



# Dharma Lei



## Bishop's Office Newsletter

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### Bishop's Message:

Aloha from the Bishop's Office,

As we enter the months of July and August, our minds, bodies, and spirits have been conditioned through the years to welcome the exciting annual Bon Season here in Hawaii. The sound of music, the sight of all the dancers around the red and white yagura (Bon Dance tower), and the refreshing taste of shave ice—seem like distant memories now. For the second year in a row, we have had to cancel our Bon Dance season because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

There have encouraging news that Hawaii is slowly approaching herd immunity, and that restrictions will one day be lifted, and we will be able to return to our normal lifestyle. I am hopeful that we can once again enjoy Bon Dances next year in 2022.

The sadness and frustration I feel for not being able to enjoy the Bon Dance this year is the same type of feeling many people have shared with me regarding so many other activities. Family vacations, graduation parties, birthday parties, and weddings are just some of the activities they have had to postpone or cancel.

I share with people, though, that no matter how depressing these setbacks have been, it is still important that we stay committed to living each day to the fullest. It is true that the pandemic has taken so much from us—from our health to our daily activities. However, it has never taken away our choice to make the best of each day. That decision is left to us.

I am reminded by the wise words of the Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh, whose poignant words help me through my own struggles to stay positive through these difficult times, and I share them with you to hopefully provide you focus and hope...



***Breathing in, I calm body and mind.  
Breathing out, I smile.  
Dwelling in the present moment,  
I know this is a wonderful moment.***

*~The Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh*

Please take care of yourselves and your loved ones. I look forward to meeting with you soon.

In Gassho,

*Shugen Komagata*



# Hilo Taishoji Shinsanshiki and Hossenshiki Report

Aloha,

On May 16, 2021, We had a special ceremony at Taishoji. It is the Shinsankaido and Hossenshiki ceremony. To explain the ceremonies simply, they are Deacon Jigaku and my promotion ceremony. They are a great celebration.

Shinsan means that a new resident minister enters the temple officially. In Soto Zen Buddhism, a new resident minister performs the Shinsan ceremony as a first ritual. For the ceremony, basically, many temple members and ministers gather at the temple to celebrate the new resident minister. But actually, this ceremony is normally held a couple years later after the minister has been ordained as the resident minister, because the resident minister cannot have the ceremony without his disciple. And the Shinsankaido ceremony is part of the Shinsan ceremony.

During the Shinsankaido ceremony, the resident minister shares his knowledge of Buddhism to lead the members to the Buddha's path. I climbed up the altar as the resident minister of Taishoji and prayed for Buddha, Dogen Zenji, Keizan Zenji and world peace and offered incense for them. And I expressed my gratitude for two Taishoji founders, Rev. Mokusen Hioki and Rev. Hakudo Ezawa, and all the past ministers. After that, I prayed for all the family members' prosperity and long continuity of the family line, and offered incense for them. And I expressed my gratitude and offered incense for my dharma teacher, Rev. Gakuyu Hata. He is my father. After that, I answered all the questions related to Zen practice from the attending ministers. This is the main part of the ceremony. I was a little bit nervous, but it was a very meaningful time for me. Before and after the question and answer section, Bishop Shugen Komagata hit a mallet two times. The first announcing mallet signals the start of the questions and answers. The last announcing mallet proves that I provided my knowledge of Buddhism to the attending ministers completely. So this Shinsankaido ceremony is important for me. Next, Hossenshiki ceremony, Hossen means dharma battle. During the ceremony, my disciple, deacon Jigaku Takenouchi, answered all the questions related to Zen practice from the attending ministers instead of me. This style came from the story in which Buddha let Mahākasapa, a disciple of Buddha to share his dharma with all the disciples instead of Buddha. Through this ceremony, Jigaku was tested for his practice of the Dharma and showed his determination.

