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# TAIHEIJI BULLETIN



NOVEMBER & DECEMBER 2020

## IMPORTANT MESSAGE: LEGACY ENDOWMENT BOND

By Rev. Shuji Komagata

Aloha from the Soto Mission of Aiea. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has made 2020 a challenging year, I pray that you and your family are doing well. After so much struggle this year, I look forward to a more positive 2021.

As you may know, Taiheiji launched the Legacy Endowment Bond Pledge Drive at the beginning of this year. This bond, underwritten by the Hawaii Kansha Foundation, will pay investors a fixed annual return of 3% for twenty years. (The current 20-year U.S. Treasury Bond rate at 1.34%, down from 1.96% just one year ago.) After the 20-year period, the final interest payment and the return of the principal investment amount IN FULL will be made.

We were off to a fabulous start, receiving over \$320,000 in pledges by late February. We projected that we would reach our goal of securing \$1,000,000 in pledges by the end of 2020, in time for the collection of those pledges from January to December 2021. However, the pledge drive abruptly stopped in March when the world was turned upside down with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, we find ourselves far short of reaching our \$1,000,000 goal.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought nothing but struggle and pain into our lives, and only offers uncertainty for our future. Some of us have been able to maintain things like our health, safety, jobs, and financial stability, but there are so many other people who have been adversely

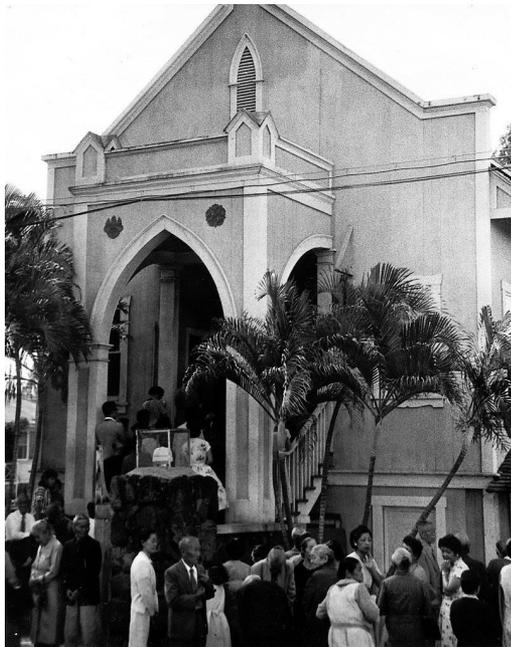
affected by the pandemic. Both lives and livelihoods have been lost.

The struggles we endure and the uncertainty of the future forces us to now rethink many of our choices. Perhaps your planned investment in the Legacy Endowment Bond has also come to mind—its timeliness, value, relevance.

As the head and spiritual leader of this temple, I have spent a great deal of time contemplating how to proceed with the Legacy Endowment Bond Pledge Drive given the current environment surrounding the ongoing pandemic. I have struggled over how our members and supporters would receive my request for investments of \$1,000, \$5,000, or even over \$10,000 when enduring so much hardship. I have asked myself, “isn’t what we have at the temple good enough,” and

“can’t we just continue to get by with what we have and are already doing at Taiheiji?”

I began to reflect upon the struggles our temple pioneers faced to establish Taiheiji and realized that those struggles still resonate today, even after 100 years—poverty, disease, prejudice, labor disputes, unemployment, and war. Yet, they made so much sacrifice and persevered to establish Taiheiji, a safe and meaningful place for their family and friends to gather for generations to come.



*Circa 1949. Taiheiji members gathering outside the original Taiheiji temple.*

I revisit the question as to whether what we have now is good enough at Taiheiji. While the temple has been able to survive to this day, I am not so sure about the future. The decline of our temple membership we

*(See ‘Important Message,’ continued on page 3)*



1920 Sugar Plantation Strike. Japanese and Filipino laborers went on strike for nearly 6 months, fighting for better pay and work conditions.

experienced over the last 40 years has stabilized over the past decade but relying on that membership to keep the temple afloat is becoming increasingly challenging.

