

SOTO MISSION OF AIEA
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TAIHEIJI BULLETIN



JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2020

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2020!

Please join us at the New Year's Blessing Service and Daihannya Service at Taiheiji to offer prayers for a prosperous and safe year, and receive blessings from the temple. **The New Year's Service at Taiheiji begins at 9:00 a.m.** on Wednesday, January 1. During the service, the sutra, Hannyashingyo, will be chanted to the beat of the taiko. What a wonderful feeling it is to start the New Year by sharing together the wisdom of the Buddha-Dharma with family and friends! Attendees will also be blessed with the *Rishubun*, the holy book containing the Buddha's teachings. Please take this opportunity to also pick up the new *Ofuda* Packets, extra *ofuda*, and *omamori* you may have ordered. Don't forget to collect all the old *ofuda* and *omamori* from your home and bring them to the temple. It is important to replace them with your new set!

The Komagata family will serve New Year's *gochiso* (delicious food) immediately after the service, which include *ozoni* and *zenzai*...the source of physical and spiritual strength for the New Year 2020. We look forward to seeing you at 9:00 a.m. on New Year's Day!!!

SOTO MISSION OF AIEA ACTIVITY CENTER

Turn to page 3 to learn more about Taiheiji's plans for the Soto Mission of Aiea Activity Center and how you can help make this project a reality!!!



Artist's rendering of the Soto Mission of Aiea Activity Center, with construction to begin in 2022.

JANUARY SERVICES

HATSU KANNONKO & DOGEN BIRTHDAY SERVICES OFUDA-YAKI CEREMONY

On **Sunday, January 26, at 9:00 a.m.**, everyone is invited to attend the “Hatsu Kannonko,” or first Kannonko service of the year. Please invite your spouse, children, and friends to attend Kannonko services. A service will be also held commemorating the birth of Dogen Zenji, one of Soto Buddhism’s two founders.

Rev. Shuji will also conduct a New Year’s Blessing service for anyone unable to attend the New Year’s Day Service. At the end of the services in the temple, we will adjourn to the front of the temple for the *Ofuda-yaki* ceremony. All the old *ofuda* and *omamori* from 2019 will be burned during this service. Upon conclusion of the services, light refreshments will be served. Please stop by and join everyone. We look forward to seeing all of you.

FEBRUARY SERVICES

NEHAN-E, KANNONKO, & SETSUBUN

On Sunday, February 9, the Soto Mission of Aiea will observe Nehan-e (Parinirvana), Kannonko Service, and also celebrate the Setsubun (Bean Throwing) Ceremony. February is the month when Buddhists observe the passing of Shakamuni Buddha. At Taiheiji, the large Nehan-zu (scroll) that illustrates the Buddha’s passing is displayed for all to view. The scroll, painted back in the 1930s, was recently restored to its original beauty in 2008. As followers of the Buddha and his Teachings, it is important that many have the opportunity to see and appreciate the scroll to express our gratitude. We therefore urge all of you to pay a visit to the temple and join others at this annual observance. Although not a Buddhist practice, the Setsubun Ceremony is a Japanese tradition that the members of Taiheiji have adopted. Those born in “the Year of the Rat” will have the honor and privilege of tossing roasted beans while shouting, “FUKU WA UCHI,” (good luck in) and “ONI WA SOTO” (bad luck out). This lighthearted ceremony is a joy for participants of all ages. After the above services, Taiheiji’s annual New Year’s Party will take place in the hall.

WHAT IS NEHAN (PARINIRVANA)?

February 15 is Nehan, the day that Shakyamuni Buddha died near the town of Kushinagara on the banks of the Hiranyavati River. A big scroll depicting the Buddha entering Nirvana is hung in the temple and a ceremony expressing our gratitude to the Buddha is performed.

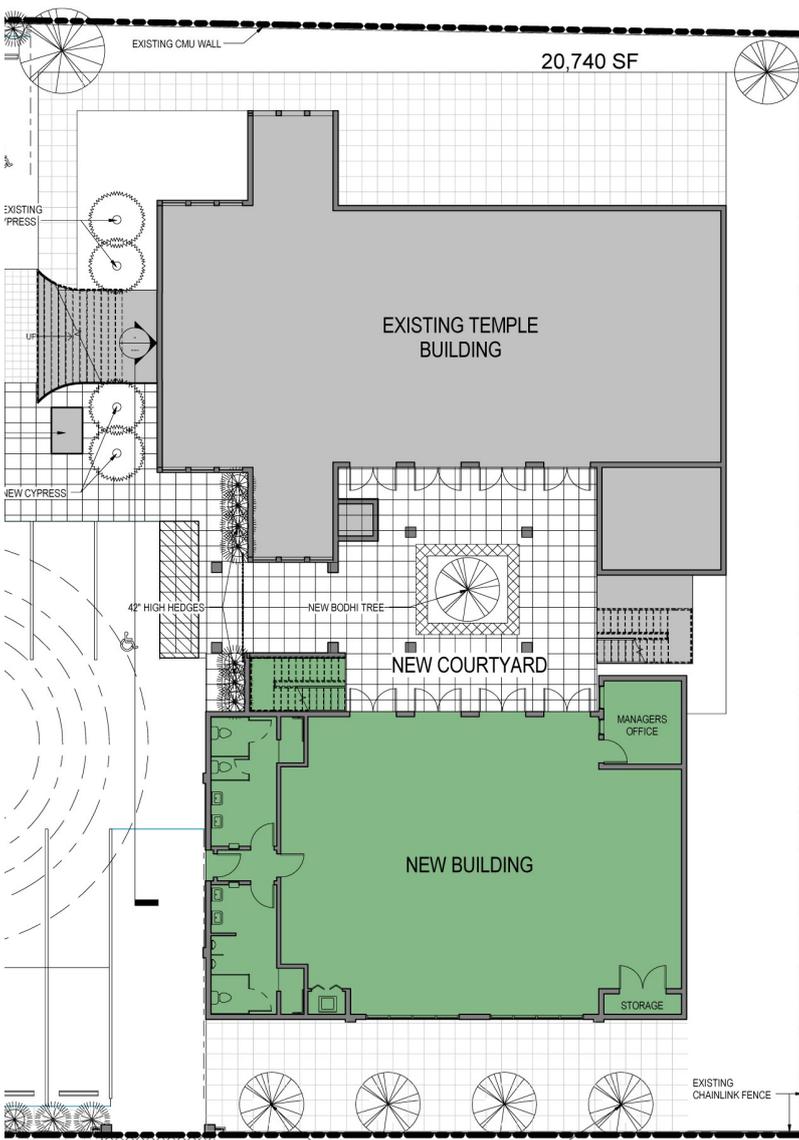
It is said that at the time of his death the Buddha was sleeping on a bed that had been prepared between two sal trees; his head to the north, his face to the west, and his right hand for a pillow. At that time, white flowers bloomed on the sal trees and fell continuously.

