



Dharma Lei



Bishop's Office Newsletter

Soto Zen Buddhism Hawaii Office

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Bishop's Message:

Aloha from the Bishop's Office,

Can you believe we've already arrived at the halfway point of 2022? I hope that you and your family have been healthy, happy, and enjoying the year so far! While the weather in Hawaii has been utterly beautiful recently, the COVID-19 pandemic rolls on, gas prices are through the roof, and the Russia and Ukraine War sadly sees no end in sight. Let's send our prayers to all those may be suffering both near and far from us.

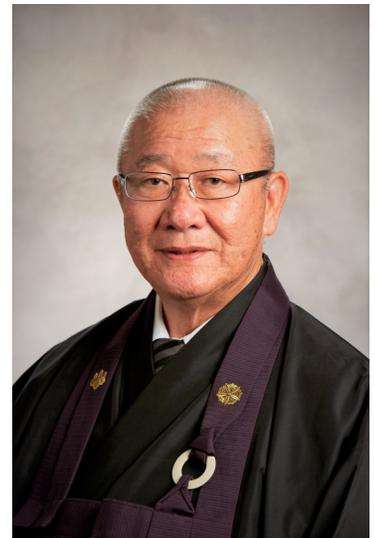
The familiar season of Bon is upon us now. Bon is a time to offer our prayers to our departed loved ones and friends. Bon is also a time for us to offer our deep gratitude to our ancestors who passed on well before our time here. When the pandemic forced us to rewrite the way we interact with others, the use of online virtual services certainly helped to enable people to continue to offer Bon prayers from the safety of their homes.

I am happy that in 2022, several of our Soto Mission temples have been able to return to in-person Bon Services. The ability to see one another, interact with one another, and offer prayers together in-person at the Bon Service are invaluable. I pray that by next year all the Soto Mission temples in Hawaii will be able to safely gather for in-person Bon Services.

In many ways, we can look at our lives presently in the middle of 2022 and assess that although we have made great strides battling the COVID-19 pandemic, we are still trying to figure out what the new normal in life will be for the future. There is still a lot of uncertainty ahead, it can be a bit unsettling. However, there are a lot of good 'certainties' already in our lives. For me personally, I constantly remind myself of the small blessings in my life: speaking to my sisters in Hawaii, California, and Japan on the phone, having a Father's Day video chat on Facetime with my son in New Mexico, having weekly dinners with my other son and his family, and being able to continue my work each day as the head minister of Bet-suin and the bishop of the Hawaii Soto Mission. "A happy life is often taken for granted," I tell myself.

So please recount your blessing in your life. They may be small things, but they are blessings, nonetheless. And as Buddhists, let us never lose our original determination—that is to help others around us. Whether it is lending a hand, offering a prayer, or even giving a smile, it is the small things in life that can have a positive impact on others.

In Gassho.



New Resident Minister of Maui

Aloha,

Nice to meet you. My name is Tomoki Hirasawa, new resident minister of Mantokuji from Japan. I left Japan on April 13th. After a 5-day orientation on Oahu, I arrived at Mantokuji on April 18th.

I was born and raised in Kanagawa Prefecture. Kanagawa is famous for the port city of Yokohama and The Great Buddha of Kamakura. Some of you might have been there on a trip. After graduation from the university, I lived at Sojiji Temple, one of the head temples of Soto Mission, to devote myself to Buddhist training for a year with Rev. Hoshino and Rev. Hata. They are my friends with whom I have shared many experiences.

During our training, we woke up early in the morning, cleaned up every nook of the temple, had a few rice and vegetables meals, and did Zazen everyday. Those days were very hard but also fulfilling.

After my training, I worked at a city government office in my hometown for 10 years. I worked in the tax department and community center. At the same time, I helped my father, who is a resident minister of his temple.

I got married in 2018. Hawaii was the place of our honeymoon trip. We loved Hawaii because of its warm, mild, comfortable climate, beautiful nature, and the kindness of its people. Now we are back in Hawaii. This is an incredible experience for us and we are grateful for this opportunity.

I last came to Maui 3 years ago in 2019. Since then, it has been a very long time with two painful years due to COVID-19. Many people have supported us to come here. I would like to thank all the people in the Sangha who have been waiting for us.

When I entered the Hondo of Mantokuji, I am reminded of my hometown and feel at ease. I am sure that this is the same feeling that you, your parents, and all ancestors felt. This is the meaning of the temple's existence and the reason why I should be here. I would like to show my respect to all the ancestors who rest here, and to all those who have saved this temple until now. I am now very happy to be here.

I will study English hard and hope to be able to communicate with all of you soon. Please feel free to talk to us when you come to Mantokuji.

In gassho,

Tomoki Hirasawa

The 9th resident minister of Mantokuji



Lay Confirmation Ceremony

At Daifukuji Soto Mission

Fifteen sangha members received the bodhi-sattva precepts and their Buddhist names in a Soto Zen Buddhist Lay Confirmation Ceremony held on May 22, 2022 at Daifukuji Soto Mission. This ceremony was officiated by Bishop Shugen Komagata with the assistance of Reverend Shuji Komagata from the Soto Zen Buddhism Hawaii Office, and Reverend Jiko Nakade and Deacon Jikai Nakade of Daifukuji.

A warm congratulations to the following recipients: Stephen Shōdō Tanaka, MaryAnne Jiu Seibert, Kym Jōshin Peck, Frank Kai-on Galman, Richard Jigan Morley, Travis Hosshin Marsh, Huong Seishin Lam, Linda Jōkō Calloway, Aimee Myōshō Disharoon, Markus Myō-on Fahrenberger, Dan Taihei Gordon, Jonika Jōren Grossi, John Jiun Hamm, Gerald Jōgan Hirata, and Mark Kōshin Holst. All of the recipients completed a three-month online study of the 16 precepts under the guidance of Rev. Nakade.

The Daifukuji sangha sends an ocean of gratitude to Bishop Komagata for serving as preceptor and to Rev. Shuji for serving as the service M.C.

The ceremony was followed by a potluck lunch and fellowship in the Daifukuji social hall. It was truly a joyful day!

