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TAIHEIJI BULLETIN



MAY & JUNE 2024

Rev. Shuji Komagata Appointed Chief Priest of the Soto Mission of Hawaii

By Rev. Shuji Komagata

On April 30, 2024, Bishop Shugen Komagata retired as chief priest of the Soto Mission of Hawaii (our main temple located in Nuuanu). During his career spanning 55 years, he was the resident minister at the Soto Mission of Hawaii (1969-1976), at Kona Daifukuji Soto Mission (1976-1981) and at Wahiawa Ryusenji Soto Mission (1981-2008). He had been serving as the Bishop of our Hawaii Soto Mission from 2008.

Upon his retirement, I was assigned to be the new chief priest at the Soto Mission of Hawaii. While I will now be a bit busier working at two temples, I fortunately have the support of the two other resident ministers at the Soto Mission of Hawaii to help—Rev. Hirosato Yoshida and Rev. Masataka Hoshino.

Please be assured that I am committed to continuing to serve as the resident minister of the Soto Mission of Aiea. We are still in the middle of our new building construction project that will take us through the rest of 2024, and have an Adult Day Care Center to open after construction is completed.

For now, I am spending each night at the main temple in town as the primary caregiver for my now retired father and return daily to Aiea to conduct services and tend to Taiheiji business.

Bon Services at Taiheiji in June

Although we are in the middle of the construction of the new building, Taiheiji still plans to hold its 2024 Bon Services on:

Thursday, June 20 @ 7:00 p.m.

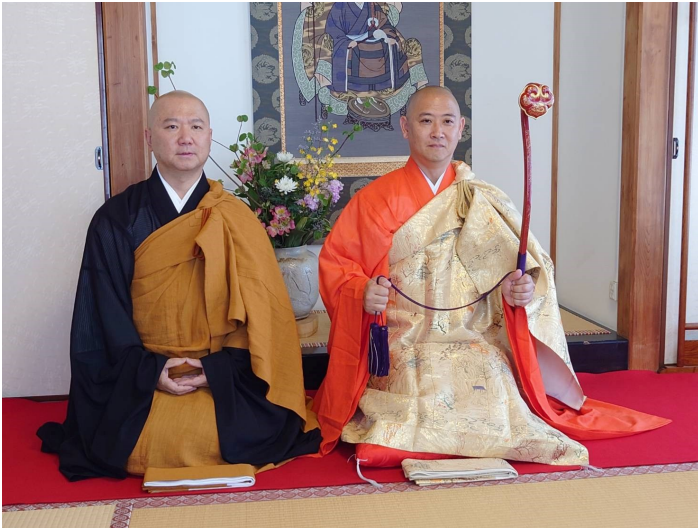
Saturday, June 22 @ 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, June 23 @ 10:00 a.m.

The Bon Otoba Request Forms will be mailed to you in May. Please be certain to complete the form and send back to Taiheiji!

Rev. Shuji Officiates Memorial Ceremony for the 700th Anniversary of Daihonzan Sojiji's Founder Taiso Keizan Jokin Zenji in Japan

“Daionki” are major ceremonies held once every 50 years to show our heartfelt gratitude to the two founders (Koso Dogen Zenji and Taiso Keizan Zenji) and the two second abbots (Koun Ejo Zenji and Gasan Joseki Zenji) of Soto Zen Buddhism's two head temples, Eiheiji and Sojiji. In April 2024, Master Keizan's 700th Memorial Service was held at Sojiji in Japan. I was selected to represent the Hawaii region as the officiating priest, or *Shokoshi*, of this special memorial service. It was an incredible experience and honor to have the opportunity to offer incense, sweet water, sweets, tea, bows and prayers in front of Keizan Zenji. Thank you to Rev. Shoryu Fukagawa, Rev. Masataka Hoshino, Carl Kawauchi, Pua Kondo, Catherine Ishida, and Midori Satoh for traveling from Hawaii to Japan to support me in person at this once in fifty years event.



Rev. Bunryu Oyama, the Ino Roshi at Sojiji with Rev. Shuji. Rev. Oyama was raised at Waipahu Taiyoji and graduated from Waipahu High School. He and Rev. Shuji are childhood friends.





