

SOTO MISSION OF AIEA  
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# TAIHEIJI BULLETIN



JULY & AUGUST 2020

## ***How We Move Forward...***

By Rev. Shuji Komagata

I am happy to announce that as we move into July, the Soto Mission of Aiea will begin to reopen. There are new practices of social distancing and cleanliness policies everyone must follow. For the time being, facemasks must be worn.

Everyone has been deeply impacted by COVID19. We not only had to change the things we did, but also the way we think. My daughter, Remi, was a senior this year at Aiea High School. Because of the pandemic, she lost the opportunity to attend her senior prom, dance in the lead part in her dance studio's production and concert, say goodbye to her classmates, and march in her commencement ceremony. Yet, she has been so resilient these past several months. Knowing full well that there are others in the world who have suffered more than her because of the pandemic, she hasn't sulked even once about her misfortunes. In Buddhism, letting go of one's attachments is a fundamental teaching that can lead to happiness and peace. Remi was able to overcome the sadness of not being able to experience key events of her senior year of school and instead redirected her focus to positive things—spending quality family time at home, learning how to cook, creating dance choreography, making jewelry for her friends, and planning for her move to Oregon State University in the fall. Remi has been a great example of perseverance and resilience for all of us to follow.



## TAIHEIJI BON SERVICE REPORT

On Saturday, June 20, Taiheiji's Bon Service was held in memory of dearly departed loved ones. The temple was beautifully adorned with flowers, colorful flags, lanterns, and otoa.

There was one thing that was different—the temple was empty.

Due to the COVID19 pandemic, no one was allowed to attend Taiheiji's Bon Service this year. Instead, Rev. Shuji, Jaymie, Remi, and Reigen Komagata offered prayers on everyone's behalf.

The service was broadcast via Facebook Live streaming for people to observe the service from the comfort and safety of their own homes. Login to your Facebook account and search for "Soto Mission of Aiea" to view the recording of the Bon Service.



## **July 11: Temple Cleanup**

Please come to help at Taiheiji's July temple cleanup day on Saturday, July 11 at 8:30 a.m. The Waipahu Kendo Club, who practices at Taiheiji, will be here to join the cleanup. There are many tasks to complete, like gardening, cutting weeds, cleaning restrooms, wiping windows, and mopping floors. The temple and columbarium will also be cleaned, so your kokua will be greatly appreciated.

## **July 12: Kannonko Service**

Please join us at the temple on Sunday, July 12 at 9:00 a.m. for the July Kannonko Service at the Soto Mission of Aiea. This will be the first service open to the public since the pandemic began earlier this year.

Please be sure to wear a facemask. You will be asked to sanitize your hands upon entering the temple, and to do your best to maintain a six foot separation from others.

Although there will not be any refreshments served downstairs upon completion of the Kannonko service, we hope that it will still be a meaningful visit for you.

## **July 19: Taiheiji Board Meeting**

Taiheiji Board members: we will have a board meeting at the Soto Mission of Aiea on July 19 from 9:00 a.m. in the social hall. Please wear your facemask! This meeting will also be broadcasted via Zoom for those unable to come in person. Details will be emailed to you. If you have questions regarding the meeting, please contact Rev. Shuji.

## **July 26: Shakyō Writing 1**

On Sunday, July 26 at 9:00 a.m., Taiheiji will hold a Shakyō Session. Shakyō means "tracing the sutras." The Buddhist practice of Shakyō is a means of spreading the Buddha Way among people. It is also for praying for the fulfillment of one's greatest wish. It is also an excellent way to reflect upon ourselves, or to attain mental well being by mindfully tracing the sacred scriptures.

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Please dress comfortably and wear a facemask. The Shakyō Session will be held in the social hall below the temple. Please contact Rev. Shuji if you have any questions.

## ***Taiheiji Bon Dance: Cancelled***

The Soto Mission of Aiea' Bon Dance is cancelled for 2020 due to the COVID19 pandemic. All of Hawaii's Soto Mission temples have also cancelled their Bon Dances for 2020. We hope that things will improve in 2021 so we will be able to have our Bon Dance again.