Many of his disciples, the king and his family, men and women of all ages, and even birds and animals gathered, sighing with sadness. The Buddha gave his last discourse, expounding the fundamental truth – even though the physical body dies, the Dharma is eternal; in order to see the Buddha, it is necessary to see the Dharma. In this way, he taught his disciples the precepts and the way they should maintain the practice of Buddha’s Way. This last sermon is called the *Yuikyogyo*.

SOTO MISSION OF AIEA ACTIVITY CENTER: FROM VISION TO REALITY

By Rev. Shuji Komagata

As Taiheiji enters its second century of existence, it is important that we establish our plans for the future. With ongoing operating costs and mounting repairs, temples and churches across the island are struggling just to keep their doors open. The valuable donations collected seem to evaporate into thin air just to cover these costs. I would like to find a better future of Taiheiji—not only of survival—but also of growth. I would like Taiheiji to both thrive and positively impact more and more people in the community. With that in mind, Taiheiji will break ground in 2022 on the construction of the new Soto Mission of Aiea Activity Center—a new two-story multipurpose building. In addition to providing a new and upgraded home for many of our existing activities, the new building’s footprint better utilizes the limited space on the temple property. On the second floor, two activity rooms will provide the ample space for various groups to use simultaneously. There are plans to open a Zazendo (meditation hall) with enough space to accommodate more than 20 practitioners. There will also be a large meeting room with seating for over 50 people.



As part of our continued commitment to serve both our temple members and community, plans are underway to open on the ground floor the Taiheiji Adult Care Center. This modern facility will provide a friendly, comfortable, and nurturing environment for our kupunas of the temple and Aiea community. With plans to accommodate up to 30 clients, we are confident that the Taiheiji Adult Care Center will make a positive difference in people’s lives.

(Continued on page 4)

An aerial view of the existing temple (top) and the new building (bottom).

The new 2 story building will boast over 5000 square feet of space for a variety of activities

(Continued from page 3)

The Taiheiji Legacy-Endowment Bond

To fund this project, Taiheiji will issue the Taiheiji Legacy-Endowment Bond in 2021. The money collected from this \$1,000,000 bond will be deposited into the temple's Building Fund, which will be used to pay for the project. In return, all Taiheiji Legacy-Endowment Bond investors (or designated beneficiary) will receive an annual interest return of 3% on their principal investment for a period of 20 years. After the 20th annual interest payment is distributed, all investors (or designated beneficiary) will receive their initial principal investment amount back in full.

