



JIHO

August 2020



Kona Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

Building Healthy Sanghas: Embracing Generosity and Openness



Obon Family Service

Our Obon Family Service will be held on Sunday, August 16th starting at 10:00 am via Zoom. During this special service, we will take time to remember departed loved ones and celebrate our continuing relationship with them. If you would like to honor your loved one(s) at this service please submit their name(s) to the temple office by Wednesday, August 12th. Please email konahongwanji@twc.com or call 808-323-2993. A donation envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Dharma Family Services

Please join us for our virtual Sunday Services in August. All services will begin at 10:00 am via Zoom. A link to join the service will be emailed to you a few days before. Please contact the office to be included in our email list to receive weekly temple updates and information. We look forward to seeing you online! Please consider making an offertory donation for our virtual services just like attending an in-person service. Mahalo!

August 2, 2020, with a message by Jana Masunaga

August 16, 2020, Obon Family Service

August 30, 2020, with a message by Daren Katayama

KONA HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

P.O. Box 769

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

President's Message

The troubling times continue for us with the added threat of a looming hurricane in addition to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. By the time you read this, tropical cyclone Douglas should have passed our islands with what I sincerely hope is minimal, if any, impacts. If the temple can be of any assistance to you in the aftermath of the storm, please do not hesitate to contact the temple staff.

The temple continues to work toward reopening our facilities to our membership and temple affiliates. Our Coronavirus reopening committee has set a *tentative* date to resume the use of the facilities by temple groups of September 1, 2020. The guideline will be circulated to all temple groups with policies & procedures for the safe use of the temple facilities. Among the changes will be limits on the number of people in each of the temple areas, instructions for monitoring the health of attendees, as well as guidelines for cleaning & sanitizing areas after use.

Everyone's safety & health will always be our primary concern. If the temple can be of assistance to you in these uncertain times, please contact the temple.

In Gassho,

Joseph Gusman
Kyodan President

Celebrating the Spirit of Obon Rev. Blayne Higa

Obon is a special time to remember and to celebrate our continuing relationship with departed loved ones and all the causes and conditions that enable our lives to be possible. In Shin Buddhism, Obon is a festival of joyful memory in which we reflect on our lives and how we are continually influenced by our loved ones. This enduring connection is life-giving because it reminds us that we are never alone. Our relationship grows over time as we deepen our understanding of the values and life lessons they shared with us.

Obon has its origins in the Ullambana Sutra. The word Obon is the shortened form of the word Urabon-e which means to suffer as if being hung upside down. The sutra tells the story of Mogallana, one of Shakyamuni Buddha's ten great disciples, and how he suffered over the death of his mother, feeling a deep sense of regret and sorrow. He believed that her devotion to him had been a barrier to her understanding the Dharma. However, the Buddha counseled Mogallana by asking him to reflect deeply upon this and he came to realize that his mother's devotion to him was based on unselfish love. With this profound insight into his mother's life, Mogallana danced with joy as his regret and sorrow were transformed into appreciation and gratitude.

Mogallana's story is also our story. The pain of losing a loved one is a natural part of human life and how we come to understand the meaning of death is through the telling of stories that help us to remember and to reflect on life and the enduring bonds of love. It is in the retelling of these stories that our loved ones continue to offer inspiration and guidance for living in this present moment.

While the pandemic has disrupted the traditional ways of celebrating Obon this year, we can still celebrate the spirit at the heart of this festival. Take time to remember your loved ones and reflect on how they continue to influence your life. Share your stories with your children and grandchildren. Tell them about your life and the lives of your parents and grandparents so they too can live on through these stories. Engage your family by asking them to take a video of you on their smartphone. Laugh, cry, and learn together as you share and pass on your family history.

During this time of isolation, we have spent more time talking and sharing with our loved ones and rediscovering what is most essential in life. Obon is a time to celebrate the simple joy of remembering, reconnecting, and renewing our bonds of love and what it means to be 'Ohana. Obon is truly a joyful celebration of memory which can offer us wisdom for living. Take a moment to celebrate the spirit of Obon in your life. Namo Amida Butsu.



