

## Hawaii GIIP hosts 11th Annual Mahatma Gandhi Day Celebration



Honolulu, Hawaii, Oct. 02, 2016  
NRIPress-Club/Gary Singh/ Dr. Raj Kumar/

The Gandhi International Institute for Peace founded on September 11, 2001 by Dr. Raj Kumar in Honolulu, Hawaii, held its second annual event to celebrate the 147th birthday of Mahatma Gandhi on October 2 outside Honolulu Zoo. Dr. Kumar released his new book, Gandhi's Wisdom For you, a compilation of 108 best quotes for self-realization, social change and world peace on this auspicious day. Over 300 people including locals, children, and tourists attended the event.

The event began with a Hawaiian blessing by Kahu Kamaki Kanahale, Kahu Bruce Keaulani, and Dr. Terry Shintani. Soorya Kumar, Professor Ramdas Lamb, Madana Sundari, Veda Das, Eric Bott, and Sundarananda Das performed an Indian invocation and spiritual chant. The Royal Hawaiian Band played the National Anthems of U.S., India, Hawaii Pono'i, and the song, 'Let There be Peace on Earth.' Hawaii's well-known musicians and singers, Kuuipo Kumukahu, Wallen Ellingsong and singers Pomaika'i and Maile Lyman played music and sang Queen's prayer and John Lennon homage to peace, "Imagine". Those who attended event, they learned Sun Salutation Yoga, Transcendental Meditation and Ho'oponopono.

The event also included and Hula dance by Waianuhea, multicultural dances by Willow Chang from Bollywood Hawaii, Sai Bhatawadekar and a group from the East- West Center of Hawaii. Several students from Iolani School, University of Hawaii and Hawaii Pacific University also participated in the event. Down to Earth and the Vegetarian Society of Hawaii gave free refreshments and water to the attendees.

Interfaith dialogues on world peace were given by interfaith leaders, Bishop Eric Matsumoto from a Buddhist perspective, Sister Joan Chatfield from a Roman Catholic perspective, Veda Das from a Hindu world view, Dr. Jared Yurow through the lens of Judaism and Harendra Panalala from a Jainist understanding.

The keynote speakers were Hon. US Senator (retired) Daniel K. Akaka, Hon. Senator Mike Gabbard, Hon. Representative Ken Ito, Councilwoman Kymberly Pine and Misty Kelai, Director of Arts and culture from the City and County of Honolulu, Maya Soetoro-Ng, Ph.D., Director of the Outreach Program of the Spark Matsunaga Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, UH Manoa; and several interfaith leaders spoke from their hearts about the teachings and philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi.

GIIP also received proclamations from Governor David Y. Ige, Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell, a certificate and recognition from the Senate and the House and a message from Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard from Washington, recognizing GIIP's valuable contribution to raise awareness about nonviolence and peace in Hawaii.

GIIP requested that the Hawaii Legislature commemorate Gandhi's birth, and the Senate passed Bill 332; and on April 9, 2015, Governor David Y. Ige signed the Senate Bill into law (Act 5) designating October 2 of each year as "Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi Day". By doing so, Hawaii became the first state in the Union to honor Gandhi.

On April 28, 2016, the Hawaii Legislature passed resolution SCR 20 to establish a Sister State relationship between Hawaii and Goa, India. The Government of Goa appointed Dr. Kumar as a liaison to promote trade, tourism, peace education, cultural exchange programs, spiritual pilgrimages, and international peace conferences between two great states and foster a cooperative relationship between two large democratic countries.

Mahatma Gandhi was known as a pioneer of 'Satyagraha' (true resistance movement), which he successfully used against British Rule in India. He was the first world leader to practice the method of Ahimsa, which means to refrain from harming others in thoughts, words and actions even though when confronted by an oppressor who intimidates by using violence. Dr. Nelson Mandela, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dalai Lama, Aung San Suu Kyi, Anna Hazare, along with several other world leaders have used the methods of nonviolence and have succeeded in achieving freedom, justice, and equal rights in various countries around the world. Mahatma Gandhi was able to remove the British Empire from India without using any form of violence in August 1947. He is known as the Father of the Nation, India, where his birthday, October 2, is celebrated as a national holiday.

The General Assembly of the United Nations passed a resolution on June 15, 2007 that declared October 2 the "International Day of Nonviolence." There are hundreds of Gandhi Peace centers around the world that observe October 2 as the Day of Nonviolence and Peace.

Once, Mahatma Gandhi

said, "We are brothers and sisters and be the change, if you wish to see change in the world."