## ***August 15: Temple Cleanup***

Please come to help at Taiheiji's August temple cleanup day on Saturday, August 15 at 8:30 a.m. Just like the July cleanup, there are a lot of tasks to complete on this day!!! Your kokua will be greatly appreciated.

## ***August 16: Kannonko Service***

Since there will not be any Bon Dance at Taiheiji this year, we will be able to hold a Kannonko Service in August. Please join us at the temple on Sunday, August 16 at 9:00 a.m. for the August Kannonko Service.

Please be sure to wear a facemask. You will be asked to sanitize your hands upon entering the temple, and to do your best to maintain a six foot separation from others.

For now, there will not be any refreshments served downstairs upon completion of the Kannonko service.

## ***August 30: Shakyō Writing 2***

On Sunday, August 30 at 9:00 a.m., Taiheiji will hold its second Shakyō Session. Shakyō means "tracing the sutras." This session will be a continuation of the Shakyō session held in July. New participants are welcome to attend. Please dress comfortably and wear a facemask. The Shakyō Session will be held in the social hall below the temple. Please contact Rev. Shuji if you have any questions.

# ***Taiheiji: The Next 100 Years***

The Soto Mission of Aiea was established in 1918 with a humble mission to serve the religious needs of Japanese immigrant workers and families living in and around the sugar plantation town of Aiea. The pioneer members of the temple selflessly contributed what they could to help cover the construction costs of the temple. Through the years, Taiheiji has been blessed by the continued support from members and supporters, and we are extremely grateful to have been able to arrive at our centennial celebration in 2018 enjoying a warm, safe, and inviting gathering place for religious and social activities.

At the centennial celebration, Rev. Shuji Komagata, with the unanimous support of the Taiheiji Board of Directors, unveiled plans to build the Soto Mission of Aiea Activity Center—a new multipurpose building and activity center. In partnership with the Hawaii Kansha Foundation and members’ and supporters’ financial support towards the project, we were extremely optimistic for the bright future of Taiheiji over the next century and beyond.

However, this year, Taiheiji—and the entire world—has been greatly impacted by the COVID19 pandemic. Although we are still working hard to successfully see to it that the Soto Mission of Aiea Activity Center is built, we fully understand how the recent unprecedented events may have affected Taiheiji members and supporters. So, if you are able to and when you are able to, we humbly ask for your continued support.

When we stop for a moment to appreciate the rich history of Taiheiji and to contemplate how we can make a positive difference as the stewards of our temple, we discover that we are in a position where our actions will greatly impact our temple. Thank you very much for your consideration.

# **Construction 2022: Soto Mission of Aiea Activity Center**

In addition to the temple that serves the religious needs of Taiheiji members, the social hall and Japanese School building currently is home to various extracurricular activities offered to people of all ages.

Although the Japanese School building and minister’s residence have served the temple for nearly a century, there are costly major repairs and upgrades needed to improve the structures. As Taiheiji looks to grow and increase its positive presence in the Aiea community, the more sustainable option and viable solution for the future is the construction of the 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.



*Construction of the Soto Mission of Aiea Activity Center to begin in 2022.*

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.

# **What is the Legacy-Endowment Bond?**

The LEGACY-ENDOWMENT BOND is a bond offering issued by the Soto Mission of Aiea, Taiheiji. The “BOND”\* is very similar to a 20-year U.S. Treasury Bond (paying 2.39% as of 5/31/19). Our “BOND” will also be for 20 years, but will pay a 3% fixed annual interest. After the 20-year period, the “BOND” owners will receive the final interest payment AND the principal investment amount back IN FULL.

\*This bond offering is an investment. It is not a donation. All interest received would be fully taxable.

*How much is Taiheiji seeking to raise?*

The “BOND” goal amount is ONE MILLION DOLLARS.

*What is the bond for?*

The “BOND” will be used for a large capital improvement project that includes tearing down the aging Japanese School building and the residence building, and replacing it with the construction of the Soto Mission of Aiea Activity Center—a new multipurpose building.