Jr. YBA Convention Goes Virtual

In these crazy times, we must learn to adapt to many things. The Hawaii Federation of Jr. YBA did just that. On June 27, 2020, the 63rd Jr. YBA State Convention was held via Zoom. Awesome job to the United of Maui for hosting this and to Joy Wasai Nishida the Federation's head advisor for leading this organization through all this.

We would also like to congratulate our very own United of Hawaii lead by President Manami A. for winning the Model United trophy!



Congratulations also to:

Ethan M. (Hilo) for winning Mr. Jr. YBA and 1st place in the oratorical contest.
Sara I. (Hilo) 2nd place in essay.

Outstanding Jr. YBA: Manami A. (Kona), Nate S. (Hilo), Jonathan O. (Hilo)

Great job Juniors! Keep it up!

Weekly Sangha Talk Story

Rev. Blayne hosts 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.

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 video conference. 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.

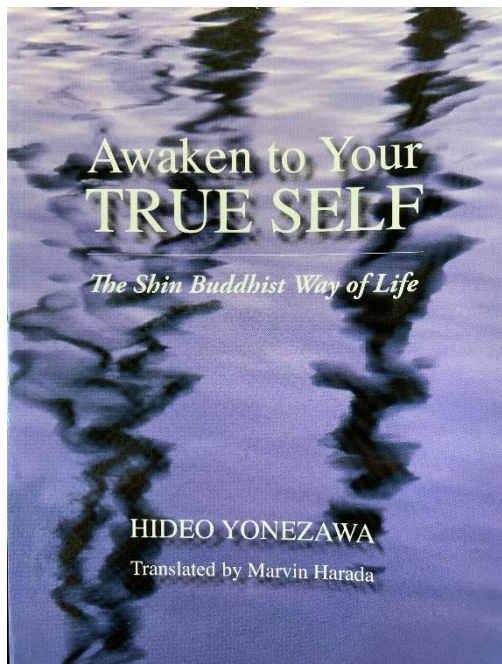
Aloha, Rev. Blayne



Kona Hongwanji Preschool Reopens!

The Kona Hongwanji Preschool reopened on July 20th and is accepting students for the new school year beginning on August 3rd. The staff has worked hard to ensure a healthy and safe learning environment based on DHS guidelines. Please encourage your family and friends to apply. Contact our Preschool Director, Leanne Abe at KHP72016@outlook.com or 808-323-3737 for more information.

KHBT Virtual Book Club



Are you interested in learning about the teachings of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism and how it can relate to your everyday life? Are you looking for a relaxed and fun environment to read and explore the Shin Buddhist Path together and discuss what it personally means to you? If so, the Kona Hongwanji Book Club is the place for you!

Join us as we explore ***Awaken to Your True Self: A Shin Buddhist Way of Life*** by **Hideo Yonezawa** translated by **Rev. Marvin Harada**. We will meet weekly via Zoom from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm on the following Wednesdays in September (2, 9, 16, 23, 30) and October 7. Please sign up with the temple office by Monday, August 17th to place your order for a copy of the book. We look forward to having you join us!

Cooking with Kona Hongwanji

We are excited to announce not only a new feature to our newsletter but a new virtual cooking class with members of our Sangha. Our first cooking class will be featuring BWA members Shigeko Nakasone and Fujie Ichishita along with Marsha Boyle. They were kind enough to agree to be featured in our first online class which will be held on Saturday, August 29 at 10:00 a.m. For our first class, we will be featuring Tsukemono. While there are many recipes in many cookbooks, we look forward to hearing of extra steps or “recipe secrets” from our experienced sangha members! While many of us have been home quarantining, we have begun to cook more than we may have previously. Tsukemono is the perfect item to try! It is not as scary as you think to make, and we are hoping you will try it! Please find the recipes below for the two Tsukemono dishes we will be featuring. If you like, purchase the ingredients on the list so you can cook along! Please be sure to sign up for temple email updates so you can receive a link to our first live cooking class!