**So, while the pioneers of the Taiheiji toiled to establish this temple, the current members and supporters of the temple must find a way to shift from**

**“survivability” to “sustainability.”** “Sustainability” is perhaps the key word when we refer to what positive change the Legacy Endowment Bond will bring to the temple. While some people may still choose to donate money to the temple for this project, the Hawaii Kansha Foundation has provided us with an opportunity to invest in the temple, an alternative and creative way to utilize our members and supporters’ money for the temple in a mutually beneficial way. In addition to already backing the 3% annual payout on the \$1,000,000 investments we plan to collect AND already securing the return of all principal contributions to investors in full at the end of twenty years, the Hawaii Kansha Foundation has recently completed making an additional \$400,000 donation to Taiheiji to help fund the construction of the Soto Mission of Aiea Activity Center in 2022.

In this new building, Taiheiji plans to open the Soto Mission of Aiea Adult Care Center, a safe and modern facility for our elderly kupuna to spend their days. In addition, the layout of the new building includes added classrooms, meeting rooms, and meditation hall to further support ongoing activities and potential new activities in the future. The reconfiguration of the buildings on the temple property will still provide ample parking and a beautiful area for the annual Bon Dance to be held. The income produced from the Soto Mission of Aiea Activity Center, combined with establishing a future Endowment fund, will help create a

(See ‘Important Message,’ continued on page 4)

sustainable future for Taiheiji.

Collecting \$1,000,000 in investments was never seen as an easy task, and the pandemic has certainly made things more challenging. However, none of this changes how important this opportunity is to create something meaningful and valuable for the future of Taiheiji. Most importantly, though, is that I believe that this project will create HOPE for the future of our temple.

The Taiheiji Vision Team, the committee overseeing the Legacy Endowment Bond, has unanimously agreed to give the bond a concerted and big push during the months of January, February, and March of 2021 to hopefully meet our \$1,000,000 goal. During these final months of 2020, I humbly ask you to take the time to seriously consider how much you will invest in the Legacy Endowment Bond. We are in great need of larger bond purchases to effectively close the deficit to a million dollars. However, bond purchases in any amount will be greatly appreciated. The bond will be sold in increments of \$1,000. It is also especially important to name your beneficiary to ensure that your investment can benefit both you and future generations of those you love.

I thank you for reading this article and for investing in the Legacy Endowment Bond. Let’s work together to create HOPE and a sustainable future for the Soto Mission of Aiea. Please contact me if you have any questions. Thank you and please take care!



*Artist’s rendering of what the Soto Mission of Aiea Activity will look like after being built in 2022.*

# EITAIKYO, KANNONKO, & KEIZAN ZENJI'S BIRTHDAY SERVICES

**Important:** Due to everchanging COVID-19 restrictions of gathering, please contact Rev. Shuji to confirm the service dates and times before coming to the temple. The wearing of facemasks is required at all times while at Taiheiji.

**On Sunday, November 8, the Eitaikyo (Perpetual Donors), Kannonko, and Keizan Zenji's birthday services will be held at Taiheiji from 9:00 a.m. Everyone is invited to attend this occasion.**

## **Keizan Zenji's birthday service**

Our Soto tradition in Hawaii is traced back to our two founders, Dogen Zenji and Keizan Zenji. While both Dogen and Keizan will always be remembered as great teachers of Zen, Keizan Zenji is credited with initiating the rapid and wide spread growth and influence of Soto Zen throughout Japan. He laid the foundation for the development of Soto Zen by training many outstanding disciples who would propagate the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha. And so it is with deep reverence and gratitude that we honor and pay homage to Master Keizan.



*Keizan Zenji*

## **Eitaikyo Service**

Eitaikyo Service is held each year at Taiheiji, as an annual memorial service for deceased members of Taiheiji. What sets this special service apart from private memorial services is that Eitaikyo service is for “Perpetual memorial.” By making a donation over \$300 for this service, a deceased loved one is prayed for every year in this service. Their name will be read along with all other Eitaikyo recipients’ names that have been read since the beginning of Taiheiji’s long history. If you are interested in ensuring that your deceased loved one will be honored in the Eitaikyo service this year and every year to come, please call Rev. Shuji to make arrangements.