*Why do it?*

This will be just the beginning of what will become our current temple generation’s legacy. This project would certainly help make Rev. Shuji’s shared vision and dreams become a reality.

*When will it start?*

The “BOND” will be issued in 2021 and all money will be collected by the end of December 2021. However, although collection is important, early pledges are also very critical. While the goal is to raise the ONE MILLION DOLLARS by December 2021, **we are currently collecting pledges, which help give a good early indication of your support.**

*How will the temple pay for the interest and principal?*

We are very pleased to announce the commitment of the HAWAII KANSHA FOUNDATION. The foundation has pledged to help ensure

the success of the LEGACY-ENDOWMENT BOND by donating an annual monetary gift that more than covers the annual interest payments of the “BOND” (with the excess amounts invested into the temple’s Legacy-Endowment Fund account). It has been projected that the total annual excess funds invested into the Legacy-Endowment Fund account over the course of 20 years will be in excess of ONE MILLION DOLLARS.

*How will the bond be recorded?*

The “BOND” purchases will be recorded using the commonly practiced method of proper accounting procedures referred to as “book-entry.” All investments and payments will be recorded into the temple’s accounting records.

*How much will it cost?*

Each “BOND” will be valued at ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS and can only be purchased in one thousand-dollar increments.

*Are there any limits?*

The minimum amount is ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS. While there is no maximum established, any large purchase should be made only after consulting with a tax advisor. Our goal is to reach the ONE MILLION DOLLARS by sharing the opportunity and the experience with many of our members and supporters—not just a few.

*Who can buy?*

The “BOND” issue will be offered to all members and supporters of Taiheiji. It will not be available to the general public.

*Who will manage the funds?*

Two temple accounts have already been established with AMERIPRISE FINANCIAL SERVICES, INC. The new “LEGACY FUND” account will initially hold all funds collected from the “BOND” issue. These funds will then transfer to the new “BUILDING FUND” account to pay for construction expenses. The “LEGACY FUND” will then be used to hold all annual gift payments from the HAWAII KANSHA FOUNDATION

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and to distribute all interest payments and the final principal payment when due.

With everyone's support, the "LEGACY FUND" will eventually create the "ENDOWMENT FUND," to provide sustainability and assure us that the SOTO MISSION OF AIEA, TAIHEIJI will be able to continue its mission in perpetuity.

AMERIPRISE FINANCIAL SERVICES, INC. will provide monthly statements to selected temple board members that show transactions and investment performance. The entire board of directors will provide oversight within their Fiduciary responsibilities.

## ***About the Hawaii Kansha Foundation***

The Soto Mission of Aiea expresses its deep gratitude to the Hawaii Kansha Foundation for the incredible opportunity to embark on this exciting project to issue the Legacy-Endowment Bond that will enable us to build a multipurpose building.

The Hawaii Kansha Foundation was established in 2017 by a Taiheiji family whose relationship to the temple began in the early 1960s. This private family foundation seeks to support organizations committed to providing programs, services, assistance, and activities for people in need.

The Hawaii Kansha Foundation has touched the lives of many people through its charitable contributions to:

- Shriners Hospital
- Ronald McDonald House Charities Hawaii
- Lanakila Meals on Wheels
- Make a Wish Foundation of Hawaii
- Victor Elementary Educational Fund (CA)
- Inland Empire United Way (CA)

*Additional note:*

The Hawaii Kansha Foundation, in addition to its pledge to underwrite the Legacy-Endowment Bond, has also generously pledged an additional \$400,000 to Taiheiji's Building Fund. With this additional pledge, the total pledge of the Hawaii Kansha Foundation is valued at TWO MILLION DOLLARS for the entire project.

Let's keep the momentum going strong!!! Contribute towards the Taiheiji Bond!