YATSUMI ZUKE

1 medium sized head cabbage
3 medium sized mustard cabbage
4 T. or ½ c. Hawaiian salt
2 T. roasted white sesame seeds

Sauce:

1/3 c. shoyu
¼ c. Japanese vinegar
¼ c. brown sugar (firmly packed)
Chili pepper (optional with or without seeds)

Chop or tear the head cabbage and the mustard cabbage into ½” size. Put them in a large container and sprinkle the Hawaiian salt & mix well, leaving for about ½ hour. Squeeze the vegetables to drain the excess water & put them back into the large container. Add the sesame seeds. Prepare the sauce bringing it to a boil. Pour the hot sauce over the vegetables & mix well. Leave the mixture for 3-4 hours at room temperature. Keep in covered jar in the refrigerator.

TAKUAN

8-9 pounds daikon
2 ¼ c. juice (drained daikon juice)
1 ½ c. Japanese vinegar
6 c. sugar
½ c. Hawaiian salt
Chili peppers with or without seeds (optional, cut into small pieces)
Yellow food coloring (optional)

Cut daikon into bite size pieces, salt, put weight on daikon, mix occasionally and let sit overnight. Drain but keep the juice. Measure the juice, vinegar, sugar and chili peppers in a pot and boil. Remove from stove and add drops of food coloring, starting with about ¼ t. Pour hot sauce over daikon, mix well. May add more food coloring if desired.



Kona Hongwanji featured in Honolulu Civil Beat Article

Temples Get Creative To Save Obon Season In Hawaii

With bon dances canceled across the state, Hawaii Island temples are finding ways to celebrate and carry on traditions virtually.

By Cameron Miculka / July 24, 2020

Two days before the Obon service at Daifukuji Soto Mission in Honalo, banners hung in the temple's main hall along with blue and white lanterns meant to guide ancestral spirits back for Obon. Near the altar stood nine o-toba, wooden pillars each inscribed with the name of a temple member who had passed away in the last 12 months.

Typically the Obon service is open to everyone, often drawing members of Taishoji Soto Mission in Hilo, said Rev. Jiko Nakade, resident minister at Daifukuji Soto Mission. This year's service would be smaller though, Nakade said, limited only to the families of those whose names were written on the o-toba.

Obon, a season of celebrating community and honoring ancestors, had been transformed by the pandemic.

Daifukuji Soto Mission and other temples have had to adapt to new norms: arrows on the floor of the main hall direct foot traffic, and pews have been carefully marked to ensure adequate social distancing. The temple, like many others in Hawaii, also canceled its bon dance, which attracts crowds every year for an evening of music and celebration.

Nonetheless, temples and their members are determined to find opportunities to celebrate Obon, especially during a time when values like family and community are a source of strength and resilience.

"I think that what we've learned over the past three months of the pandemic is, 'What are the essential things in our lives?'" said the Rev. Blayne Higa, resident minister at Kona Hongwanji in Kealahou. "It's family. It's home. It's these simple things that we oftentimes take for granted. And so I think even more so, Obon has become more special for people as they remember their loved ones and the values which ground their lives."

A Long Tradition

The celebration of Obon is rooted in the story of Maudgalyayana — known in Japan as Mokuren — a disciple of the Buddha who, on perceiving the suffering of his deceased mother, was advised to feed the monks on July 15 at the end of their training and do good deeds in dedication of his mother. He did so, and, seeing the spirit of his mother suffering no longer, danced with joy.

Obon made its way to Japan with the arrival of Buddhism around the sixth century, where it melded with local festivals, dance ethnologist Judy Van Zile wrote in her book "The Japanese Bon Dance in Hawaii."

After Japanese immigrants began arriving in Hawaii in the 1800s, Van Zile wrote, life on the plantations afforded little opportunity for traditional celebrations. It's questionable to what extent bon dancing took place before the establishment of missions and temples toward the end of the century. The earliest reference to bon dancing in Hawaii she found appears in a 1905 Japanese-language newspaper clipping.

"Obon is a joyful gathering to express appreciation to family and friends who have gone before me." — Betty Takeoka

These days, the tradition started by Mokuren's celebration of his mother continues around the yagura, a towering bandstand at the center of bon dances, as dancers step to traditional folk songs and modern music that have made their way into the repertoire of Obon.

On Hawaii Island alone last year, there was a bon dance planned for nearly every Saturday from June through August, according to a schedule published by Honolulu Magazine.

"Obon is a joyful gathering to express appreciation to family and friends who have gone before me," said Betty Takeoka, a Captain Cook resident and member of Kona Hongwanji for more than 30 years. "Those who love to bon dance, even if they are not church members, look forward to dancing and just having fun."