# DECEMBER BODHI DAY SERVICE

**Important:** Due to everchanging COVID-19 restrictions of gathering, please contact Rev. Shuji to confirm the service dates and times before coming to the temple. The wearing of facemasks is required at all times while at Taiheiji.

The teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha have touched the lives of people around the world. His words of love, mercy, and compassion have helped countless people find peace and happiness in their lives. Our Buddhist beliefs and practices can be traced back to a single event in the Buddha's life—his enlightenment. After sitting in quiet meditation under the Bodhi tree, Siddhartha Gautama became Shakyamuni Buddha, thus revealing to all people of the world the way to end suffering. On **Sunday, December 13, at 9:00 a.m.**, Taiheiji will be observing its Bodhi Day service honoring the Buddha's enlightenment as well as its monthly Kannonko service. We look forward to seeing you.



*On December 9, 1979, seven Taiheiji YBA members: Susan Suzuki, Pam Suzuki, Pat Suzuki, Diane Suzuki, Corinne Fukumae, Chizuru Togami, and Craig Inuma won 1st place in a mural contest sponsored by the Hawaii Buddhist Council for their painting of the Buddha's Enlightenment.*

# ELECTIONS: TAIHEIJI BOARD

The members of Taiheiji have the opportunity to vote for who they would like to see serve as board members in the upcoming elections held in December 2020. If you are a current Taiheiji member, please be on the lookout for the arrival of your ballot that will be mailed to you.

Board members serve for two-year terms, and attend quarterly board meetings (currently held on Zoom) to discuss and vote on temple matters. Many of them participate in committees, working on various temple projects. There are a few vacant board seats we would like to fill, so if you are willing to volunteer to serve as a board member, would like to nominate a fellow temple member to serve, or have questions about being a board member, please contact Rev. Shuji by November 30.

The nomination committee has already created the slate of officers for the 2021-2022 term. They are: President-Teri Wong; First Vice President-George Hokama; Second Vice President-Carl Kawauchi; Secretary-Verna Rabacal; and Treasurer-Susan Tachino.

The board of directors serving for the 2021-2022 term will be asked to approve the slate of officers listed above at the January 2021 board meeting.

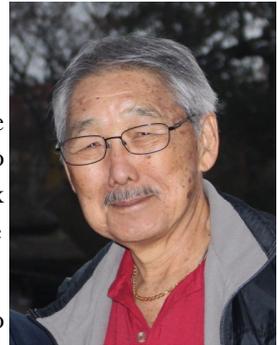
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## A MESSAGE FROM TEMPLE PRESIDENT RALPH YOKOUCHI

I would like to thank Reverend Shuji and the board members for giving me the opportunity to serve as president to the Kyodan for the past six years. It was a very good experience for me to be involved with the Otera and work with all of you.

I ask for your continued support for the Soto Mission of Aiea, Taiheiji.

We will be in good hands with Ms. Teri Wong, as the new president. Again, thank you very much.



In Gassho,

Ralph Yokouchi

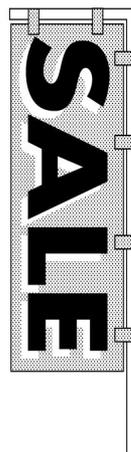
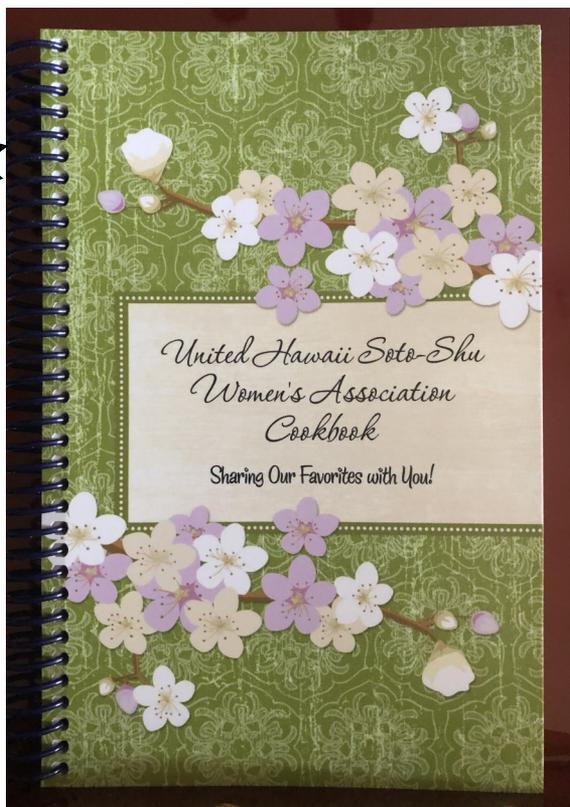
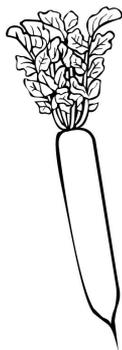
# FUJINKAI COOKBOOKS FOR SALE!