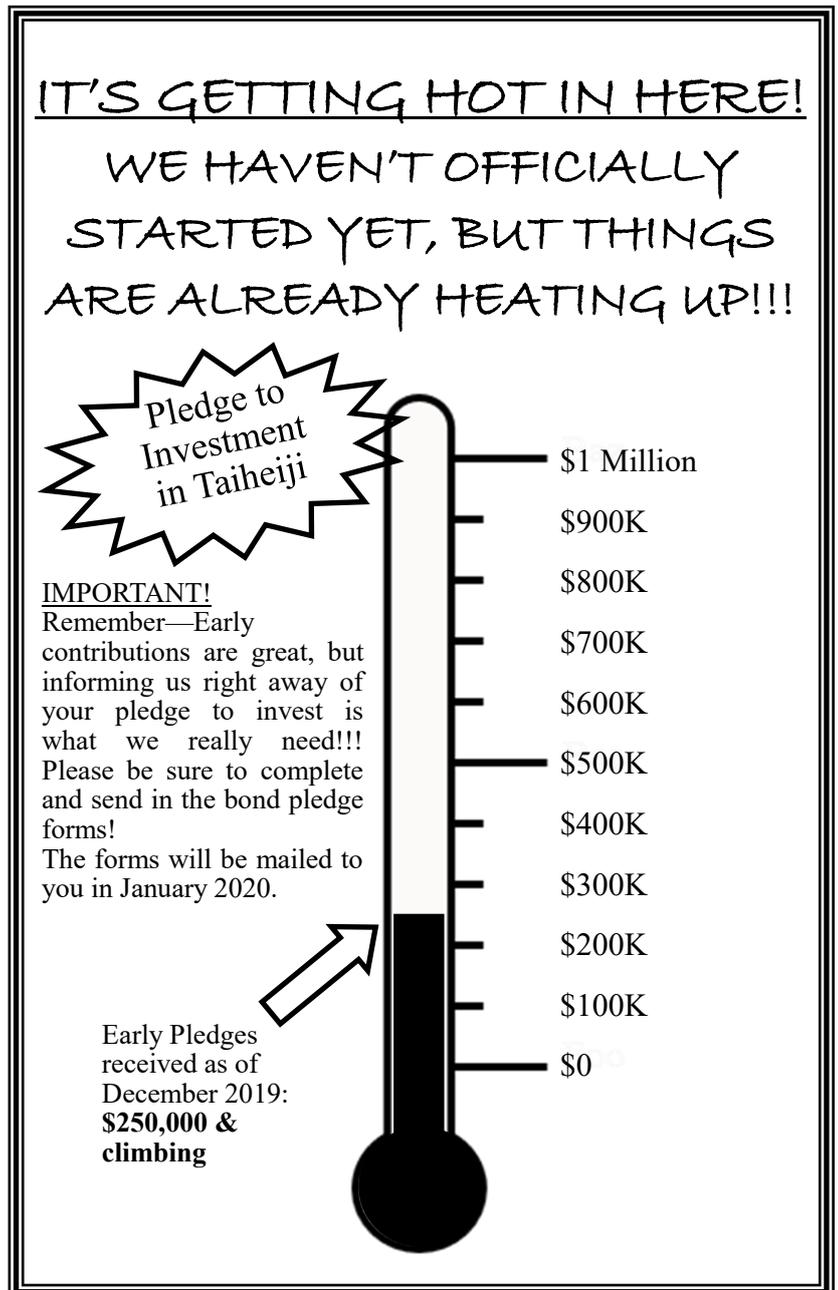
2020: Receiving pledges and early contributions

To get a head start on this project, Taiheiji will be accepting pledges and early contributions to the Taiheiji Legacy-Endowment Bond between January and December 2020. While early contributions are helpful, the pledges we receive over the next 12 months are the most important. Your pledge not only indicates your support for this project, but also helps us measure how close we are to attaining our goal of raising \$1,000,000. In fact, we have already received over \$250K in pledges and early contributions from just the Taiheiji board and those working close to the project.

I hope that the unanimous support the Taiheiji Legacy-Endowment Bond has received from the Taiheiji board of directors is an indication of how strongly we believe in the bond, and how truly excited and extremely optimistic we are about the success of the project.

We are excited about this project and strongly believe in this bond as the best method to raise money for the Soto Mission of Aiea Activity Center because of how different it is from how we've raised money in the past. The vast majority of non-profit religious organizations including Taiheiji rely

(Continued on page 5)



(Continued from page 4)

heavily on the generosity of its members and supporters to survive. We are grateful that even after taking on several large projects like the elevator installation, Nehanzu (scroll) restoration, temple altar's restoration project, restroom expansion and renovation, Kannondo Project, PV solar panels, roof repair, temple painting, and ongoing repairs and upgrades required to maintain Taiheiji, our members and supporters have consistently and generously donated money in support of these projects.

Our partnership with the Hawaii Kansha Foundation

Although there is no indication that this support is waning, the Taiheiji board of directors felt it important to explore other fundraising methods for the new Activity Center. We were ecstatic when the Hawaii Kansha Foundation—a private charitable organization with Taiheiji roots—agreed to partner with us on this project. There are many reasons why the Hawaii Kansha Foundation chose to back the Legacy-Endowment Bond instead of simply paying for the construction of the Activity Center. This arrangement encourages temple members and supporters to truly be a part of this effort to start a new chapter of true sustainability for Taiheiji. However, instead of donating to the project, temple members and supporters can invest in Taiheiji through the bond—truly a mutually beneficial relationship. Over the lifetime of the 20 year bond, the Hawaii Kansha Foundation contribution to Taiheiji is projected to be in excess of over \$2,000,000—far more than what would have been awarded simply as a lump sum contribution today. The excess money from Hawaii Kansha Foundation will help start Taiheiji's Endowment Fund—monies that Taiheiji will be able to use in perpetuity—the lasting mark of what can be our generation's legacy.

As the minister of Taiheiji, I am excited about the Legacy-Endowment Bond. I really want this construction of the Activity Center to be a success, and if I could, I would invest \$50,000 of my money in the Legacy-Endowment Bond. However with my



limited income as a minister, I can only comfortably invest about \$3,000 at this time. However, the beauty of pledging is that if my financial situation improves over the next year or so, I can always increase my investment. The Taiheiji Legacy-Endowment Bond is a solid long term investment opportunity that can be part of your financial portfolio. I humbly ask you to participate in this effort.

The idea of donating—giving selflessly to the temple—remains a fundamental principle that will continue to be practiced and encouraged. In fact, a number of our board members have already indicated that they would like to donate their pledged investment to the temple. This means that the bond they purchase will be donated back to the temple, and these funds will be invested toward the growth of Taiheiji's Endowment Fund. For me personally, I have chosen to use the Legacy-Endowment Bond as a part of my investment portfolio as I work to build my retirement nest egg. Perhaps down the road I will change my investment into a donation. But that is why this is so appealing—I have choices... Please contact me with your questions, and I will do my best to answer them. Mahalo!!!