Tsuicho-e, Mother's Day, & Kannonko



A special service is held during each of the monthly services. In May, Taiheiji observes a very special memorial service called Tsuicho-e. Sponsored by the auxiliary group at the Soto Mission of Aiea called Fujinkai, Tsuicho-e is a memorial service dedicated to all its departed members. The Taiheiji Fujinkai has a very long and rich history dating back to 1929, when Mrs. Taki Yoshizumi, wife of Rev. Kogan Yoshizumi, organized the group. Through the decades, the Taiheiji Fujinkai selflessly volunteered their time and energy for the temple.

The Fujinkai Tsuicho-e will be held in conjunction with our Mother's Day and Kannonko services on Sunday, May 5, from 9:00 a.m.

New Building Construction Update

Throughout March and April 2024, progress on the construction of the Soto Mission of Aiea Activity Center has been slow due to several delays with materials, staffing, and equipment.

However, we are committed to pushing forward through these challenges to complete the project! Mahalo for the continued donations into the New Building Construction Fund. Stay tuned for further updates, or call Rev. Shuji.



Hawaii Buddhist Council's Buddha Day Service

On Sunday, April 7, the Soto Mission of Hawaii hosted the Hawaii Buddhist Council Buddha Day Service. People from the various Buddhist sects on Oahu gathered for the island-wide event to celebrate the birth of Prince Siddhartha Gautama, who would become the Buddha. Flowers adorned the Hanamido and the altar was decorated with countless floral arrangements. The bishops and ministers from the Higashi Hongwanji Mission, Honpa Hongwanji Mission, Jodo Mission, Koyasan Shingon Mission, Nichiren Mission, and Tendai Mission joined Bishop Shugen Komagata and other Soto Mission ministers in chant and prayer. After the ceremony was over, attendees adjourned to the social hall downstairs to enjoy a performance by Taiheiji's own Somei Taiko Keiki students.



Visit the Temple website
at

www.sotomission.com

Please take a moment to check out Taiheiji's updated website at www.sotomission.com. There, you'll find helpful information on various events and activities, as well as Buddhist resources. It is our hope that the website will be an effective way for members and supporters to stay connected to the temple. You also have the ability to make online donations. **You can make donations online to the New Building Construction Fund as well!**

Cemetery Plots Available for Purchase

Taiheiji can help you and your family make arrangements for a final resting place in the future. Through the generous donations by temple members and supporters over the years, the Soto Mission of Aiea owns several cemetery plots at Hawaiian Memorial Park Mortuary and the Valley of the Temples Memorial Park that are available to the Taiheiji community. If you are interested in acquiring a plot for you or a loved one, please contact Rev. Shuji at 488-6794. He will be able to send you more information. Additionally, if your family has an available plot they would like to generously donate to Taiheiji, please contact Rev. Shuji. Mahalo! More information can be found at www.sotomission.com

UPCOMING SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

MAY

5 Sun 9:00 a.m. Tsuicho-e, Mother's Day Service, Kannonko
Zazen every Tuesday @ 6:00 a.m. in May: 7, 14, 21, & 28

JUNE

20 Thu 7:00 p.m. Bon Service at Taiheiji
22 Sat 10:00 a.m. Bon Service at Taiheiji
23 Sun 10:00 a.m. Bon Service at Taiheiji
Zazen every Tuesday @ 6:00 a.m. in June: 4, 11, 18, & 25

Zazen at Taiheiji: Tuesdays, 6:00 a.m.

What is Zazen?

Zazen is a meditative discipline that is typically the primary practice of the Zen Buddhist tradition. In general, it can be regarded as a means of insight into the nature of existence.

Do I need to be a Buddhist to sit in Zazen?

Absolutely not! Everyone, no matter what their religious beliefs may be, should try to make meditation a part of their lives. The practice of Zazen is to make you a better self.

What is the Zazenkai?

The Zazenkai is a group that sits together in Zen meditation. They support one another in the practice of Zazen.

When does the Zazenkai meet?

The Zazenkai meets every Tuesday from 6:00 am to 7:00 am in the Taiheiji social hall.

I don't have any experience sitting in Zen Meditation. May I still join the Zazenkai?

The Zazenkai is open to everyone. No experience necessary. If you'd like, you may call Rev. Shuji to schedule an appointment for beginning instructions in Zazen, kinhin (walking meditation), and general etiquette.

Zazen Etiquette

All participants are to arrive a few minutes early and be seated **before** beginning time. Please refrain from talking. While at Taiheiji, participants are asked to abide by the following five precepts, which promote the harmony and wellbeing of the Zazenkai.

