



JHO

December 2020



Kona Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

Building Healthy Sanghas: Embracing Generosity and Openness

Virtual Dharma Family Services

Please join us for our virtual services in December. All online services will begin at 10:00 am on 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!

Bodhi Day

Sunday, December 6, 2020 at 10:00 am

Guest Speaker: Mernie Miyasato-Crawford

Medical Social Worker and member of Jikoen Hongwanji

Bodhi is the Sanskrit word for enlightenment. Bodhi Day is when Siddhartha Gautama attained enlightenment and became Shakyamuni Buddha. Siddhartha was 35 when he realized Truth. As a Buddha, he shared the Dharma for 45 years until his death at age 80.

Dharma Family Service

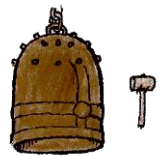
Sunday, December 20, 2020 at 10:00 am



New Year's Eve Bell Ringing

Thursday, December 31, 2020

5:30 pm to 6:30 pm



You are cordially invited to visit the temple to offer incense and for the traditional ringing of the temple bell (Joya no Kane), a symbolic ringing away of our delusions that permeate our everyday lives. The last day of the year is an opportunity to reflect upon the past year in preparation for the coming new year.

New Year's Day Service

Friday, January 1, 2021 at 10:00 am on Zoom

The first day of the new year is a time to reflect and, with renewed dedication, to endeavor to live a life of gratitude and joy within the compassionate embrace of Amida Buddha. Let's begin 2021 by rededicating ourselves to hearing and sharing the Dharma as Ohana!

For Assistance

Office Clerk: Ramah DeMello (Phone: 808-323-2993 Email: konahongwanji@twc.com)

Resident Minister: Rev. Blayne Higa (Emergency only 808-383-9153)

Temple President: Joseph Gusman (Emergency only 808-896-4988 or 808-324-0708)

KONA HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

P.O. Box 769

Kealahou, HI 96750

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

President's Message

Although it will certainly take on a much different format this year, the holiday season has always been my favorite time of the year. The pandemic may limit our gatherings, but I believe the spirit of the season still shines through. From the nicely decorated stores & businesses to the happy greetings we exchange with friends & family-from an appropriate social distance of course-the holiday season seems to bring out the "nice" in everyone. With that, I would like to send out my best wishes for the best holiday season possible to everyone.

As I always do at the end of the year, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the sangha at Kona Hongwanji for all the support I have received this past year as your president. From the work of the Board of Directors to the various committees & affiliates, to the casual conversations at the temple or in the community, it has been a pleasure and an honor to serve our sangha. I look forward to a better and perhaps less stressful year for all in 2021.

In Gassho,
Joseph M. Gusman
Kyodan President

Finding Hope in Darkness Rev. Blayne Higa

*To come out of darkness we must open our eyes to the light.
-Rev. Dr. Seigen Yamaoka*

When we began this year, I don't think anyone imagined how challenging and life-changing things would become. The ongoing pandemic along with the civil and political unrest we are facing as a nation has certainly tested our resilience. This darkness in the world often seems overwhelming and we have been desperately searching for some glimmer of hope.

Now with winter quickly approaching, we are facing the reality of disrupted holiday celebrations due to a dramatic rise in COVID cases. This sobering truth compounded with our communal weariness and the creeping gloom of the season will undoubtedly be difficult for many of us. However, we should remember that this is only one moment in time and that we have much to be hopeful for despite the darkness.

Since the pandemic began there have been many days where I simply could not see the light despite the sun shining all around me. The daily struggle of putting one foot in front of the other trying to manage the chaos of life has narrowed my vision and dimmed my perception. However, there are moments of human kindness that pierce through the darkness revealing the light that is ever-present in our world.

A few months ago, after a particularly rough day at the office, I returned home to find a bag of fruits and vegetables on the wall next to my garage. There was no note but I knew exactly who had left it. From time-to-time, this temple member generously shares the bounty from his farm. He never stops to chat but quietly drives by and leaves a bag for me. I never manage to catch him but have seen him drive away a few times. I am always grateful for his generosity and it reminds me of how my life is sustained by the kindness of others.

On this occasion, his simple gift brought a big smile to my face as the tension of the day melted away. I also felt a little ashamed of being so consumed by my darkness. My heart was opened by his kindness and my eyes were now able to perceive the light illuminating my world.