UPCOMING SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

JANUARY

1	Wed	9:00 a.m.	New Year's Blessing Service
19	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Taiheiji Board Meeting
25	Sat	8:30 a.m.	Temple Cleanup Day
26	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Dogen Zenji Birthday Service, Hatsu Kannonko, and Ofudayaki

February

2	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Fujinkai Meeting
8	Sat	8:30 a.m.	Temple Cleanup Day
9	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Nehan-e, Kannonko, & Setsubun Ceremony
9	Sun	11:00 a.m.	Taiheiji Shinnenkai (New Year's Party)

2020 TENTATIVE CALENDAR*

January	1	New Year's Day Blessing Service
	1	Daihannya Services
	26	Dogen's Birthday, Kannonko, Ofuda-yaki Services
February	9	Nehan-e & Kannonko Services
	9	Taiheiji New Year's Party
March	8	Spring Higan & Kannonko Services
April	12	Taiheiji Buddha Day & Kannonko Services
May	3	Fujinkai Tsuicho-e & Kannonko Services
June	18, 20	Taiheiji Bon Services
	21, 22	Taiheiji Bon Services
August	7, 8	Taiheiji Bon Dance
September	13	Autumn Higan, Ryosoki, and Kannonko Services
October	11	Daruma-ki & Kannonko Services
November	8	Keizan's Birthday, Veteran's Day Services
	8	Eitaikyo & Kannonko Services
December	13	Taiheiji Bodhi Day & Kannonko Services

*Dates Subject to Change

TAIHEIJI NEW YEAR'S PARTY

Please reserve Sunday, February 9 in your calendars. The Soto Mission of Aiea will hold its annual New Year's Party, called the Shinnenkai. Each year, the Shinnenkai has been a very popular event. Many of our members and supporters, both young and old, come to enjoy a day of good food, games, and entertainment. Cocktails will be served at 10:30 a.m. followed by the luncheon at 11:00 a.m.

The cost to attend the party is \$16 for adults, \$8 for children ages 6-12, and free for children 5 and under. As a special thanks to our *kupunas*, all temple members 80 years old and above are free! Send in your RSVP form to reserve your spot!! Mahalo!

TEMPLE CLEANUP

We humbly ask for your presence and participation at our January and February temple cleanup days. There are many tasks, such as cleaning the temple, restrooms, and hall. Outdoor tasks include cutting weeds, and tending to the garden next to the temple.

Cleanups are from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 25, and Saturday, February 8. Please contact Rev. Shuji if you have any questions.

TAIHEIJI BOARD MEETING

The Taiheiji Board meeting will be held on Sunday, January 19, at 9:00 a.m. We humbly ask that all board members be present at the meeting! Mahalo!

FUJINKAI MEETING

The Taiheiji Fujinkai will have a meeting on Sunday, February 2, at 9:00 a.m. We ask for Fujinkai members to come and attend the meeting! Mahalo

FUJINKAI MEMBERSHIPS

If you haven't done so already, please submit your Fujinkai membership dues (\$10) for 2020. Please call Rev. Shuji if you need new membership forms. Mahalo!

DESSERTS FOR SHINNENKAI

We humbly ask you for your donations of desserts for the upcoming Shinnenkai (New Year's Party) on Sunday, February 9. Please contact Mrs. Jaymie Komagata at 488-6794 and let her know what dessert item you will donate. Mahalo!

SOTO MISSION OF AIEA MEMBERSHIP

Taiheiji strives to serve the social, spiritual, and religious needs of its members through its ongoing mission to provide a place where people are welcomed with open arms to receive the guidance of the Buddha Dharma.

Whether for happy occasions like weddings and blessing services, or for the times to remember departed loved ones during memorial services and funerals, your Taiheiji membership enables you to access the variety of religious services available. We at Taiheiji certainly feel that your membership donation we receive is an encouraging sign of confidence that you place in the temple as an important and relevant part of your life.

Taiheiji regularly receives requests from nonmembers for services. The requests often comes at the time of a wedding or a funeral, or when people know of no other place to call. The strongest confirmation we receive that we have positively impacted someone's life is when they decide to join the temple as new members.

An additional benefit active members receive is the opportunity to use the social hall to host parties and events. With no set rental fee, members make a donation at their discretion for use of the hall. The social hall can comfortably accommodate up to 150 guests.

The membership/donation form for your household to join the temple or renew membership has already been sent to you. Please send your membership in if you have not already done so. **Please also encourage your parents, adult children, and relatives to renew their membership or to join our temple community by becoming a member.**

The annual membership donation is \$100 per household, and is customarily received in December and January. If you have any questions, please call Rev. Shuji at 488-6794.

ARE YOU OBSERVING A MEMORIAL SERVICE IN 2020?

Memorial Services (*Nenki Service*)

1 Year Service	17th Year Service
3rd Year Service	23rd Year Service
7th Year Service	27th Year Service
13th Year Service	33rd Year Service

At memorial services, we remember our departed loved ones and ancestors with love and gratitude. We remember the ways in which they enriched our lives and pray for their continued peace. Prayers are also made for the well being of the family. This is the traditional custom of properly honoring the deceased.

If possible, the first memorial service should be conducted just before the first year has passed. For subsequent memorial services, the memorial services should be conducted before the beginning of the particular memorial year.

For example: using the date of passing (*meinichi*) as a starting point, the seventh year memorial service should be held right before the sixth anniversary after passing.