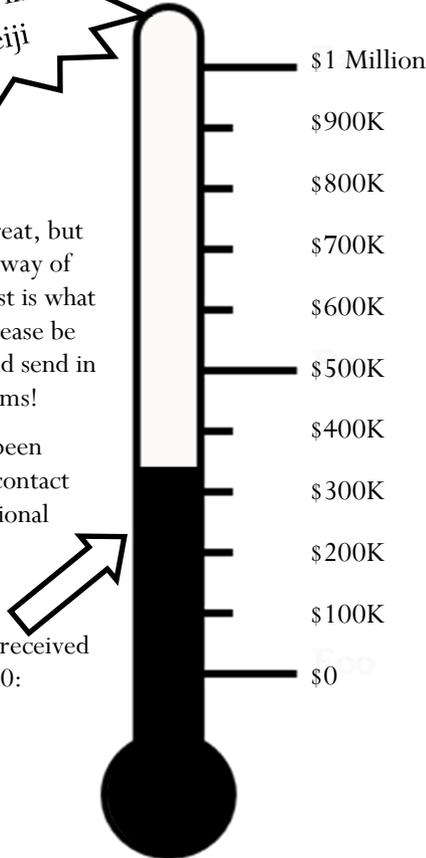


IMPORTANT!

Remember—Early contributions are great, but informing us right away of your pledge to invest is what we really need!!! Please be sure to complete and send in the bond pledge forms!

Pledge forms have been mailed out. Please contact Rev. Shuji for additional forms.

Early Pledges received as of June 2020: **\$332,000 & climbing**



# UPCOMING SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

## July 2020

- 11 Sat 8:30 a.m. Temple Cleanup
- 12 Sun 9:00 a.m. July Kannonko Service
- 19 Sun 9:00 a.m. Taiheiji Board Meeting
- 26 Sun 9:00 a.m. Shakyō Writing Session 1

## August 2020

- 15 Sat 8:30 a.m. Temple Cleanup
- 16 Sun 9:00 a.m. August Kannonko Service
- 30 Sun 9:00 a.m. Shakyō Writing Session 2

\*\*\*\*\*No Taiheiji Board of Directors' Meeting in August\*\*\*\*\*

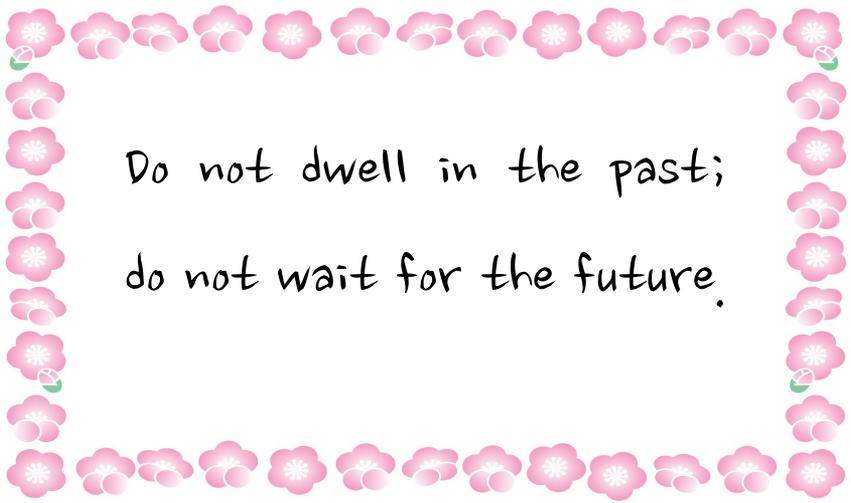
## Looking ahead into September 2020...

### Taiheiji BBQ Chicken and Sushi Sale

Currently, we are tentatively scheduled to have the Soto Mission of Aiea's annual BBQ chicken and sushi sale on Saturday, September 19. As we get closer to the date, we will be able to confirm the event depending on the existing COVID19 related restrictions and guidelines set in place. Thank you!

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF GENEROUS DONATIONS RECEIVED

Chester Fujimoto	Early Contribution to Legacy-Endowment Bond
Loren Odagiri	Early Contribution to Legacy-Endowment Bond
Verna Rabacal	Early Contribution to Legacy-Endowment Bond
Lynn Kihara	One Year Memorial Service for Marian Kihara
Leigh Goya	49th Day Memorial Service for Kieko Kosuga
Wes Wakata	Donation to Temple
Diane Maeda	Early Contribution to Legacy-Endowment Bond
George Niino	Donation to New Building Construction Fund
Ralph Yokouchi	Early Contribution to Legacy-Endowment Bond
Gail Nagamine	Makuragyo Service
Gail Nagamine	Early Contribution to Legacy-Endowment Bond
Gerri Nishida	Donation to Temple



Do not dwell in the past;  
do not wait for the future.