This is the inconceivable working of Amida Buddha's Vow manifesting in our lives. In the *Shōshinge (Hymn of True Entrusting)* Shinran Shōnin says, "But though the light of the sun is veiled by clouds and mists, beneath the clouds and mists there is brightness, not dark." Here Shinran is reminding us that there is light even in our darkest moments and that we have the ability to persevere because of Amida's embrace. This is why Buddhism is a path of supreme optimism in which we learn to appreciate the fullness of life with all of its ups and downs.



In our daily lives, we often fail to recognize these moments of awakening. However, these simple acts of kindness remind us there is a light in the darkness and there is always hope for transformation and change. We simply need to open our eyes to see it. May you find rest, renewal, and hope this holiday season. Namo Amida Butsu.

Mahalo for your generous support!

December 2020

Dear Members and Friends of Kona Hongwanji,

This has been a difficult year. The social and economic impacts of the ongoing pandemic are far-reaching. It has affected the way we work and play, even the way we connect with family and friends. We have had to come face-to-face with the truth of impermanence and change that was taught by Shakyamuni Buddha. While COVID-19 has impacted our lives in so many ways, it has also been an opportunity for innovation and creativity in how we build community and share the Buddha's teachings.

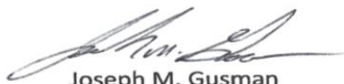
Our temple has responded to these challenges compassionately, responsibly, and creatively. Our Sangha Food Distribution Program, phone ministry, weekly email updates, and our various online Dharma offerings among other activities, have been ways we have adjusted to a rapidly changing situation. Even our preschool has adapted to continue serving families in our community.

Working together and offering a compassionate heart is how we have cared for each other during this difficult time. This is how we have aspired to build a healthy Sangha by embracing generosity and openness. We hope you feel connected and supported as part of our Ohana.

As we look forward to 2021 with optimism, we also accept the uncertainty of how the year will unfold. The pandemic will most likely continue to affect our normal calendar of events and activities, impacting our ability to raise funds. Planning for temple sustainability during and after COVID-19 is essential and is the only way we can ensure a bright future for our spiritual home.

We hope you will consider making an end-of-year gift to support the temple as we prepare for an uncertain future. Your generosity is greatly appreciated and ensures we can continue sharing the Dharma and caring for our community. Mahalo nui loa!

In Gassho,


Joseph M. Gusman
Kyodan President


Rev. Blayne Higa
Resident Minister

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 on 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*



Preparing For The Holidays During COVID-19

For many people, the holiday season will look different this year. Often, the last few months of the year are busy with parties and visiting family and friends. But due to COVID-19, things like traveling and gathering in large groups may not be possible.

Many people have lost loved ones and will be missing someone's presence during the festivities, and even more have lost their jobs and are dealing with financial stress. Others, like healthcare workers, may be working overtime and unable to take as much time off around the holidays as they usually can. It can be hard to cope with these kinds of changes, especially if certain holidays are the only time you see some of your loved ones.

If you live with a mental health condition, you may have an especially difficult time with the uncertainty and the change of plans this year. Many people with mental health conditions find consistency important in their recovery, especially during times of high stress - like both the pandemic and the holiday season. A sudden shift in tradition may have you feeling an extreme loss of control on top of disappointment.

Change is difficult for most people, especially when you didn't ask for or even expect these changes. But that doesn't mean that the holidays are destined to be a disappointment this year. There are plenty of ways to cope with the tough feelings you're having while still enjoying the holidays:

Identify How You're Feeling.

Figuring out your emotions about the upcoming holidays can make things feel less overwhelming. Most people are feeling a lot of different ways at once right now, which is hard for our brains to process and understand. This year has been a difficult year for many reasons. That means that some of your distress is likely related to things other than the holidays. It is completely normal for you to be feeling a bit more emotional than usual right now. Take some time to sort through your emotions in whatever way is most productive for you - you can journal, talk to a friend, or just spend some quiet time alone thinking. Once you have a better idea of the specific feelings you're experiencing, you can start making plans to cope with them.

Acknowledge What You've Lost.

While the holidays are mainly about thankfulness and celebration, this can also be a really hard time of year, even during normal circumstances. If you're missing a loved one, think of ways to honor them during your festivities. If you've lost a job or had to drop out of school, take the time to recognize the challenges that came with that. Even if you haven't lost anything concrete, we've all lost our sense of normalcy this year - it's okay to grieve that during this time.