Memorial service offerings that are traditionally brought to the temple by the family:

- Ihai (Wooden Memorial Tablet)
- Photo of the deceased (optional)
- Flowers (non-thorny, of any color, cut or potted)
- Food offerings (*osonaemono*) - sweets or fruits
- Osaisen Small monetary offering by everyone attending the service (place in the offertory chest)
- “*Ofuse*,” or Donation to Soto Mission of Aiea*
Average “*Ofuse*” donation amount is \$150
- “*Orei*,” or Discretionary Gift of Appreciation to Minister*
Average “*Orei*” amount to minister for a memorial service is \$150

**It is customary to place monetary “Ofuse” donation to temple and “Orei” to minister in separate envelopes*

Soto Mission of Aiea

Memorial Services for 2020

Please contact Rev. Shuji at 488-6794 to schedule services

One Year Memorial Service (2019)

1/5/2019 Imamura, Jane
 3/28/2019 Yamaki, James Jimmy
 5/27/2019 Seto, Eiko
 6/5/2019 Kihara, Marian
 6/22/2019 Yoshimura, Glenn
 8/13/2019 Mitsuzawa, Yoshio
 9/4/2019 Kurashige, Ayako
 11/16/2019 Naito, Yoshiaki
 12/14/2019 Yamaki, Melvin

3rd Year Memorial Service (2018)

1/2/2018 Kawabata, Michael
 1/15/2018 Aruga, Georgiana
 1/16/2018 Sakaue, Mary
 7/25/2018 Kazama, Shogo
 7/27/2018 Haga, Yaeko
 9/15/2018 Fukuhara, Iris
 9/21/2018 Nakamoto, Hatsuko
 10/9/2018 Tanakaya, Gary
 12/29/2018 Fukumae, Ernest
 12/31/2018 Soma, George

7th Year Memorial Service (2014)

1/14/2014 Eto, Clifford
 2/3/2014 Fernandez, Alejandro
 2/23/2014 Kaya, Grace
 3/14/2014 Kaya, Haruyoshi
 4/21/2014 Fukutomi, Arnold
 9/8/2014 Matsukawa, George
 10/9/2014 Chun, Aileen
 10/26/2014 Enga, Colleen
 11/3/2014 Tsumaki, Kazumi
 12/4/2014 Nagamine, Ruth
 12/16/2014 Koga, Alan

13th Year Memorial Service (2008)

1/18/2008 Yoshiki, Ernest
 1/28/2008 Taketa, Dean
 3/7/2008 Fuyumuro, Richard
 3/28/2008 Pantorilla, Yoshiko
 3/31/2008 Kojima, Lynn
 4/15/2008 Takahashi, Miyoshi
 5/13/2008 Le, Ethan Ryan
 6/13/2008 Tanaka, Doris
 6/23/2008 Saito, Tobe
 7/30/2008 Ichiki, Howard
 8/21/2008 Kaya, Hideo
 9/15/2008 Kosuga, Masao
 10/6/2008 Ito, Osamu
 10/26/2008 Matsuura, Sueko
 10/29/2008 Hashida, Nancy
 10/31/2008 Koizumi, Jerry
 11/9/2008 Imaguchi, Roy
 11/20/2008 Kawachi, Aiko
 12/26/2008 Otani, Tomio

17th Year Memorial Service (2004)

1/8/2004 Ono, Hisako
 2/8/2004 Omura, Peggy Yoshiko
 3/17/2004 Kazama, Katsumi
 3/26/2004 Nose, Sueko
 4/23/2004 Azama, Shoichi
 6/25/2004 Abe, Yoshiye
 7/10/2004 Anzai, Yoshio
 7/15/2004 Ishizaki, Hisao
 8/4/2004 Kanemoto, Umeichi
 10/7/2004 Kawauchi, Benjamin
 10/14/2004 Kuroda, Bettie
 11/12/2004 Fujimoto, Thomas

23rd Year Memorial Service (1998)

1/20/1998 Tanaka, Kazuto
 1/30/1998 Shiraki, Tatsuo
 3/8/1998 Moriyasu, Jun
 3/17/1998 Rabacal, William
 4/19/1998 Abe, Kazumi
 5/6/1998 Tanaka, Katsumi
 7/31/1998 Imai, Dale
 8/2/1998 Aisaka, Katsumi
 8/11/1998 Hara, Kame
 8/27/1998 Komori, Kazue
 9/12/1998 Onaga, Jack
 10/25/1998 Abe, Kikue
 12/5/1998 Suzuki, Yuri
 12/19/1998 Matsuura, Rokuro

27th Year Memorial Service (1994)

2/21/1994 Kurashige, Kaoru
 3/7/1994 Miyasato, Yoshitaka
 5/24/1994 Enga, Michael Masaaki
 10/12/1994 Saito, Haruko
 11/3/1994 Hamada, Kensaku
 12/14/1994 Kaya, Sada

33rd Year Memorial Service (1988)

1/9/1988 Sakamoto, Masumi
 2/16/1988 Kojima, Sui
 2/27/1988 Aisaka, Koichi
 4/24/1988 Tanakaya, Sakae
 5/1/1988 Kurozawa, Niichi
 5/10/1988 Shishido, Konomu
 9/15/1988 Saito, Kaneji
 10/16/1988 Fukumae, Kuniyo

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF GENEROUS DONATIONS RECEIVED

