

SOTO MISSION OF AIEA
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TAIHEIJI BULLETIN



SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER 2025

**Coming
in October**

the 4th Annual Online Auction

Now Accepting Your Donated Items!

Donation Drop-off date:

Saturday, September 6

9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Questions: Call Corinne Gytoku at (808) 223-5735



Mahalo for your support

Fourth Annual Online Auction

Taiheiji's **Fourth Annual Online Auction** will be held this October! This popular fundraiser is made possible by the generosity of our Sangha and friends, who contribute items, services, and monetary donations each year. **Proceeds will go toward the New Building Construction Fund.**

Donations will be accepted on **Saturday, September 6, from 9:00–11:00 a.m.** at the temple. Please consider supporting this event by donating, bidding, or spreading the word to your family and friends—we are grateful for all the support we can get!

How You Can Help

Be a Donor:

We are asking our members, community, and local businesses to donate auction items. Taiheiji is already accepting items, and below is a list of examples to help inspire ideas:

- Artwork, Handmade Crafts
- Jewelry, Accessories
- Cultural Objects (Japanese, Hawaiian, etc.)
- Buddhist Items (ojuzu, zafu, books, artwork)
- Collectibles (sports memorabilia, stamps, coins, toys, etc.)
- Musical Instruments
- Housewares (dishes, silverware, small appliances, etc.)
- Home and Garden (tools, décor, plants, orchids)
- Non-Perishable Gift Baskets or Food (rice, coffee, snacks)
- Services (massage, manicure, haircut, yard care, etc.)
- Gift Cards/Certificates (retail, restaurants, services, gas)
- Business or organization donations are also welcome!

(If your donation is a service, please provide a gift card or authorized certificate.)

Be a Bidder:

Bidding starts on **October 3 at 6:00 p.m.** and ends on **October 10 at 9:00 p.m.** Don't miss the opportunity to bid on a wide variety of items. The auction will once again be hosted online at:

www.32auctions.com/sotomissionofaiea2025

To bid, you will need to create a free account at 32auctions.com. Items up for auction are already viewable! Check back frequently to see what new items have been added!

Item Pickup:

Auction item pickup is scheduled for **Sunday, October 12, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** at the temple. For more information, please call **Corinne Gytoku at (808) 223-5735.**

Fall Higan Service – September 7, 2025

Taiheiji's Fall Higan Service (*Higan-e*) will be held on **Sunday, September 7, at 9:00 a.m.** This biannual service, also observed in spring, is dedicated to remembering our departed loved ones with gratitude.

In Japan, the Higan observances traditionally coincided with the autumn and spring equinoxes—times when farmers gave thanks for harvests and prayed for their ancestors' blessings. Today, even if we are far removed from farming life, we too can reflect on the struggles and sacrifices made by those who came before us.

The September Kannonko Service will also be observed alongside Higan. A potluck brunch will follow the service, and all are warmly invited.



Darumaki Service – October 12, 2025

Please join us on **Sunday, October 12, at 9:00 a.m.** for Taiheiji's annual Darumaki and Kannonko Services.

Darumaki honors Bodhidharma (Daruma in Japan), the Indian monk credited with bringing Zen Buddhism to China. Over centuries, stories about him have become legend—Daruma dolls, round and armless, symbolize resilience and persistence, while tea is said to have sprouted from his fallen eyelids to help practitioners stay awake in meditation.

Beyond legend, Bodhidharma embodied the essence of Zen through unwavering meditation practice. On his memorial day, we express gratitude for his life and teachings that continue to inspire us more than 1,400 years later.

The October service will also include prayers to Kannon Bodhisattva, who embodies compassion and mercy. Together, these observances remind us of both the strength of practice and the kindness of the Buddha's teachings. A potluck brunch will be served afterward. Your contribution is greatly appreciated!



Message from the Bishop

A Call to Build Our Future – Together

Dear Taiheiji members and supporters,

Taiheiji is more than walls and buildings—it is a living expression of the devotion, sacrifice, and love of generations before us. Today, we stand as caretakers of that legacy, entrusted with the responsibility to preserve and nurture it for generations yet to come.