In October, the United Hawaii Soto-Shu Women's Association published its cookbook, **just in time for you to purchase as this year's holiday gift for your loved ones.** Spearheaded by Mrs. Jaymie Komagata, over 300 recipe favorites were collected from the women of the Fujinkai groups at the various Hawaii's Soto Mission temples.

This beautifully edited and professionally printed new cookbook boasts nearly 70 recipes for Taiheiji Fujinkai ladies and even Rev. Shuji. Thank you to Mrs. Komagata for leading the charge, and thank you to Teri Wong for compiling and editing Taiheiji's recipes.

The United Hawaii Soto-Shu Women's Association Cookbook is now on sale for \$12. Please contact Rev. Shuji at 808-488-6794 to order your cookbooks for you and your loved ones!



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# NEW YEAR'S & DAIHANNYA BLESSING SERVICES

## EARLY REMINDER!

On Friday, January 1, 2021, Taiheiji's New Year's & Daihannya Services will be held at 9:00 a.m. It is important to pay your respects at Taiheiji, receive your New Year's blessing, and pick up your new ofuda packets.

Due to the ongoing restrictions on gatherings and to ensure the safety of all, the New Year's Blessing Service will be modified into a "DRIVE THRU" Service. Much like the annual chicken and sushi sale at Taiheiji, visitors will "drive thru" the temple parking lot and remain in their vehicles as they receive their annual blessing and new ofuda packets.

This is an innovative change that will be implemented while still remaining an important annual practice. During these uncertain times in Hawaii and around the world, the 2021 New Year's Blessing and Daihannya Service on January 1 will certainly be a positive way to start the new year.

See you on New Year's Day!!!

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## DAIHANNYA OFUDA PACKETS

On New Year's Day, Friday, January 1, 2021, the new *Daihannya Ofuda* will be distributed to Taiheiji members and their families. Each household will receive in their NEW OFUDA PACKET: 1 wooden *kifuda*, 2 paper *ofuda*, 1 car *omamori*, and 1 wallet *omamori*. Order forms will be mailed to you at the beginning of December.



# ARE YOU A MEMBER OF TAIHEIJI? SOTO MISSION OF AIEA MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

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.

We regularly receive requests from nonmembers for services. It is during these times when people know of no other place to go that they realize the importance of being a member of the temple. Your Taiheiji membership enables you to access the variety of religious services available, whether for happy occasions like weddings, or for challenging times like dealing with the loss of a loved one.

We certainly feel that your membership donation is an encouraging sign of confidence that you place in the temple as an important and relevant part of your life.

An additional benefit active members receive is the opportunity to use the social hall to host parties and events. Currently, there is no rental fee for members, so booking the facility is simple with a donation made at the member's discretion. The social hall can comfortably accommodate up to 150 guests.

The annual membership donation is \$100 per household. In December, we will send out the membership/donation form for your household to join the temple or renew membership. **Please also encourage your parents, adult children, relatives and friends to renew their membership or to join our temple community.** If you have any questions, please call Rev. Shuji at 488-6794.

# 2021 FUJINKAI DUES

The Soto Mission of Aiea Taiheiji Fujinkai will soon be collecting Dues (\$10) for the year 2021. There are two membership options to choose from:

- Annual Membership: \$10/year
- Lifetime Membership (for current members of the Fujinkai with at least two years of active membership), based on age:
  - 50 and under - \$100
  - 51-60 - \$50
  - 61-70 - \$40
  - 70 and over - \$30

The Taiheiji Fujinkai membership form will be sent to you in December. Anyone interested in joining the Fujinkai is welcomed. If you are unable to pay the membership dues because of financial difficulties, please contact the Soto Mission of Aiea Fujinkai at 488-6794 to discuss options.