Matsui, Betty	17th Yr. Mem. Service for the late Kazuo Matsui
Kazama, Sachiko	1st Yr. Mem. Service for the late Howard Shogo Kazama
Tanakaya, Debbie	1st Yr. Mem. Service for the late Gary Tanakaya
Enga, Marcia	33rd Yr. Mem. Service for the late Richard and Janet Enga
Mijo, Amy	3rd Yr. Mem. Service for the late Frances Tango
Nakashima, Leslie	3rd Yr. Mem. Service for the late June Nakashima
Yamaguchi, Charlene	7th Yr. Mem. Service for the late Chie Shiraki and Toshio Shiraki
Tanoue, Geraldine	Car Blessing Service
Fukutomi, Courtney	Donation to Temple
Akahori, George	Donation to Temple
Nishida, Geraldine	Donation to Temple
Aiko Karaoke School	Donation to Temple
Fukiya	Donation to Temple
Shizendo	Donation to Temple
Rhineland, Lois	Donation to Temple
Nishida, Geraldine	Donation to Temple
Oka, Edwin	Donation to Legacy-Endowment Bond
Onaga, Yuriko	Donation to Temple
Uchiyama, Byron	Donation to Temple
Nishida, Geraldine	Donation to Temple
Fukiya	Donation to Temple
Fukiya	Donation to Temple
Fukiya	Donation to Temple
Shizendo	Donation to Temple
Uchiyama, Byron	Donation to Temple
Nishida, Geraldine	Donation to Temple
Shizendo	Donation to Temple
Fukiya	Donation to Temple
Araki Hiroya Soroban	Donation to Temple
Rhineland, Ed	Donation to Temple
Nishida, Geraldine	Donation to Temple
Fukiya	Donation to Temple
Nishida, Geraldine	Donation to Temple
Kihara family	Funeral Service for the late Marian Kihara
Seto Family	Funeral Service for the late Eiko Seto
Yoshimura, Brian	Funeral Service for the late Glenn Yoshimura
Mitsuzawa, Stephen	Funeral Service for the late Yoshio Mitsuzawa
Higa, Edna	Funeral Service for the late Ayako Kurashige
Takahashi, Betty	Inurnment Service for the late Leonardo & Elaine Cordero
Mitsuzawa, Stephen	Inurnment Service for the late Yoshio Mitsuzawa
Angela Naito	Scattering of Ashes for the late Yoshiaki Naito
Kawauchi, Carl and Mutsumi	Donation to the Building Fund
Soto Mission Women's Association	Donation to Temple



Bishop's Office Newsletter

Soto Zen Buddhism Hawaii Office

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First Quarter, 2020

Issue No. 31

Bishop's Message: Bishop Shugen Komagata

Aloha from the Bishop's Office,

Happy New Year from the Hawaii Soto Mission Bishop's Office. I wish you and your family a bright and happy 2020. As time goes by quickly we are experiencing many changes. When we reflect upon the past year of 2019, we have so much to be thankful for... all the blessings we received from the Buddha and loving thoughts and kindness from family, friends and people we associated with. I pray that the New Year of the Rat will be a happy, healthy and safe one for everyone.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to you and your family for prayers of compassion and peace throughout the past year. I ask for your continued prayers for a New Year that brings you a fresh start filled with hope, aspirations, and happiness.

2020 is the Year of the Rat. The Rat is the first symbol in the Japanese zodiac. It is said that when the zodiac symbols were summoned to gather for the first time, the rat arrived first after secretly riding in on the back of the punctual ox. Rodents are known to breed quickly, so 2020 will hopefully be a year of growth, prosperity, and social success. People who are born in the Year of the Rat as said to be charming, smart, ambitious, and hard working.

Rat people are said to be most compatible with dragons and monkeys. Together, these three zodiac symbols generate great positive energy. Rats are also get along well with ox people. Looking ahead in 2020, let's all work hard to find peace and happiness in our lives. It will be equally important to share that happiness with others. It can be through kindness we share, a smile, or even supportive shoulder to lean on.

The Bishop's Office and staff, Rev. Shuji Komagata (Office Coordinator), Rev. Masataka Hoshino and Rev. Tatsunori Hata are committed to working together with all the Hawaii ministers, members, families, and supporters of the Hawaii Soto Mission for making 2019 a happy and memorable year. I look forward to another exciting year in 2020! Please call or visit us any time. We appreciate your continued support during the coming year.

In Gassho,

Bishop Shugen Komagata



Shushogi, Chapter 4: Verses 18-21

By Rev. Hirosato Yoshida
Soto Mission of Hawaii



As we enter the fourth chapter of Shushogi, things get much more interesting because we start discussing about the ways and methods that one should act and live in their daily life. In the section that I will be introducing, it begins with what it means to be a Buddha (Bodhisattva) and what are the actions that a Buddha would take. So, let's begin.

Verse 18

To arouse the thought of enlightenment is to vow to save all beings before saving ourselves. Whether lay person or monk, whether a deva or a human, whether suffering or at ease, we should quickly form the intention of first saving others before saving ourselves.

This verse simply expresses the fundamental idea of what an enlightened person would do; which is the act of compassion and thinking about others before oneself. In general terms, the action you take should be done for the best of others not for the best of oneself. Doing things without thinking about yourself first, is the action of compassion just like what a Buddha would do.

Verse 19

Though of humble appearance, one who has formed this intention is already the teacher of all living beings. Even a girl of seven is a teacher to the fourfold assembly, a compassionate father to living beings. Do not make an issue of male and female. This is a most wondrous principle of the way of Buddha.

