

Helpful COVID-19 Resources

You may find the following community resources helpful for keeping informed during this pandemic:

- **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.

Online Jodo Shinshu Service Book

The Jodo Shinshu Service Book is now available online. This is the PDF version of Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii's "red service book." You can use this online service book anywhere using your digital device. You may click entries in the table of contents to go right to specific sections.

It is available on the HHMH Website: <https://hongwanjihawaii.com/the-jodo-shinshu-service/>



Congratulations and Best Wishes Graduates!

Jaymie Kunitomo



Jaymie Kunitomo is the daughter of Kel and Pattie Kunitomo. Her grandparents are the late Stanley and Gladys Kunitomo.

Jaymie Kunitomo graduated from Konawaena High School as one of the class valedictorians. She plans to attend the University of Portland in Portland, Oregon where she will major in molecular biology. Jaymie plans to pursue a career in genetics to support her local community in understanding and dealing with the impacts of inherited and geographically acquired diseases.

Jaymie has been a very active member of the Kona community. She was a member of the Busy Bee Buddies 4H club for 12 years and the president of the Kona 4H Federation for the past two years. Jaymie participated in multiple community events through the 4H program.

Jaymie was a 2-year member of the Konawaena High School varsity bowling team; a 3-year member of the high school varsity soccer team; and a 4-year varsity tennis team member. In addition, she was actively involved in student government serving as senior class president and student body vice president this year and class vice president in her freshman and junior years. Jaymie was also a member of the Leo Club, Japan Club, and National Honor Society.

The influences of the Sangha has provided a strong foundation for Jaymie's value system. Surrounded by the wisdom, guidance, and traditions as shared by her late grandparents, Stanley and Gladys Kunitomo, and her many aunties and uncles, Jaymie grew up to embrace the understanding that making choices which are guided by mindfulness, concentration, and good effort will lead to a happy and fulfilled life.

She would like to thank everyone for serving as the inspiration that has helped her to become who she is today.

Ka'i Kunitomo

Ka'i Kunitomo is the daughter of Eric and Kimberly Kunitomo.

Konawaena High School Class of 2020. Ka'i is a member of Kona 4H Busy Bees and Konawaena Leo Club. Ka'i was on the Konawaena Bowling team that went to the State Championships. She was also one of the team captains of the Konawaena Tennis Team.

Ka'i will be attending the University of Hawaii at Manoa in the Fall. She is interested in International Business.



Jana Masunaga

Jana Kiyo Lily Masunaga is the daughter of Gail and Margaret Masunaga of Captain Cook, Hawaii. She first started attending Kona Hongwanji as a baby with her mother and big sister Colette. She went to Kona Hongwanji Preschool with Hunter Tavares, Ka'i Kunitomo, and Jaymie Kunitomo.

Jana has been active at Kona Hongwanji as a guest speaker, MC, Dharma Quiz Bowl team winner in 2018 & 2017, Jr. YBA, Dharma School, and Gatha Festival.

She is one of the Valedictorians of the Konawaena High School Class of 2020. Her academic honors include the National Honor Society, top 10% of the class, Activity Pin, Seal of Biliteracy in Japanese, and STEM. Jana received scholarships from the Kona Hongwanji BWA, Hawaii Community Federal Credit Union, Panthera Edge, and Kona Japanese Civic Association.

Jana will be attending the University of California at Irvine.



Hunter Tavares

Hunter Michael Tavares is the son of Cindy Tavares. His grandparents are Kenneth and Elaine Sugiyama.

Konawaena High School Class of 2020. Hunter is one of the valedictorians for his class and received recognition for the following achievements: Top Ten Percent, Academic Honors, team captain for both Bowling and Tennis and claimed the BIFF Boys Individual Champion for bowling, Junior and Senior year. Hunter is working with the Boy Scout Aloha Council to set a date for his Eagle Scout Review.

Future Plans: Hunter will be attending Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska this fall with a major in Biology and a Pre-Dental track.

Church Activities: Hunter is part of the Boy Scout Troop 59. Through Boy Scouts, Hunter has participated in various church and community service activities and assisted with church services.



Practical Dharma

A reflection from the article *How to Be a Good Citizen in Troubled Times* in Lion's Roar Magazine:

Do Your Little Bit of Good

by Toni Bernhard

When the Buddha said, "A follower of the dharma does not contend with anyone," he was presenting the essential qualities of a good citizen—open-mindedness and nonattachment to views.

As a good citizen, you grant those with opposite views the benefit of the doubt as to their intentions. At the same time, however, you work in accordance with your own views to alleviate suffering and make life better for others. In the words of Desmond Tutu, "Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world."