The Fujinkai is the auxiliary women's organization of the temple, and has been a long time advocate for women inside and outside the Buddhist community. They help one another out in the time of need, and spend time together in fellowship at and outside the temple throughout the year. In addition to providing support for each other, the women of the Fujinkai take on added responsibilities. They make generous contributions to the maintenance and furnishing of the minister's residence, and purchase appliances for the temple. Please remember to make your \$10 dues payable to "Soto Mission of Aiea Fujinkai."

# BBQ CHICKEN AND SUSHI FUNDRAISING PROJECT

The Soto Mission of Aiea's annual barbeque chicken and sushi benefit sale for 2020 became another victim of the COVID-19 pandemic that has greatly affected people everywhere when it was cancelled in mid September. There were no tasty chicken and sushi to enjoy while watching a college football game, no smiles and chatting amongst chicken sale volunteers, and no customers eagerly driving in and out of Taiheiji throughout the day to pick up chicken and sushi. And with that, the biggest fundraiser that has consistently raised over \$10,000 annually was lost.

The Taiheiji board recently discussed possible alternative fundraising opportunities to replace the canceled chicken and sushi sale. However, with the continued safety of our members remaining the top priority, the temple board chose against having a fundraiser this year.

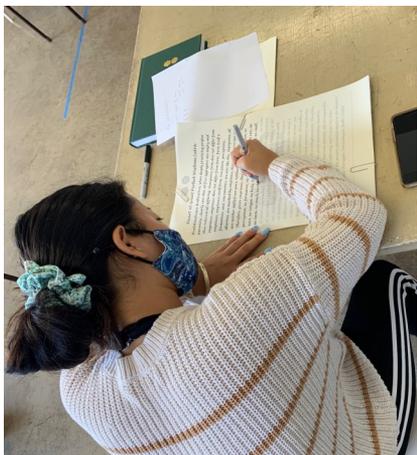


*"You got away this year..."*

The profits from the annual chicken and sushi sale's were traditionally used to help cover ongoing building maintenance costs, but in recent years has been used to help cover temple operation costs. Without this year's fundraiser, compounded with the fact that virtually all temple services and activities have been canceled, Taiheiji is in dire need of funds.

We humbly ask you for donations to the temple in lieu of the selling chicken and sushi tickets this year. Your donations will help ensure that the basic costs of running the temple—water, electricity, insurance, and the minister's salary—can continue to be paid. We thank you for your continued support.

# SHAKYO: TRACING THE BUDDHIST SCRIPTURES



After several prior cancellations due to restrictions on gatherings, Taiheiji's first Shakyō session was finally held at Taiheiji in October. A small group met in the spacious lanai to participate in the writing of the sutras, or Shakyō. This practice of tracing the holy scriptures is akin to sitting in meditation, which requires both concentration and patience.

There are more Shakyō sessions scheduled at Taiheiji in November and December. Please join us!



# UPCOMING SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

## November 2020

- 8 Sun 9:00 a.m. Keizan Zenji Birthday Service, Eitaikyo, and Kannonko Service
- 15 Sun 9:00 a.m. Shakyo

## December 2020

- 6 Sun 9:00 a.m. Shakyo
- 13 Sun 9:00 a.m. Taiheiji Bodhi Day & Kannonko Service

## Tentative 2021 Calendar of Events

- January 1 New Year's Blessing and Daihannya Service
- January 17 Dogen Birthday, Kannonko, Ofuda yaki Services
- February 14 Nehan and Kannonko Services
- March 14 Spring Higan and Kannonko Services
- April 11 Hanamatsuri and Kannonko Services
- May 2 Fujinkai Tsuicho-e and Kannonko Services
- June 17, 19, 20, 21 Bon Services
- August 6, 7 Bon Dance
- September 12 Fall Higan and Kannonko Services
- October 10 Daruma-ki and Kannonko Services
- November 7 Keizan Birthday, Eitaikyo and Kannonko Services
- December 12 Bodhi Day and Kannonko Services