But in life, it is can be very difficult to act "others first" at all time. Our egos constantly prevent us from genuinely helping others before thinking about "what is it for me" type of thoughts. This is something that is beyond age and beyond gender. Dogen Zenji said, even a girl of seven years old can be a teacher to anyone. Seeing the pure act of compassion can be seeing regardless of age and gender. My son, who is three, would share his snacks with me without me asking. This act of sharing that he is doing, is out of his compassion to share joy with others. As we get older, I am sure that he will eventually stop sharing just because and become smart about the reason why he would share...like maybe sharing so that he can nag me to buy him toys. Like so, when we are younger, we can be very compassionate to others without any selfish feelings and this is the heart that we adults may need to re-learn from children.

Verse 20

After arousing the thought of enlightenment, even though we cycle through the six destinies and four modes of birth, the circumstances of this cycling themselves are all the practice of the vow of enlightenment. Therefore, although until now we may have vainly idled away our time, we should quickly make the vow before the present life has passed. Even if we have acquired a full measure of merit, sufficient to become a buddha, we turn it over, dedicating it to living beings that they may become buddhas and attain the way. There are some who practice for countless kalpas, saving living beings first without themselves becoming buddhas; they only save beings and benefit beings.

In this verse, we begin with the notion of six destinies or realm and four modes of birth. Let me explain them briefly about them first. In Buddhism, we believe that there are six realms of world, Heavenly Realm, Human Realm, Hell Realm, Animal Realm, Hungry Ghost Realm, and Fighting Realm. Then the four modes of birth that were believed in ancient India, which are birth through womb (like mammals), birth through egg (like birds and reptiles), birth in a humid area (like moss and plants), and a sudden appearance of birth (like demons and other mystical things). We are currently born into the Human Realm through the womb. It is natural for us to want to escape this cycle of reincarnation and at least be born into the Heavenly Realm but the chant is saying that do not be attached to the notion of realm or birth but to concentrate on the action or the karma. If we follow the buddha's path and concentrate on the Right action, which realm or which method we are born would not matter. Think of Kannon Bodhisattva as an example, they are beings that have become enlightened and can at any time escape this cycle. However, they decided to stay behind to save those in need of help. The choice they made to stay here doesn't make them not enlightened because they didn't escape the cycle of reincarnation. This is an example saying that what is more important is the action that one takes during their lifetime, not the place where they are born.

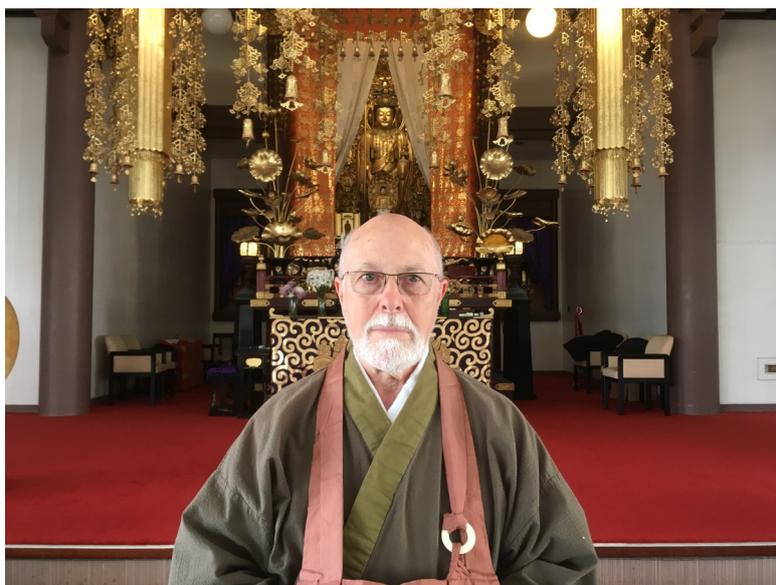
Verse 21

There are four kinds of wisdom that benefit living beings: giving, kind speech, beneficial deeds, and cooperation. These are the practices of the vow of the bodhisattva. "Giving" means not to covet. In principle, although nothing is truly one's own, this does not prevent us from giving. Do not disdain even a small offering; its giving will surely bear fruit. Therefore, we should give even a line or a verse of the dharma, sowing good seeds for this life and other lives. We should give even a penny or a single blade of grass of resources, establishing good roots for this world and other worlds. The dharma is a resource, and resources are the dharma. Without coveting reward or thanks from others, we simply share our strength with them. Providing ferries and building bridges are also the perfection of giving. Earning a living and producing goods are fundamentally nothing other than giving.

Now that we understand how important actions are for Buddhist, the chant explains what we need to do in order to become a Bodhisattva and they are the four kinds of wisdom that can navigate one to perform the right action. The four wisdoms are giving, kind speech, beneficial deeds, and cooperation or empathy and they are the practices of a Bodhisattva. "Giving" seems simple to understand but in our common understanding, we correlate giving as physical and material things. For example, you give money, you give a flower, you give toys. When we don't have money or things to share, we sometimes feel very discouraged to give or share to others and we often can act in greedy ways when we are desperate to maintain our own life. But what is also important to understand from the Buddhist perspective and I also believe that we humans feel this way deep down is that we all know that what truly impacts people's life is not giving of materials but the giving of compassion, giving of love, giving your time and attention, giving non-materialist things to another person. We all have a moment that we feel empty handed and there is nothing we can give, but we can always give our love and attention to another person. Buying a boat or building a bridge to help someone cross a river is an act of compassion but also sharing of wisdom and dharma to another is also an act of compassion.