Make The Most Of It.

There's no denying that things will be different this year, but holidays don't need to be canceled (or even minimized). There will be some things that you can't do right now, but there are surely some that you can. You can still carve pumpkins, send sweets to your friends and family for Diwali, make your favorite Thanksgiving meal, light the menorah, decorate gingerbread houses, and break out confetti poppers for New Year's Eve. For the things you can't do - brainstorm how to adapt them for COVID times. If you're disappointed about Halloween parties being cancelled, plan a small outdoor gathering, or come up with virtual games to play over Zoom instead. Feeling lonely because you won't get to see your extended family? Round up your cousins to video chat while preparing Thanksgiving dinner.

Don't Romanticize Your Typical Holiday Plans.

Remember that while your holiday season may normally be full of excitement and joy, it can also be a time of high stress. Long days of travel, endless to-do lists, and dinners with that one family member you don't get along with are all part of the holidays too. Even though you may be giving up some of your favorite things about the holidays this year, you're probably leaving some stressors behind too. You don't need to be happy about this - sometimes the chaos is part of the fun! - but be careful not to distort the situation and make it seem worse than it really is.

Practice Gratitude.

Gratitude is a major focus this time of year, and while it may seem harder to find things to appreciate, there is still plenty to be thankful for. Make a conscious effort to regularly identify some things that you're grateful for. It can be something as broad as your health, or something as specific as your favorite song playing on the radio the last time you got in the car. Change is hard, but it isn't always bad. There are still ways to celebrate

the season with your loved ones, even if you must give up some of your favorite traditions. Find creative ways to adapt. Or start new traditions – they may even add more meaning to your holiday season.

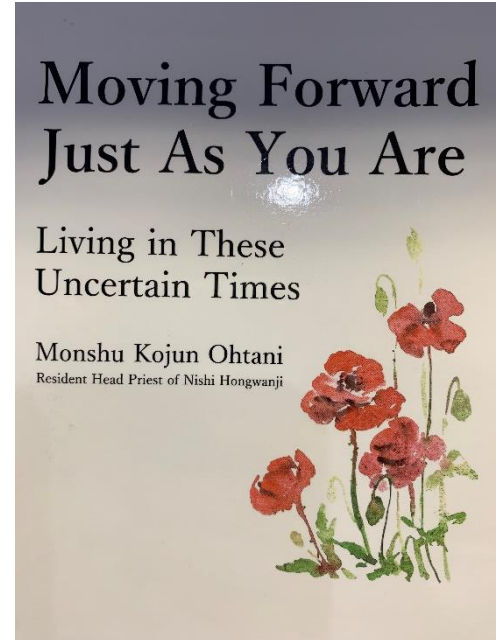
If you're still finding yourself sad, hopeless, or unable to enjoy the holidays this year, you may be struggling with a mental health condition. Take an online screen to determine if what you're feeling is a sign of something like depression or anxiety rather than holiday stress.

The article can be found at <https://mhanational.org/preparing-holidays-during-covid-19>

KHBT Virtual Book Club Returns January 2021

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 *Moving Forward Just As You Are: Living in These Uncertain Times* by Monshu Kojun Ohtani. We will meet weekly via Zoom from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm on the following Wednesdays in January (13, 20, 27). Please sign up with the temple office by Monday, December 14th to order a copy of the book. We look forward to having you join us!



Unique Holiday Gift Idea

Need a creative gift for family and friends? We have handmade Kukui Nut O-Nenju for only \$20.00. The Kukui or Candlenut has been valued for its many uses since ancient times. Native Hawaiians used the oil from the Kukui to make light. The Kukui was designated as the state tree of Hawaii in 1959. The tree symbolizes enlightenment, peace, guidance, and leadership. Kukui has a spiritual meaning of light, hope, and renewal. Our handmade Kukui Nut O-Nenju is a beautiful reminder of how we are always embraced by the light of the Buddha of All-Inclusive Wisdom and All-Embracing Compassion.

Everyday Dharma

An excerpt from *Moving Forward Just As You Are: Living in These Uncertain Times* by Monshu Kojun Ohtani, Head Priest of Nishi Hongwanji:

When faced with what seem to be insurmountable personal problems, we can overcome these ordeals by remembering that we are not alone.