The reason why we performed the ceremonies is that Jigaku became my disciple to be an official soto zen minister. I mentioned that the Shinsankaido ceremony is an important ceremony for me, but I could not have the ceremony without my disciple. After I got a disciple, Jigaku, I was able to perform the ceremony for the first time. And Jigaku also cannot perform his hossenshiki ceremony without his teacher. In order to become a soto zen minister, he has to find a teacher and have the ceremony with the teacher. Both ceremonies are always held together. So the ceremonies are rare and people hardly get to see them. At Taishoji, I heard that the 10<sup>th</sup> resident minister of Taishoji, Rev. Aoki performed the ceremonies, but that was about 50 years ago. So you can understand how valuable the ceremonies are.

For deacon Jigaku, it was difficult to perform the ceremony as a soto zen monk, because everything was for the first time. He learned how to wear the robe and behave as a soto zen monk. But he completed the ceremonies successfully. I am proud of him. Actually, I wanted to have the ceremonies last October, but I couldn't do that due to the coronavirus.



And we tried to have the ceremonies on different days several times and tried to have an online ceremony via Zoom, but we couldn't schedule it again and again. However, Jigaku and I didn't give up. Finally, we were able to have the ceremonies this month. The date and program of the ceremonies have changed due to the coronavirus, but it became more special and meaningful as a result. The important thing in our life is to make an effort to achieve our goal without giving up. And to continue the efforts. Things don't always go the way we want them to. There are times we make mistakes. But I believe that if we always continue the effort to achieve the goal which we set, we will achieve good results and make new discoveries which we didn't expect. Finally, my deepest thanks to the Taishoji members, all the Hawaii ministers and deacons who helped with the ceremonies and the HSMA members who support us.

With gratitude, In Gassho,  
Shinsho Hata, 15th resident minister of Taishoji Soto Mission

Dear Friends Family and Sangha,

My name is Joseph Takenouchi or Jigaku and I am a deacon at Taishoji Soto Mission of Hawaii on the Big Island. This year through the Shinsanshiki and Hossenshiki ceremony I became a disciple of Reverend Shinsho Hata. The ceremonies, last held over 50 years ago, tie student and teachers together for life. Once bound no other transmission may occur. They are also an important requirement to enter a monastery for formal training. A few years ago, after attending Sunday services I decided that this was a path I would like to walk and began training with Reverend Hata. Through my involvement at Taishoji I began attending Hawaii Soto Mission Association (HSMA) meetings and getting to know the ministers of the other Soto temples in Hawaii. Without them in attendance the ceremonies would not have been possible. Each minister has guided me on this path in one way or another through kind words, speech or actions that represent the Buddha Way. I am also thankful for the encouragement and support received from Bishop Komagata. Due to the extra safety measures in place due to Covid-19 making these ceremonies a possibility was a challenging task, but with the help of everyone we persevered and succeeded in observing them. I am grateful to everyone's dedication and exigent work in making it all a possibility and am truly thankful for their efforts. To better serve our islands and local communities I will be traveling to Japan to undergo formal training at a monastery. My goal is to return with a greater understanding of Buddhism that I can put into practice here in Hawaii. During the Hossenshiki ceremony Reverend Wright asked about my commitment to becoming a Soto Zen minister. My aspiration is that I can help propagate the Dharma within our community and help those seeking to understand the teachings of the Buddha. Everyone has a unique experience in this life. By being an active member in my community I will be able to facilitate understanding of Buddhist teachings in a way that makes sense to the individual. This reminds me of an important Zen teaching Banpo kiitsu. Everything is connected and leads to the experience of oneness. We can only see the world through our eyes and sometimes forget that without each other our own experiences would not be possible. I could only follow this path because of the help and support of Reverend Hata, Bishop Komagata and our Hawaii ministers.



Once in Japan my experience and knowledge will only be possible through the training and practice of my fellow monks at the monastery, and most importantly this path would not be available for me to follow without our Sangha. Banpo kiitsu. We are all connected and are integral to each other. I look forward to returning and serving Hawaii after my training is complete.