With the near completion of our new Activity Center, we now have opportunities to dedicate rooms, spaces, and features in meaningful ways. The upstairs classrooms, the large first-floor Adult Day Care, and the majestic gateway between our buildings all offer possibilities for sponsorship. A bodhi tree, a courtyard, or even a single fixture can carry your family's name and spirit into the temple's future.

How You Can Help:

- **One-Time Gifts** – Every donation, no matter the amount, helps us move forward.
- **Monthly or Annual Pledges** – Sustained giving strengthens our ability to plan.
- **Project Sponsorship** – Dedicate a room, gate, or item that carries meaning for you.
- **Legacy Gifts** – Include Taiheiji in your estate planning.

Volunteer Service – Give of your skills and time to support ongoing projects.

This campaign is not only about fundraising—it is about renewing our shared spirit of stewardship. Our temple thrives when we all give together: our treasure, our time, and our talent.

Let us honor the past, care for the present, and joyfully build for the future. Together, we can ensure that Taiheiji remains a safe, welcoming, and vibrant home for all.

With deep gratitude and hope,
Bishop Shuji Komagata
Soto Mission of Aiea

Soto Mission of Aiea

Activity Center Update

Major work on the Soto Mission of Aiea Activity Center is nearly complete. Just before the Bon Dance in early August, the new asphalt parking lot was laid, followed shortly by painted stall lines. Finishing touches are now underway: doors, ceiling fans, toilets, fixtures, and final coats of paint are being installed. Landscaping has also begun, with new greenery being planted across the property. Most notably, seven bodhi trees—six along the perimeter and one in the courtyard—are being added. These trees are cuttings from the original bodhi tree that once stood at the temple's front corner, ensuring its legacy lives on in our new grounds.



Nokotsudo Reopens

The Nokotsudo (columbarium) at Taiheiji is now open weekly for visits:

- **Tuesdays:** 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- **Sundays:** 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

If you cannot visit during these times, please call Bishop Shuji at (808) 224-2584 to schedule an appointment.

During construction of the Activity Center, access to the Nokotsudo was limited due to blocked walkways and unsafe pathways. Now, with the new parking lot completed and paths cleared, families can once again visit safely and comfortably.



Bon Services at Taiheiji

On June 19, 21, and 22, the Soto Mission of Aiea observed its annual Bon Services. The altar was lined with *otoba*—six-foot memorial tablets, beautifully inscribed in calligraphy—standing in quiet dignity to honor our departed loved ones. Led by Bishop Shuji Komagata, offerings of food, flowers, incense, candlelight, and prayer filled the temple with gratitude and remembrance.

Special *hatsubon* (first-year Bon) services were held for families who lost loved ones this past year. With flowers and bowed heads, they expressed deep reverence for their departed.

We extend heartfelt appreciation to all who helped make these services possible: our island ministers, emcees Todd Imamura and Robin Fujikawa, and the Tachino family, who graciously collected donations and distributed programs. Thanks to everyone's support, Bon at Taiheiji continues to be not only a solemn observance, but also a beautiful reminder of our unbroken bonds across past, present, and future generations.



Bon Dance Returns to Taiheiji

On August 8 and 9, Bon Dance returned to the Soto Mission of Aiea after last year's cancellation due to construction. This year's celebration was especially meaningful, set against the backdrop of our nearly completed Activity Center. With the original temple standing on one side, the new center mirroring its design on the other, and a majestic gateway rising between them, visitors were welcomed to a transformed and beautiful temple grounds. Fresh asphalt in the new parking lot made the return of Bon Dance all the more special.

The festivities opened with a lively performance by Somei Taiko students under the direction of Bishop Shuji and Jaymie Komagata. Hawaii Eisa Shinyuu Kai led spirited Okinawan Bon dances, while Aiea Taiheiji Yagura Gumi played the Fukushima Ondo to the delight of the crowd. Throughout the evening, our Bon Dance leaders guided everyone through joyful *minyo* dances.

We simultaneously held a Plant and Flower Sale outside the social hall during the Bon Dance. Thanks to many generous donations of items, we were able to offer a wide selection of flora and fauna to Bon Dance visitors.