# Dharma Lei



## Bishop's Office Newsletter

**Soto Zen Buddhism Hawaii Office**

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Third Quarter, 2020 Issue No. 33

### **Bishop's Message:**

**Bishop Shugen Komagata**

Aloha from the Bishop's Office,

As we continue through these unprecedented times, I hope that you and your family are doing well. The novel Coronavirus has infected millions of people worldwide with COVID-19 in a little over six months, and the devastation of this pandemic will certainly continue for quite some time. I pray that we will be able to weather these turbulent times and soon be able to return to a life of normalcy.

The longer days and warm weather of the summer months have long announced the arrival of the annual Bon Season here in Hawaii. Unfortunately, because of the pandemic, our Soto Mission temples here in Hawaii have been forced to modify our Bon Services to follow the



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restrictions on physical distancing. Thanks to modern technology, Virtual Bon Services—services that will be filmed and broadcast over social media—will allow people to still be a part of this year’s ceremonies. I am happy that most of our temples in Hawaii will be able to observe Bon Service this year using this method.

Bon is a time for us to remember our loved ones. Even though our congregations won’t be able to physically visit the temple for Bon Services this year, it is still important to take this time to cultivate our ability to love, appreciate, and celebrate the lives we are so fortunate to live. It is important to also pause to honor and remember those who are no longer with us physically. The quote, “Heijoshin kore do,” interpreted as “the Buddhist path lies in the ordinary mind of our daily lives,” comes to my mind during this time of Bon. It shows us that even though we cannot physically participate in Bon Services this year, the true meaning of Bon—having a sense of “gratitude”—can still manifest itself within our hearts each day in our daily lives.

Recently, we have seen the relaxation of some social and travel restrictions in Hawaii. Nonetheless, in the best interest of everyone’s safety and health, I recommended that all the Soto Mission Bon Dances be cancelled this season. I hope that the global environment will improve in time for next year’s Bon Season!

Let us extend our prayers to all the people who have lost their lives because of the novel Coronavirus, and those millions of people who have been infected worldwide. And again, please continue to take care of yourself and your family.

In Gassho,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shugen Komagata". The signature is written in a fluid, cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bishop Shugen Komagata

Shushogi, Chapter 5:  
Verses 26-29  
By Rev. Jiko Nakade  
Daifukuji Soto Mission



*V. Practicing Buddhism and Repaying Blessings*

“Arousing the thought of enlightenment is mainly something that human beings in this world should do. Should we not rejoice that we have had the opportunity to be born in this land of the Buddha Shakyamuni and to have encountered him?”

Have you ever considered how fortunate you are to have encountered the teachings of the Buddha and ancestors? When I think about the circumstances of my own birth and the compassion of my birth parents which resulted in my being raised in Hawai‘i, I feel a surge of gratitude. Had I not been given to my adoptive parents who lived in Hawaii, I could have grown up in a small town in Ohio without ever having encountered the Buddha-Dharma. But, thanks to the supreme generosity, love, and thoughtfulness of my Aunty Alice and Uncle Bob (my birth parents), who gave me as a gift to my adoptive parents whose baby had died, I was carried to Hawaii as an infant, immediately immersed in a Buddhist household, and raised by loving parents who took me to Daifukuji throughout my childhood. Truly, I rejoice in my good fortune and wish to repay the blessings bestowed upon me by the buddhas & bodhisattvas, as well as by my teachers, ancestors, and two sets of parents. Had the circumstances been different, even by a hair, I might not have had the good fortune of encountering the Buddha Shakyamuni. If you are reading this, it means that you, too, have had the good fortune of encountering the wondrous Dharma. Let us rejoice together!