In Humblest Gassho,  
Jigaku

You can watch the ceremonies from the link below.

Shinsan Kaido (Mountain Seat Hall Opening Ceremony) on May 16, 2021

[https://youtu.be/JkFVyzE\\_mxQ](https://youtu.be/JkFVyzE_mxQ)

Shuso Hossen shiki (Dharma Combat Ceremony) on May 16, 2021

<https://youtu.be/F0LaDYVlrjc>



# An Introduction to Soto Zen Buddhism

*A new 3-month Zoom Dharma series starting in August*

*Instructor: Rev. Jiko Nakade*

Here's a chance to learn the basics of Soto Zen Buddhism by joining the Zoom Dharma Fellowship which is open to all. Please select group 1 or group 2.

Group 1: Tuesdays from 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. (Starting August 17)

Group 2: Saturdays from 8:00 - 9:00 a.m. (starting August 21)

We will be using the newly published book *The Complete Illustrated Guide to Zen* by Seigaku Amato, a writer, illustrator, and Soto Zen Buddhist priest who is the assistant minister at the Long Beach Buddhist Church. The illustrations are delightful and the text is easy to understand. [www.seigakuamato.com](http://www.seigakuamato.com)

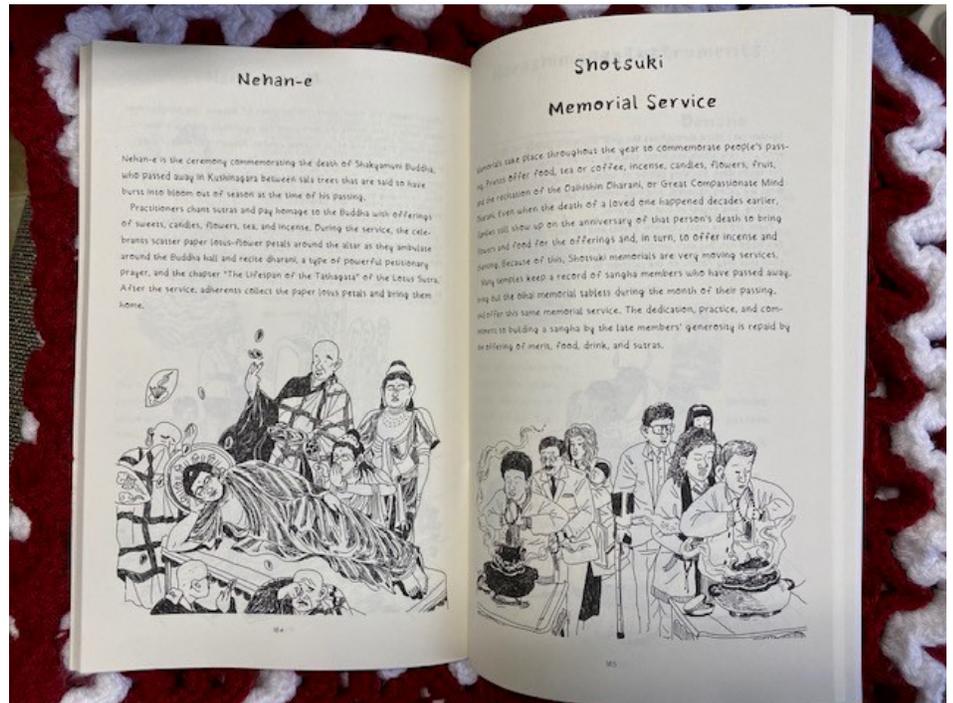
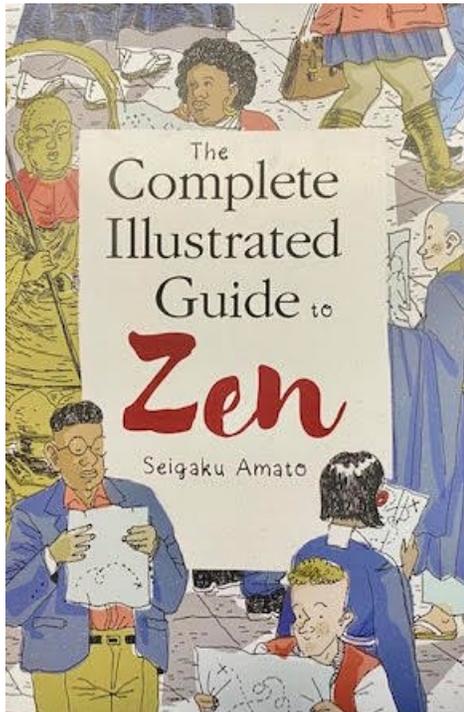
This book is available through the Daifukuji Gift Shop or online at <https://wisdomexperience.org/product/the-complete-illustrated-guide-to-zen/>. Sorry, the Daifukuji Gift Shop is unable to handle mail orders.