Obon's universal draw attracts residents and tourists to the festivals throughout the state, making them something temples can offer to Buddhists and non-Buddhists. And by perpetuating Japanese cultural

traditions and Buddhist spiritual practices, Nakade said, it's an opportunity for people to find common ties among them and celebrate life.

"Which is something I think many of us became aware of during this COVID-19 pandemic," she added. "We awoken to how precious life is."

Within the Soto Zen tradition, Nakade said, Obon services include a sutra offering prayers for the hungry spirits, those suffering from endless cravings and desires who are never spiritually fulfilled.

"So it's really a time for us to reflect on that too within ourselves," Nakade said. "How much do I really need to be happy, to live happily? It's not just about hungry spirits out there, but I think we look at our own spiritual hungers and thirst and reflect upon how we're living our daily lives."

Finding New Ways To Celebrate

While some temple groups have been slowly coming back to the temple with social distancing and health requirements like temperature checks in place, Daifukuji Soto Mission remains closed to visitors and the general public. Meanwhile, Nakade said, she hopes people at home can take the time to reflect on their ancestors and find ways to give thanks.

"Maybe they can dance in their living room or their garage," she said. "There's a lot of bon dance music on YouTube."

At Kona Hongwanji, Higa said he too has been considering how he can help his temple members "tap into the spirit of Obon," such as telling a family story or sharing meaningful moments.

"That memory, that family history, the family stories that we share, that sharing is the spirit of Obon," he said.

The two temples have also found ways to create virtual spaces for their members. At Daifukuji Soto Mission, a Buddhist study group, writing group and women's spirituality circle all meet via Zoom. Higa meanwhile has been sharing videos and written messages with Kona Hongwanji members, and the temple held its first Zoom service in June.

At both temples, those efforts have extended their ability to reach members beyond Hawaii Island. Daifukuji Soto Mission members living in Oregon, Arizona and Washington state take part in Dharma study, Nakade said. And at Kona Hongwanji's first Zoom service, Higa said, a temple member visiting family on the mainland joined from Atlanta, while another member's daughter joined from Boston.

"So technology has been I think one of the unintended consequences, maybe, of adapting to this time of isolation," Higa said.

And while the cancellation of the dances was disappointing for members — Takeoka said it was "like there is a big empty hole" — she also emphasized the celebration's spiritual significance.

"The pandemic has definitely put a damper on Obon season," said Takeoka, who is also a dance leader at Kona Hongwanji as well as its director of spiritual affairs. "However, Obon is an outward expression of joy, and I can still appreciate its importance inward, in my heart."

Winifred Kimura, a Kainaliu resident who teaches bon dancing at Daifukuji Soto Mission, also said the inability to gather with others doesn't stop her from embracing the traditions she was raised on.

"Even if I can't go to church or get together with other people, in my home I can do whatever I was taught to do: to honor our ancestors, not only this time of the year, but throughout the year," she said.

Last month, Ewa Hongwanji Mission posted a virtual Obon Service and Bon Dance to the Mililani and Ewa Hongwanji YouTube channel, as did Moiliili Hongwanji Mission on its own YouTube channel.

"Some people may be watching the video alone at home, and I'm hoping that as people see our video, I hope they will realize that they are not alone," said the Rev. Toshiyuki Umitani, resident minister at Moiliili Hongwanji Mission. "We're always together, religiously speaking, I think we're always together in Buddha's wisdom and compassion no matter who you are."

The full article can be found at <https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/07/temples-get-creative-to-save-obon-season-in-hawaii/>

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Satsuye Tanaka, In Memory of Sahei Matsumoto
Stanley Tomono, Jr. YBA, Eitaikyo, Cub Scouts, and Boy Scouts
Janet Yanagi, Jr. YBA
Shigeko Yonemori, In Memory of Kimiko Yonemori
Carol Zakahi, Social Concern

Total - \$2,300.00

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Yoshiko Kadooka	Matsuko Onaka	Margaret Fujikawa
Hatsuyo Haimoto	Ray Kawahara	Kimie Mizoshiri
Anonymous	Dr. John Tsue	
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Mahalo for your generous donations!
Please let us know if there are any corrections.