- Refraining from killing and harming living beings
- Refraining from taking that which is not given
- Refraining from causing harm through sexual misconduct or inappropriate behavior
- Refraining from false speech, harmful speech, gossip, and slander
- Abstaining from drugs, tobacco and intoxicants that cause carelessness or loss of awareness

Please dress comfortably and in a way suited to visiting a spiritual place. Please do not use strong fragrances during Zazen. Outside food and drink, with the exception of water, are not permitted. You may select either a chair or zafu (cushion) on which to sit.

Zazenkai Donations and Dues:

A small offertory bowl will be put out on the table. Your donations are greatly appreciated. You are also encouraged to (but not required to) officially join the Zazenkai. Monthly dues for the Zazenkai are \$40 and will be used to support Taiheiji and the meditation group. Thank you for your kind support.

Acknowledgement of Generous Donations Received

Sandra Tanaka	Donation to Temple
Shugen Komagata	Dollar a Day Donation (February)
Verna Rabacal	Donation to Temple
Aiea Taiheiji Judo Club	Donation to Temple
Aiko Karaoke School	Donation to Temple
Troy Fukuhara	Funeral Service for the late Harold Kawasaki
George Akahori	Donation to Temple
Harris Ihara	Memorial Service for the late Lilly Ihara
Harris Ihara	Memorial Service for the late Wally Ihara
Tracie Matsuo	Donation to Wedding Ceremony
Edwin Oka	Donation to New Building Construction Fund
Fukiya	Donation to Temple
Verna Rabacal	27th Memorial Service for the late William Rabacal
Tricia Kamikawa	3rd Memorial Service for the late Reed Kamikawa
Trent Koide	27th Memorial Service for the late William Rabacal
Frances Takakawa	Donation to Temple
Fukiya	Donation to Temple
Amy Imaguchi	Donation to New Building Construction Fund
Fumiko Kosuge	3rd Memorial Service for the late Tamikichi Kosuge
Diane Maeda	1 Year Memorial Service for the late Takeo Maeda
Edith Matsuda	1 Year Memorial Service for the late James Matsuda
Yoshimura Family	1 Year Memorial Service for the late Elmer Yoshimura

What is Bon?

The following is reprinted from Soto Zen literature published by the Soto-Shu Shumicho (Soto-Shu headquarters in Tokyo, Japan.)

The memorial services held at Obon have two meanings. One is to honor the Buddha and show reverence for one's ancestors and others who have died. The other is to express gratitude to all people to whom we are indebted, including people who are alive such as our parents, relatives, and friends.

The full expression for Obon is Urabon-e which is derived from "Ullabana," an old Indian word. According to the Bussetsu Urabon Sutra, the origin of this tradition goes back to a ceremony performed by Shakyamuni Buddha for the deceased mother of Maudgalyayana, one of the Buddha's immediate disciples. Ullabana means "hanging upside down" and it was by means of this ceremony that the suffering of that world in which she lived (the suffering was so intense it was like hanging upside down) was removed.

These days, people think that this ceremony will prolong the life of parents and remove all suffering and anguish. This is also one of the traditional holiday periods in Japan when people exchange gifts. The other traditional time is over New Years. Obon is a ceremony to respectfully honor the spirits of the ancestors; it is also to ask for the long life of our parents. In preparation for meeting the spirits, it is customary to thoroughly clean our house and put ourselves in order as if meeting guests.

Dollar a Day Donation Drive

The recent facelift of the Taiheiji's website has really given the temple a broader readership and made online giving an alternative, yet effective way to contribute to Taiheiji. Please visit the temple website to learn more about Taiheiji, and participate in the new "Dollar a Day Donation Drive." Donating to the Dollar a Day Drive is a positive expression of dana (selfless giving) and helps Taiheiji look optimistically to the future in sharing the Buddha-Dharma. This tax-deductible gift is collected monthly (\$30.00). Donors will be recognized in the Taiheiji Bulletin when they sign up to participate in the Dollar a Day Donation Drive. Donors will also be recognized on the Taiheiji website, www.sotomission.com.

Instructions: Please enter **\$30.00** (or more if you choose) as your donation amount. This amount will be charged to your credit card each month. Please contact Rev. Shuji Komagata at 808-488-6794 for more information.

**Soto Mission of Aiea
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