



Dharma Lei

Bishop's Office Newsletter

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Bishop's Message: Bishop Shugen Komagata

Aloha from the Bishop's Office,

As we move from summer into fall, we find ourselves at the end of another Bon season here in Hawaii. I would like to thank everyone for helping and participating in the various Bon Services and Bon Dances held throughout the state of Hawaii.

In the Soto Zen tradition, October is the month when we honor Bodhidharma, also known in Japanese as Daruma. It is written in the Soto publication, *Zen Friends*, Vol. 12, No. 3, 2001: *October the fifth is the anniversary of the death of Bodhidharma, the famous Indian monk and founder of Zen (Chan in Chinese) Buddhism. Heir to the teachings of the Buddha, he traveled to distant China, where he spread the Buddhist spirit through seated meditation, or zazen. Today, when mental magnanimity is greatly in demand, interest in zazen is rising. Bodhidharma physically demonstrated the quintessence of Zen, and his teachings preserve their vigor even now 1,450 years after his death.*



Daruma's perseverance and unwavering dedication to zazen serves as an inspiration for Zen practitioners who sit in meditation. His great influence has even found its way into popular Japanese culture as a red doll with no arms or legs. Often made of papier-mâché, the Daruma doll has a round shape, is hollow and is weighted at the bottom so that it automatically rights itself back up when rolled on its side. This symbolizes the ability to overcome adversity, be successful, and recover from any misfortune. From this emerged the saying, "nanakorobi yaoki," translated to mean "seven times down, eight times up." Let's take a moment to reflect upon the positive impact Bodhidharma can have on our lives, whether it is through zazen or simply to never give up.

Lastly, the 9th U.S. Soto Zen Members' Conference will be held in Las Vegas on October 26. With over 30 participants from Hawaii attending this conference, I am excited for the opportunity for us to meet and network with conference participants from across the mainland USA.

Please take care of yourself and your loved ones.

In Gassho,

Bishop Shugen Komagata



Daruma doll



The Daifukuji Gift Shop

by Rev. Jikō Nakade

When I first thought of having a temple gift shop in 2010, I imagined it occupying a corner of the small room (choba) located off the temple porch and making available three hard-to-find items in Kona: ojuzu, fine incense, and zafu (meditation cushions). I asked temple member Clear Houn Englebert, who had both a passion for the Dharma and retail experience, if he'd help with the shop and he agreed to volunteer. Our temple board provided startup funds. The shop quietly opened. That was nine years ago.

From its simple beginnings, the shop began to grow. And grow some more. Some items were ordered and others were donated. Before long, the small room wasn't big enough and items began to spill onto the temple porch, requiring gift shop volunteers to arrive at least an hour before any event to set everything up and then to stay at least an hour afterwards to put everything away. This happened month after month.

The time had come to look for a bigger space for the shop. The storage room in the basement looked promising, but it was filled with all sorts of things. Here was a good chance to clean up, but where would we move all of the things we needed to keep? We had to find alternate storage spaces. With the help of our samu group that does the weekly cleaning of the temple, a lot of junk was taken away and the needed-to-be-kept items hauled to their new locations. The emptied-out room was painted; the old floor tiles were removed. Track lighting was installed, along with shelving & display cases. It was a tremendous undertaking, made possible by many sangha volunteers. Everyone shared the vision & brought it to fruition.

Why was so much time and energy invested in expanding this gift shop? Because it is a valuable vehicle of the Dharma. Through this shop, Buddhist teachings go out into our community. Through items such as books, scrolls, cards, art, statuary, and meditation cushions, the Buddha-Dharma is being spread far and wide. Without a doubt, this is the primary mission of the Gift Shop. It is a wondrous Dharma gate.

Next, proceeds from the shop directly support our temple and lending library. Many of the books and videos found in our library are purchased through the gift shop. We've gotten so many books over the years that we've donated boxes of them to other temples and to the Prison Mindfulness Project. Moreover, the gift shop has not only returned its start-up fund, it has also made generous contributions to the temple's Dharma fund.

Having a beautiful gift shop has sparked the interest of our island community. The shop has been featured in several local publications. On Bon Dance night and the day of the Daifukuji orchid show & bazaar, it was abuzz with visitors. This gift shop is a jewel in the basement — a Dharma jewel, for sure. I am grateful to the many volunteers and sangha members who support it and make it shine. Please drop by the next time you're in Kona. <http://www.daifukuji.org/giftshop.html>



Shushogi, Chapter 3: Verses 15-17

By Rev. Shinsho Hata
Hilo Taishoji



Aloha everyone,

In the last Dharma Lei, Reverend Ishii introduced the Shushogi, chapter 3, verses 11-14. We learned about the importance of taking refuge in the three treasures [Buddha (①), Dharma (②) and Sangha (③)]. Throughout chapter 3, Dogen emphasized that we should live our life with Buddhist precepts. To learn and practice the Buddhist precepts with faith and confidence is to walk the true path of Buddha. Do you do zazen? Zazen is the main practice of Soto Zen, but there are some members who don't feel comfortable doing zazen. Shikantaza (just sitting) might be difficult for them. However, Buddhist precepts are easy to understand and practice. It is not only for monks, but also for us. Buddhist precepts are a precious gift from Buddha. I'd like to introduce the second half of the Shushogi, chapter 3.