We are deeply grateful to all who made this event possible—those who built and dismantled the *yagura*, strung lights, prepared food, and kept the festivities running smoothly. Special thanks to the Fujinkai members and friends who prepared food and baked goods. We are especially grateful to George Hokama for organizing the plant sale, Sidney and Donna Matsufuru for their dedication and hard work in the kitchen in the days leading up to and throughout the Bon Dance weekend, Mike Tsue for serving as deejay, Jeff Spencer and Wes Seto with their crew for parking management, and Sgt. Ming Wang for police presence throughout the weekend.



Assembling the yagura a week before the Bon Dance



The temple stands to the left and the new Soto Mission of Aiea Activity Center on the right.



Somei Taiko under the direction of Bishop Shuji and Jaymie Komagata





10th U.S. Soto Conference Call for Volunteers

From **October 23–26, 2025**, the 10th U.S. Soto Conference will be held at the Soto Mission of Hawaii in Nuuanu. Over 130 participants and 30 ministers from across the United States and beyond will gather for this major event, which alternates every two years between Hawaii and Los Angeles.

This is a rare chance to showcase Hawaii as a vibrant center of Buddhist learning and fellowship. Even if you are not attending the conference, we warmly invite you to help as a volunteer. Opportunities include greeting guests, assisting with workshops, preparing meals, transportation, setup, cleanup, and much more.

Email us at: conference2025@sotomission.org to let us know you're interested in volunteering. We also invite Taiheiji members to help welcome visitors on **Thursday, October 23**. As part of an optional temple excursion, 61 participants will visit Taiheiji. Your presence and aloha will make a lasting impression on all who attend. The tour arrival is still to be determined.

Zazen at Taiheiji

Every Tuesday morning at 6:00 a.m., Taiheiji offers *zazen*—the practice of seated meditation. Participants begin the day with quiet reflection, sitting together in stillness before reentering the busyness of daily life.

Whether new to meditation or experienced in practice, all are welcome to join. Each session concludes with a short Dharma message by Bishop Shuji Komagata. Come, sit, breathe, and experience the clarity and calm that arise when we allow ourselves to simply be.

Cemetery Plots Available

The Soto Mission of Aiea maintains cemetery plots for members and their families at Hawaiian Memorial Park in Kaneohe. Availability is limited, but the temple continues to offer plots at reasonable cost.

If you would like more information or wish to reserve a plot for yourself or your family, please contact Bishop Shuji at (808) 224-2584. Planning ahead ensures peace of mind and helps ease the burden for loved ones in the future.



Acknowledgement of Generous Donations Received

Fukiya	Donation to Temple
Diane Kazama	Funeral Service for the late Wally Kazama
Angie Naito	1st Year Memorial Service for the late Mitsue Togami
Shari Hasegawa	Funeral Service for the late Richard Hasegawa
Kate Shibata	Funeral Service for the late Roy Shibata
Susan Johnston	Funeral Service for the late Hisako Toyoshima

UPCOMING SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

September

6	Sat	9:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m.	Drop off your donations for the online auction
7	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Fall Higan, Kannonko Service
9	Tue	6:00 a.m.	Zazen
16	Tue		NO ZAZEN
21	Sun	8:30 a.m.	Taiheiji Board of Directors Meeting
23	Tue	6:00 a.m.	Zazen
30	Tue	6:00 a.m.	Zazen

October

3	Fri	6:00 p.m.	BIDDING STARTS: 4th Annual Online Auction Fundraiser
7	Tue	6:00 a.m.	Zazen
10	Fri	9:00 p.m.	BIDDING ENDS: 4th Annual Online Auction Fundraiser
12	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Darumaki, Kannonko Service
12	Sun	10:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.	Online Auction item pick up
14	Tue		NO ZAZEN
21	Tue		NO ZAZEN
23	Thu		10th U.S. Soto Conference
24	Fri		10th U.S. Soto Conference
25	Sat		10th U.S. Soto Conference
26	Sun		10th U.S. Soto Conference
28	Tue		NO ZAZEN

Zazen will resume on Tuesday, November 4 at 6:00 a.m.

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