“We should calmly consider that if this was a time when the true dharma had not yet spread in the world, we would not be able

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to encounter it, even if we vowed to sacrifice our very lives for it. We who have at present encountered the true dharma should make such a vow. Do we not know that the Buddha said, ‘When you meet their teachers who expound supreme enlightenment, do not consider their family background, do not regard their appearance, do not dislike their faults, and do not think about their conduct. Simply, out of respect for wisdom, bow to them three times daily, honor them, and do not cause them any grief.’”

It is said in our Buddhist tradition that it is not an easy thing to encounter the Buddha-Dharma. In fact, not only is it considered rare to be born into human life — just think of how many different kinds of life forms there are! — it is even rarer to encounter the precious Dharma which liberates one from suffering.

Using an ancient metaphor, to have this opportunity to meet teachers such as the Buddha who expound supreme enlightenment is as rare as a blind turtle in a vast ocean swimming up to the surface and, by chance, poking its head through a ring that just happened to be there. In other words, when, in the course of one’s life, one meets a sensei who teaches the Dharma, regard this as a precious opportunity and don’t hesitate to demonstrate your respect and appreciation to your teacher and sangha. You have indeed received a great blessing!

“That we are now able to see the Buddha and hear the dharma is due to the blessings that have come to us through the practice of every one of the buddhas and ancestors. If the buddhas and ancestors had not directly transmitted the dharma, how could it have reached us today? We should be grateful for the blessings of even a single phrase; we should be grateful for the blessings of even a single dharma. How much more should we be grateful for the great blessings of the treasury of the eye of the true dharma, the supreme great dharma. The injured bird did not forget its blessings, but showed its thanks with the rings of three ministries. The trapped tortoise did not forget its blessings, but showed its thanks with the seal of Yubu. If even animals repay their blessings, how could humans ignore them?”

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One's joy and appreciation are heightened when one considers how the Dharma has been transmitted, heart to heart and mind to mind, from the Buddha Shakyamuni who lived 2,600 years ago in India to people like ourselves, living in the 21st century. Just the fact that the Dharma has passed through many lands and reached us is mind-blowing! One can only imagine the countless number of men and women, monks and laypersons alike, who've diligently practiced the Buddha Way and transmitted the Dharma light through the ages! Had they not done so, we today would not have received even a single verse of the Dharma. Truly, we are blessed. Therefore, let us not take this precious opportunity for granted. Like the injured bird and the trapped tortoise who were recipients of acts of great compassion & showed their gratitude, let us rejoice and offer our thanks, for we have received something of great value. We have received the gift of Dharma which excels all other gifts.

“Our expression of gratitude should not consist in any other practices; the true path of such expression lies solely in our daily practice of Buddhism. This means that we practice without neglecting our lives day to day and without being absorbed in ourselves.”

How do we express our gratitude to the buddhas and ancestors? Dogen Zenji is saying that we do so through our daily practice of the Buddha Way; that is, by living each moment of our precious lives with mindfulness and by dedicating our practice to the welfare of others, so that others, too, may be liberated from suffering and attain spiritual peace. To have such an aspiration is the Way of the Bodhisattva. To live in such a way is to repay the blessings of the buddhas and ancestors.

# Online Dharma Message

Soto Zen Buddhism in Hawaii is providing online Dharma talks on YouTube and Facebook every two weeks. You can watch videos of Bishop Shugen Komagata and some Hawaii ministers' Dharma messages by using the link or scanning the QR code below.

## **YouTube Page Link**

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsTHV\\_8A59kEfZlBRlmdtRw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsTHV_8A59kEfZlBRlmdtRw)

## **Facebook Page Link**

<https://www.facebook.com/Soto-Zen-Buddhism-in-Hawaii-111602773848472/>



## Following is the schedule

Rev. Ryohei Ishii June 28, 2020

Rev. Shinsho Hata July 12, 2020

Rev. Hirosato Yoshida July 26, 2020

Rev. Shuji Komagata August 9, 2020

Rev. Shoryu Fukagawa August 23, 2020

Rev. Tom Wright September 6, 2020

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