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF GENEROUS DONATIONS RECEIVED

Robin & Linda Fujikawa	Donation to Temple
Shawn & Stacey Saito	Wedding Ceremony Donation
Carl & Mutsumi Kawauchi	17th Memorial Service for the late Benjamin Kawauchi
Charlene Yamaguchi	Inurnment Service for the late Fujiko Shiraki



# Dharma Lei



## Bishop's Office Newsletter

**Soto Zen Buddhism Hawaii Office**

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Third Quarter, 2020 Issue No. 34

### **Bishop's Message:** **Bishop Shugen Komagata**

Aloha from the Bishop's Office,

Recently, Hawaii has seen a drastic uptick in new infections and deaths caused by the Novel Coronavirus. I hope you have been doing well throughout these very turbulent times. I pray for a quick resolution to this problem, and for the recovery of those infected by the virus.



In the Soto Zen tradition, October is the month when we honor Bodhidharma, also known in Japanese as Daruma. Daruma is the Indian monk who traveled to China and spread the Buddhist spirit through seated meditation, or zazen.

As we find ourselves having spent majority of 2020 dealing with the global pandemic, perhaps now is the

*(Continued on page 16)*

opportune time to reflect upon the teaching Daruma. The saying, “nanakorobi yaoki,” translated to mean “seven times down, eight times up,” comes from the physical and mental perseverance of Daruma. For so many people around the world, 2020 has been a year full of “nanakorobi” (seven times down)—roadblocks, setbacks, and misfortune—for a multitude of reasons.

It is important that we direct our focus on “yaoki,” or “eight times up.” We must do our best to overcome adversity and be happy. During the recent shutdown and stay-at-home order, sometimes we can find happiness and peace in the small things. Offer senko in front of your butsudan. Take the time to chat with a friend or loved one on the phone. Clean out that storage shed that has accumulated so much over the years. Exercise. Let us take a moment to reflect upon the positive impact Bodhidharma can have in our lives, whether it is through zazen or simply to stay positive and never give up.

Please take care of yourself and your loved ones.

In Gassho,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Shugen Komagata". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Bishop Shugen Komagata

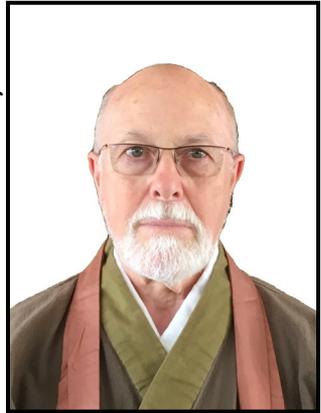
# Shushogi, Chapter 5: Verses 30-32

By Rev. Daitso Tom Wright

Alaneo Zendō

## Being Grateful

As we all know, each sentence or couple of sentences in *Shushōgi* have been taken from various fascicles of Dōgen Zenji's *Shōbōgenzō*. For example, our opening sentences were taken from different sections of *Shōbōgenzō: Gyōji (jō)—Continuous Practice, (Part I)*. **“Time passes faster than an arrow. This living body is even more transient than the dew. No matter how skillful one may be, it is impossible to bring back even a single day that has already**



**passed. To have lived aimlessly to a hundred years is to taste the bitterness of time, to become nothing more than a sad carcass. Even though you have allowed yourself to be a slave to your senses for a hundred years, if you give yourself over to practice for even a day, you will gain a hundred years of life in this world as well as in the next. Each day of your life should be considered to be precious; you should have deep regard for this mere shell of a body. It is through our own practice that the practice of the various buddhas appears and their great way reaches us. Through our *continuing and maintaining practice*, the *continuing and maintaining practice* of all the buddhas manifests. The Great Way of all the buddhas permeates everywhere. Therefore, each day of our practice is the seed of all the buddhas, the seed of the *continuous practice* of the buddhas.”**

Dōgen Zenji is not the first person who has said that time passes swiftly and our life is transient, but his interpretation of this ancient saying carries a different message. Whereas, some people think that since our life is very short, we should live a fun life and try to get as much as we can; that we should try to make as much money as possible and hold on to as much power as we can grab. Dōgen, however, interprets this quick passing of time and of our life to mean that because our life is short, we should

(Continued from page 17)

devote it to practicing the Buddha Way. He is telling us that to pile up money or material possessions or power is pointless. And, it is through our day-to-day studying and practice of the Buddha's teaching that is most important. That is, we have to continue to practice day by day, hour by hour, encounter by encounter. Then, surely the *seeds* of our practice will bear the fruit of all the buddhas.