Topics to be covered: a brief history of Buddhism, buddhas and bodhisattvas, Soto Zen practice, holidays, ceremonies, sutras, Buddhist vestments, how to set up a home altar.

This series of classes is being offered free of charge. If you would like to offer a donation, you may do so through the temple website: <http://www.daifukuji.org/donation/index.html>. Checks may be mailed to: Daifukuji Soto Mission, P.O. Box 55, Kealakekua, HI 96750.

A Zoom link will be sent to you each week. Learning together via Zoom is a fun way to meet new people and make new Dharma friends.

To register for the series, please contact Rev. Jiko at [rev.jiko@daifukuji.org](mailto:rev.jiko@daifukuji.org), (808) 322-3524.



# *Seven kinds of offerings for the non-wealthy*

“無財の七施 (Muzai no Shichise)”

Story by Rev. Daito Noda

A person, when he comes back to the serenity of the heart and observes the world about him, will be keenly awakened to the realization, “How I came to be and what I am, is because others around me have sustained my life!” Then, mysteriously, naturally, a feeling will arise to want to do something to serve others.

This is what is called “aspiring to Buddhahood [菩提心 bodaishin] but to my way of thinking, this a precious stage in the progress toward spiritual experience.

However, when one thinks about what one can do, one is filled with all sorts of negative objections: “I don’t have money.” “I don’t have time.” “I’m no good, after all!” One is filled with despair.

But there is a way to serve others, even if you have nothing and nothing left to give. This is called *Seven Kinds of Offerings*. \* Even if you don’t have anything, you can perform these offerings.

\*from Samyuktaratnapitaka-sutra, p. 30 of *Messages from the Buddha*, ([http://www.bdkamerica.org/system/files/pdf/MFTB\\_Two\\_pages\\_on\\_one-a.pdf](http://www.bdkamerica.org/system/files/pdf/MFTB_Two_pages_on_one-a.pdf))

The first is “offering of eyes.” Any person can touch another person with a friendly gaze. The second is “offering of countenance.” One can, at all times, smile and show friendliness in one’s entire countenance. Third, “oral offering.” One can speak kind words and use kind tones when speaking. Fourth, “spiritual offering.” The kanji characters used for this offering is offering of the heart. In other words, it means to think about putting yourself in the other person’s shoes. Fifth, “physical offering.” The kanji characters used for this offering means to offer your physical person. It appears to mean to offer your physical body through the conduct of your actions. Sixth, “offering of a seat.” It means to give up your seat when on the bus or train. Seven, “offering of shelter.” From long ago, it has meant to offer a night’s stay to travelers. While there are so many ways to serve others, if it were you, what will you do?

These seven kinds of offerings are not all the ways to serve others. Today, for this day, how many ways can you actually do to serve others? Even in things that can’t be settled with money, this is the practice of attaining Buddhahood!