I believe the reason why we are able to cope with our anxieties and sorrows is because we are not alone. We are able to live by supporting one another through our connections with each other. I myself, have special bonds with those around me. That is why I always feel that we should not ever leave alone those who are left in solitude.

In Japan, people often used to say, "*okagesamade* 'thanks to everyone and everything'" or "*otagaisama* 'we are in this together.'" When something good would happen to a person, he/she would say "*okagesamade*," not forgetting to give appreciation to the other person. When something bad would happen, people would say to each other "*otagaisama*" in order to express solidarity in identifying with each other's struggles. These people understood the idea that "Being on my own, I am not a complete person," that without the support of each other, we cannot live. That is precisely why these words naturally came about.

Pumpkin Butter Mochi Sale

Inspired by the challenging times we are living in, a small team of volunteers planned another creative project and sold over 100 pans of delicious Pumpkin Butter Mochi. We hope you enjoyed the flavors of Autumn!



Amazon Smile for Holiday Shopping

Amazon Smile is a free and easy way to support your favorite charitable organization. When you shop at <http://smile.amazon.com> Amazon will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases to the charitable organization of your choice.

We hope you will consider designating Kona Hongwanji Buddhist Temple as your favorite organization. Please encourage your family and friends to kokua as well. We sincerely appreciate your support during these uncertain times. Mahalo!

December 2020 Preschool News

Happy Holidays from our family to yours! I hope all is well and that you are continuing to stay safe and healthy as we enter this winter season. This is generally a busy time for us; here are some of the things that our preschoolers have been up to.

November is National Gratitude Month. We have been practicing the art of being grateful by focusing on what is positive in our lives. By beginning with a simple "please" and "thank you", we spread positive feelings to everyone involved.

December 1st is National Day of Giving. We will be teaching the children the importance of helping others in need. This is the start of our Giving Tree, a two-week fund drive to benefit the Hawaii Island Food Basket. We will be collecting cash and checks donations made payable to The Food Basket, Inc.

We will end our year with a Holiday Spirit Week which includes a Chocolate Covered Anything Day, Ugly Sweater Day and Water Play Day. Our Winter Break is From December 21, 2020-January 1, 2021. School resumes on Monday, January 4, 2021.

We are still accepting students (ages 2-6) on an open enrollment basis. We have both full and part-time slots available on waitlist until we are able to open up another classroom. Please pass the word on if you know of anyone who may be interested in attending here.

We are also hiring for the following positions: Full-Time Preschool Teacher, Full-Time Teacher's Aide, Part-Time Evening Janitor, Substitute Teacher and Teacher's Aide. If you are or know someone who is interested in any of those positions, please contact the preschool for more information at khp72016@outlook.com or (808)323-3737.

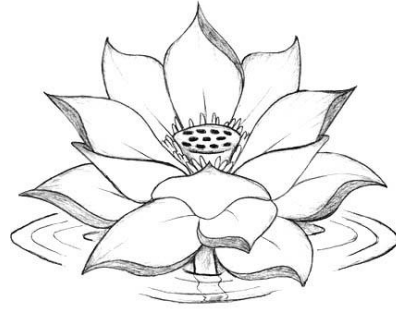
Thank you very much for your continued support of our preschool with cleaning supplies and monetary donations. Thank you also to those who support use with fresh fruits for snack-time year after year; Mr. Tashima's boxes of bananas, Molly Nakano's boxes of tangerines, the Harano's sweet and juicy oranges, Uncle Morris' assorted seasonal fruits, Ms. Sharon's bunches of bananas, and Ms. Victoria's tangerines and starfruit. We are truly grateful for your generosity.

Aloha,
Leanne Abe
Preschool Director

In Memoriam

The Kona Hongwanji Sangha extends its deepest sympathy to the families and friends of the following members who recently passed away. May you find comfort and peace in the Nembutsu. Namo Amida Butsu

George Sakamoto (August 16, 2019)
Tomie Honda (February 29, 2020)
Miles Nakahara (April 27, 2020)
Takao Katoku (May 10, 2020)
Yaeko Yoshioka (June 10, 2020)
Pauline Aoki Yano (June 21, 2020)
Mary Nakagawa (July 28, 2020)
Sally Murakami (August 25, 2020)
Charles Okino (October 8, 2020)
Ukie Saito (November 12, 2020)



Citizenship as Spiritual Practice

BY JACK KORNFIELD | NOVEMBER 3, 2020

Right speech, right action, right livelihood, compassion — tending to society is part of the Buddha's path of awakening. A commentary by Jack Kornfield.