Verse 15:

[Next we should receive the three sets of pure precepts: the precepts of restraining behavior (④), the precepts of doing good (⑤), and the precepts of benefiting living beings (⑥). We should then accept the ten grave prohibitions. First, do not kill (⑦); second, do not steal (⑧); third, do not engage in improper sexual conduct (⑨); fourth, do not lie (⑩); fifth, do not deal in intoxicants (⑪); sixth do not criticize others (⑫); seventh, do not praise self and slander others (⑬); eighth, do not be stingy with the dharma or property (⑭); ninth, do not give way to anger (⑮); and tenth, do not disparage the three treasures (⑯). The buddhas all receive and upheld these three refuges, three sets of pure precepts, and ten grave prohibitions.]

In this verse, Dogen introduced the three sets of pure precepts and the ten grave prohibitions that we must learn. The green book writes of "ten grave prohibitions," but I think that Buddhist precepts are not prohibitions. Buddhist precepts are guidelines to balance the needs of body and mind, and the great path to live correctly.

①-⑯ are called "The Sixteen Soto Zen Precepts." Three sets of pure precepts (④-⑥) are the precious vows to save all beings as Mahayana Buddhists. ⑦ is to have respect for all life. Life dwells in all animals and nature. Thanks to them, we are able to live in this world. That's why we must appreciate them. Please don't hurt others. Please eat food with appreciation. In addition, we must cherish our own life, too. We must not hurt ourselves or commit suicide.



A true Buddhist is a person who can treasure both self and others. ⑧ is to not take that which is not given. Let's become persons who are satisfied with what we have now. ⑨ is to respect the relationship between husband and wife. Please do not misuse your sexuality. ⑩ is to use true and kind words to others all the time. ⑪ is to live with clarity. Please don't drink alcohol too much and cloud your mind. If we drink alcohol, we are likely to break other precepts. The original meaning of it is to not drink alcohol. Monks don't drink it during their life in the monastery. But it is difficult for lay followers to abstain. So its meaning changed after the precept came to Japan. We sometimes drink a small quantity of Japanese sake at a New Year service or a celebration to pray for good health or the prosperity of the temple. The important thing is to live our life with clarity and peace at all times. ⑫ is to be mindful of our own speech. We shouldn't speak of the faults of others. ⑬ is to not elevate ourselves and blame others. We need to maintain modesty. ⑭ is to become a giving person. Let's share our knowledge of Buddhism with others to enrich their lives. ⑮ is to be calm and stable. Do not let anger take control of you. ⑯ is to hold the Three Treasures in your heart and never speak ill of others. These are The Sixteen Soto Zen Precepts. I'd like you to cherish the precepts and use them in your daily life to live correctly as a Soto Zen Buddhist.

Verse 16:

[Those who receive the precepts verify the unsurpassed, complete, perfect enlightenment verified by all the buddhas of the three times, the fruit of buddhahood, adamant and indestructible. Is there any wise person who would not gladly seek this goal? The World-Honored One has clearly shown to all living beings that when they receive the buddha's precepts, they join the ranks of the buddhas, the rank equal to the great awakening; truly they are the children of the buddhas.]

The 16 Soto Zen Precepts are the great path to live correctly as Soto Zen Buddhists. Buddha mind dwells in each of us. We each have the potential to become a Buddha. By practicing the precepts, we can walk the path of Buddha as Buddha's disciples.

Verse 17:

[The buddhas always dwell in this, giving no thought to its various aspects; beings long function in this, the aspects never revealed in their various thoughts. At this time, the land, grasses and trees, fences and walls, tiles and pebbles, all things in the dharma realm of the ten directions, perform the work of the buddhas. Therefore, the beings who enjoy the benefits of wind and water thus produced are all mysteriously aided by the wondrous and inconceivable transformative power of buddha, and manifest a personal awakening. This is the merit of non-intention, the merit of non-artifice. This is arousing the thought of enlightenment.]

Buddha's mind doesn't dwell only in us, but also dwells in all sentient beings. There are beautiful mountains, waterfalls, rivers, ocean beaches, and forests in Hawaii. Everything has Buddha's nature and all are connected as ohana. So all things around you are precious parts of your existence. You are also a precious part of their existence. Let us appreciate both other lives and our own life, which is supported by others. By doing so, your Buddha mind will be cultivated and be as brilliant as a rainbow!