This concludes this portion of the verses. The takeaway in these four verses that I explained is that it doesn't matter where you are born and the wealth you possess but the important thing is how you practice and act every moment of our life. Following the teachings of "Giving" should help you understand that giving is not only about things but also about love and compassion. If you have young children around you, observe their action as sometimes, their actions are very pure and compassionate that we can all learn from. Don't let our mind trick us in thinking what we can do and what we can't do to be a Bodhisattva because of our possession or status in life.

Rev. Daitsu Wright: New Minister at Alaneo Zendo



I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the newest kid on the block. My full name is Shōyū 正融 Daitsu 大通 Tom Wright. I was born in Racine, Wisconsin, in 1944, and raised in a small, rural town called Watertown, half-way between Madison and Milwaukee. I lived there until I went to college, Valparaiso University, in Indiana. After two years, not really knowing why I went to college, I decided to drop out. Fortunately, a mentor there suggested I work for a year as a youth counselor at a Lutheran church on the side-side of Chicago. Little did I know that the community of Englewood, where I lived for a year was 99.99% people of color. In fact, the minister of the church and I were the only two Caucasians in the neighborhood. There, I became active in the Civil Rights Movement under the leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. So, I worked in the Movement both in Chicago, as well as in Selma, Alabama, in 1965.

After that year, I returned to school, but not in Indiana. I entered American University in Washington D.C. During my two years in Washington, while being a student, I was also very much involved in the anti-Vietnam War Movement. Then, in 1967, being bitterly disappointed in the way people in my country were treating people of color and the way my Government was at war in Vietnam, I had an opportunity to become a lay missionary in Japan, and immediately left the country.

Although I occasionally returned to the U.S., and finally finished my studies at the University of Wisconsin, graduating with a B.A. in Oriental Languages and Literature, and an M.A. in the Humanities and English Literature, from California State Dominguez Hills, California. I have spent most of my adult life in Japan.

After two years in Sapporo, Hokkaido, where I was first introduced to Zen at Chuo-ji Temple in Sapporo, I had an opportunity to go to Kyoto, where I first met Uchiyama Kōshō Rōshi, abbot of Antaiji Monastery. That was in December, 1968. That was also my first *sesshin*. When I left Antaiji five days later, I swore to myself that I would never return to that “refrigerator.” The zendo was cold, my back ached, my legs ached—I was miserable.

But, the following summer, upon finishing my contract as a missionary, I decided to return to Antaiji and stay there as long as I felt Uchiyama Rōshi had something to teach me. Well, though I didn’t spend all those years in Antaiji itself, in 1974, I ordained as a priest under Uchiyama Rōshi and studied under him for 24 years. Rōshi passed away in 1998.

As I mentioned earlier, I didn't stay all those years at Antaiji. I married my former Japanese Language teacher, Yuko, and our son, Joe, was born soon after our marriage. In those first years of our marriage, we lived by my teaching English privately, part-time, and by going out on *takuhatsu* 托鉢 mendicant begging. As our son grew older, however, I realized that I would never be able to have enough money to put him through school, so I decided to take a part-time position at Ryukoku University in Kyoto. During those years, I also began translating the books of Uchiyama Rōshi. The first book Steve Yenik, another American and I translated was Rōshi's 生命の実物—坐禅の実際 *Seimei no Jitsubutsu—Zazen no Jissai*. The English title became *Approach to Zen*, but was subsequently reedited and titled *Opening the Hand of Thought*. Finally, in 1989, I took a tenured position at Ryukoku, and became full-professor in 1994.

The second book I published was 永平大清規：典座教訓 *Eihei Daishingi: Tenzo Kyōkun*, along with Uchiyama Rōshi's commentary. This was first published as *Refining Your Life*, and later revised and retitled *How to Cook Your Life*.

I retired from Ryukoku in 2010 and moved to Hawaii a few months after retiring and am currently Emeritus Professor of Ryukoku University. In 2018, I published my third book, a translation of 正法眼蔵：有時, which I translated as *Living Time* and 諸悪莫作 *Refraining from Evil*, along with Uchiyama Rōshi's commentaries on those fascicles. This book also includes one more fascicle from the *Shōbōgenzō*, Okumura Shōhaku Rōshi's translation of 摩訶般若波羅蜜 *Maka Hannya Haramitsu*, along with Uchiyama Rōshi's commentary. This book is titled *Deepest Practice, Deepest Wisdom*.

I would just like to say in closing that practicing zazen and translating Dōgen Zenji, along with Uchiyama Kōshō Rōshi's commentaries is my lifework. Zazen is important for me because I consider it to be the highest form of culture. Zazen is the practice of giving up trying to get ahead, or trying to make money or gain power. It is the purest practice of becoming our true self, prior to all the nonsense that goes on in our heads or in our society. I pray for the day when zazen reaches a tipping point and becomes the purest and clearest way for humankind to live out our life.

Lay temple assistant training completion ceremony for Jigaku Takenouchi

On November 10, 2019 Hilo Taishoji had a lay temple assistant training completion ceremony for one of the members, Jigaku Takenouchi officiated by Bishop Shugen Komagata. During the ceremony, Jigaku received the certificate and a rakusu (a small Buddha robe that is hung around the neck by a strap and worn on the chest like a bib) and became a Taishoji deacon. He will assist Rev. Hata as the Taishoji deacon and be active as one of the precious Hawaii Sotoshu members from now on.



Rev. Shinsho Hata/ Brent Takenouchi
Jigaku Takenouchi/ Bishop Shugen Komagata

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