Our text continues; **“All the various *buddhas* are none other than the Buddha Shakyamuni himself. The Buddha Shakyamuni is nothing other than ‘this very mind is *buddha*’. When the *buddhas* of the past, present, and future become *buddhas*, they surely become the Buddha Shakyamuni. That is ‘this very mind is *buddha*.’”**

This passage was taken from the fascicle *Sokushin Zebutsu—This Very Mind is Buddha*. Our next sentence, **“Study this question in careful detail: Who is *this mind itself is buddha*?”** comes from *Ōsaku Sendaba—The King Requests Sendaba*. And, our final sentence, **“For it is in this way that we can express our gratitude to the Buddha,”** can be found in the fascicle *Raihai Tokuzui—Revering Attainment of the Marrow*.

Now, let us explore the meaning of these passages.

**All the various *buddhas* are none other than the Buddha Shakyamuni himself. The Buddha Shakyamuni is nothing other than ‘this very mind is the Buddha’. When the *buddhas* of the past, present, and future become *buddhas*, they surely become the Buddha Shakyamuni.** The implication that all *buddhas* are, in fact, the Buddha Shakyamuni, is that all *buddhas*, past, present and future *buddhas*, have discovered or attained the same enlightenment that the Buddha Shakyamuni attained. What a *buddha* does, any *buddha*, is carry out *buddha actions*, i.e., acts as a *buddha*. That means when we take up the posture of zazen, we are taking up the same posture as the Buddha Shakyamuni. We are carrying out *buddha actions*. Yokoyama Sodō Rōshi calligraphed the expression 坐相降臨 *zasō kōrin*—the posture of zazen has come down from the heavens. In other words, that very form we are able to take when we sit zazen is a gift from the heavens. And, I think the longer we sit, the deeper we are able to realize that truth.

(Continued on page 19)

In the fascicle, *Ōsaku Sendaba*, leading up to this line, **‘We must deliberate carefully on who ‘this very mind itself is *buddha*’ is referring to’**, we can read the following: “Do not be remiss in your study and, by all means, carry on that life vein of our Buddha ancestors. For example, when someone asks, ‘What is *buddha*?’ and the reply is ‘this very mind is *buddha*’, what does that truly mean? Is this not *the king requesting sendaba*? We must deliberate carefully on who ‘this very mind is *buddha*’ is referring to.”

Here, *this mind* refers to the very life force which we have been given. In this passage, *mind* or *shin*—心, is not referring merely to our psychological mind. Here, *shin*, refers to our very life force, which is, at the same time, *buddha*.

**“For it is in this way that we can express our gratitude to the Buddha,”** How can we not feel grateful for being able to carry out the actions of a *buddha*. The opportunity to return to the true and full reality of our life through sitting zazen is something that we must always feel grateful for, because returning to the full reality of our life means to give full measure to who we truly are. This is expressed in our founder, Dōgen Zenji’s, 只管打坐 *shikan taza*—just concentrate on sitting, and in his 尽一切自己 *jin-issai jiko*—all inclusive and comprehensive self. Sawaki Kōdō Rōshi expressed through his enigmatic expression 自己<sub>が</sub>自己を自己<sub>する</sub> *jiko ga jiko wo jiko suru*—self selfs the self. His disciple, Uchiyama Kōshō Rōshi expressed this as 自己<sub>ぎり</sub>の自己 *jiko giri no jiko*—self that is only self. In other words, who we truly are, who our true self is, is a self that is connected to and comprises the whole universe. This is embodied in the Buddhist understanding of interdependence of all things.

How wonderful it is that each of us, in our own way, can practice *this mind itself is buddha*, in our sitting life, and then carry that over into our day-to-day actions, through kind and compassionate actions.

**Soto Mission of Aiea  
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