You might be an activist in national or local politics. You might volunteer as a hospice worker. You might help a neighbor in need. Whatever you do, by not contending with others, a good citizen acts out of compassion, not anger, and alleviates suffering one step at a time.

Read the full article at:

https://www.lionsroar.com/how-to-be-a-good-citizen/?utm_content=buffer3d07f&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com/lionsroarbuddhism&utm_campaign=buffer&fbclid=IwAR1a_3HeXP_rT8gGKSdK4PaRFSjKsNUQlvORjI-l4gZler2G_HWEU65IYtc

Acknowledgments

February 2020

Capital Fund

Sandy Iwashita
Doris Yamamoto

Hawaii Kyodan Dues

Wesley Deguchi
Doris Yamamoto

Jiho: \$100.00

Sandy Iwashita
m/m Sadamu Koba
Doris Yamamoto

Project Dana: \$80.00

Sandy Iwashita
Doris Yamamoto

Cub Scouts: \$50.00

Sandy Iwashita

Memorial Service: \$100.00

Jerry Hirata—1st year for Tokino Hirata

In Memory Of: \$555.00

Jane Iha—Isamu Iha's 3rd year
m/m Kenneth Komo—Hideo Komo
Joyce Kudamatsu—Fumiko Miyazono
Ken Love—Rev. Shoyei Hatta & Masami Ohata
Ken Love—Fred Uechi, Desiree Shiraki,
Yasunori Deguchi
Earl Ogata—Elaine Tsuruko Ogata Yamamoto

Hakasoji/Nokotsudo: \$365.00

Sandy Iwashita
m/m Sadamu Koba
David Komo
Setsuko Morimoto
m/m Edwin Nagata
Val Ogata
Doris Yamamoto

March 2020

Hawaii Kyodan Dues

m/m Gordon Ogi
Daisy Sasaki
Akino Sonoda
m/m Samuel Taguma
Alert Watanabe
Richard Maeda
Sueto Matsumura
Satsuko Matsuoka
Shirley Matsuoka
Dennis Nakano

Capital Fund

Daisy Sasaki
m/m Samuel Taguma
Albert Watanabe
Edward Aoki
Richard Maeda
Carl Matsubara
Ann Matsumoto
Sueto Matsumura
Satsuko Matsuoka
Shirley Matsuoka
Dennis Nakano

Jiho: \$230.00

Kay Matsuyama
Akino Sonoda
Roy Hayama
Albert Watanabe
Satsuko Matsuoka

Project Dana: \$100.00

Albert Watanabe

Taiko: \$100.00

Albert Watanabe

Jr. YBA: \$100.00

Albert Watanabe

Acknowledgments

Donations: \$175.00

Yoga Class
Roy Hayama
Jay Matsuoka
Glenn Mizoshiri
Albert Watanabe

Memorial Services: \$600.00

Alan Matsumoto—49th Day for Glenn Matsumoto
Nishihara Family—Michiko Nishihara
Neal Ohata—Graveside Inurnment for Yaeko Ohata
Ruth Honda—49th Day & Inurnment for Tomie Honda

In Memory Of: \$955.00

Jordan Ciriako—13th year Manabu Nakashima
Okamoto Family—Frank & Wayne Okamoto
Edwin Ueda—Agnes Katsue Ueda & Mitsue Ueda
Sidney Aoki—Ernest Manabu Nakashima
Lynn Aoki-Tokuyama—Ernest Manabu Nakashima
Claudia Chang—Ernest Manabu Nakashima
Setsuyo Fujino—50th yr. Ine Fujino
William Nakagawa—25th year Shizue Nakagawa
Glenn Yano—Ernest Manabu Nakashima
Dr. Lorraine Mito—20th year Gilbert Yamane & Aiko Yamane
Carol Honda—Doris Murata, Glenn Matsumoto, Ernest Urada

Hakasoji/Nokotsudo: \$1,255.00

Kay Matsuyama
Fay Nakamoto
m/m Gordon Ogi
Daisy Sasaki
Roy Hayama
James Sato
m/m Samuel Taguma
Albert Watanabe
Edward Aoki
Amy Hanaoka

Lorraine Haraguchi
Stanley Kaku
Emi Kaneko
Richard Komo
Judith Koyanagi
Carl Matsubara
Sueto Matsumura
Jay Matsuoka
Satsuko Matsuoka
Shirley Matsuoka
Glenn Mizoshiri
Dennis Nakano
Neal Ohata
Fern Sapanara
Molly Takashiba

Mahalo for your generous donations!

Please let us know if there are any corrections.



Over 130 boxes of food were distributed to our Sangha members on May 16, 2020.