More than anything, I believe the world is in need of a spiritual perspective.

Currently we are experiencing suffering in multiple forms. There is a health crisis, an economic crisis, and there is a moral crisis. The pandemic has not only sickened millions, it has highlighted the ongoing systemic injustice of our world. The outpouring of protests after the murder of George Floyd show that after the centuries of racism, violence, and ignorance, they are still painfully widespread today. With all this, our political divisiveness has grown stronger.

How, as spiritual practitioners, do we respond? How do we practice in a complex political world and embody a way toward peace?

The Buddhist teachings of generosity, virtue, loving-kindness, and wisdom offer our world great medicine, so needed in our times. The Buddha's words on wise society encourage creating communities of mutual respect, care for the vulnerable, and compassion for all. And with this admonition, he offers practices to awaken these qualities, individually and collectively.

This dharma medicine is nonpartisan — it welcomes everyone and encourages all to awaken together. Inner and outer are not separate. Our relationships with others, expressed in right speech, right action, and right livelihood, in compassion and universal loving-kindness, are essential parts of the Buddha's path of awakening. Tending to our society is part of our practice. Thus we can understand Gandhi's words: "Those who say spirituality has nothing to do with politics, they do not know what spirituality really means."

The Buddha taught that peace is possible, both individually and collectively, but that it depends on skillful causes and conditions. Inner peace grows from mindfulness, compassion, and respect. Outwardly, it requires the same conditions. For the Buddha, greed must be replaced by generosity, hatred must be replaced by love, and ignorance must be replaced by wisdom.

When we envision a society of compassion and justice, when our actions stem from respect for all beings, peace is the result. With a dedicated intention we must face the sufferings of the world and not shy away. With the dharma, we become willing to stand up for what we know is true. This is a powerful act of the heart—to stay true to our values, and live by them.

At Spirit Rock Meditation Center, Sylvia Boorstein has taught a class called "Informed Citizenship as Spiritual Practice," which encourages people to ask themselves: what can I do as a wisdom holder, as a bodhisattva, and as a member of this society, to best contribute to the world in these times? We all need to ask ourselves this question now.

The Buddha's teachings of compassion and wisdom are empowering. They encourage us to act. Do not doubt that your good actions and the wisdom you offer will bear fruit. Do not doubt that change for the better can be born from your life.

An essay from Lion's Roar magazine: <https://www.lionsroar.com/citizenship-as-spiritual-practice/>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS—November 2020

SPECIAL DONATIONS

Mr. & Mrs. Richard Maeda

Chizu Nakashima

Mr. & Mrs. John Tsue

Family of Chiyoko Kawasaki

Family of Elaine Kawasaki

Sachiko Katoku, Memorial Service for Naoto Katoku

Mr. & Mrs. Alvin Haraguchi, Jiho

Mr. & Mrs. Gilbert Kaneko, Sunday Service

Anonymous, Ohigan

Suga Suzuki, Hoonko Service

Anonymous, In Memory of Tsugio Sakata

Carol Kawachi, In Memory of Jack Tokunaga

Gary Katoku, In Memory of Naoto Katoku

Mr. & Mrs. Harold Tasaka, In Memory of Naoto Katoku

Sylvia Hayase, In Memory of Naoto Katoku

Mr. & Mrs. Alan Katoku, In Memory of Naoto Katoku

Francis Katoku, In Memory of Naoto Katoku

Kona Hongwanji BWA, In Memory of Sally Murakami

Sachiko Oka, In Memory of Ito Oka and Haruo Oka

Lilly Ushiroda, Jean Murata, Bill & Lenora Kelley, In Memory of Hatsuko Kaku, 17 yrs.

Lilly Ushiroda, Jean Murata, Bill & Lenora Kelley, In Memory of Norman Kaku, 25 yrs.

Total - \$1,400.00

HAKASOJI and NOKOTSUDO

Yukiko Nakayama

Nobue Teshima

Mark Thrift

Toyoko Urada

Total - \$185.00

CAPITAL FUND

Mr. & Mrs. Melvin Kunitake

Howard Yamasaki

Mark Thrift

HAWAII KYODAN DUES

Mr. & Mrs. Melvin Kunitake

Howard Yamasaki

Mark Thrift



***Mahalo for your generous
donations!***

***Please let us know if there
are any corrections.***