



# Dharma Lei



## Bishop's Office Newsletter

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Fourth Quarter, 2023

Issue No. 46

### Bishop's Message:

Did you know that the most popular opening comment on the television news on November 1 is “Can you believe it? It’s already November!” The funny thing is that I completely agree. 2024 has been a very busy year for the Hawaii Soto Mission, and we are now already in November.

On October 21 and 22, the Hawaii Soto Mission celebrated its 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Although Betsuin—the main temple I am at in Honolulu—was founded 110 years ago, the historic beginning of the Hawaii Soto Mission took place ten years earlier in 1903 when temples were established in the sugar plantation camps of Waipahu, Oahu by Rev. Sen’ei Kawahara, and Wahiawa, Kauai by Rev. Ryouin Kan. Over the next 120 years, our network of temples has grown to nine temples and one Zendo and has served the religious needs of thousands of members and their families.

As we commemorated our 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we offered our heartfelt gratitude to the six past bishops—Bishop Hosen Isobe, Bishop Zenkyo Komagata, Bishop Zenshu Komagata, Bishop Koryu Oyama, Bishop Gyokuei Matsuura, and Bishop Jiho Machida—and over one-hundred ministers and Jizoku for their faithful service to the temple community here in Hawaii. In addition, offered our prayers to all our departed temple members and supporters for their hard work and dedication to the temple.

We also observed the Preliminary Memorial Ceremony for the 700<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Daihonzan Sojiji’s Founder Taiso Keizan Jokin Zenji on October 22. This preliminary memorial ceremony was observed in each of Soto Zen Buddhism’s four international regions—North America, South America, Europe, and Hawaii—as a prelude to the 700<sup>th</sup> Great Memorial Ceremony to be held at Sojiji in 2024. These services are held once every fifty years, so I am honored to have been able to participate in these same ceremonies back in 1974 at Sojiji Monastery.

Thank you to all the guest ministers in attendance, our Hawaii ministers, Jizokukai, members of the Hawaii Soto Mission Association, and of course, all the members and supporters from within our Hawaii Soto Mission *ohana*. It was a wonderful weekend seeing everyone again. As we look forward to the holiday season, please take good care of yourselves.



In Gassho.

Bishop Shugen Komagata



# The Preliminary Memorial Ceremony for the 700<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Daihonzan Sojiji's Founder Taizo Keizan Jokin Zenji and the 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Hawaii Soto Mission

The Hawaii Soto Mission Association's (HSMA) 2023 Fall Meeting and Conference were held on October 21 and 22, 2023 at the Soto Mission of Hawaii in Honolulu. The weekend's events included the Preliminary Memorial Ceremony for the 700<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Daihonzan Sojiji's Founder Taizo Keizan Jokin Zenji and the 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Hawaii Soto Mission.

## Saturday, October 21, 2023

### **HSMA Fall Meeting and Keynote Speaker, Rev. Konjin Godwin**

After the Opening Ceremony was completed, special guest Rev. Konjin Godwin, Director the Soto Zen Buddhism International Center and abbot of the Houston Zen Center, delivered a wonderful presentation on Soto Zen Buddhism in North America in front of the HSMA officers, delegates, ministers, and Jizoku (minister's spouse) gathered at Betsuin. Rev. Godwin shared a detailed analysis of the history, growth, and spread of Soto Zen, and her thoughts on what the future may hold for our organization. After a tasty lunch in the social hall, the HSMA held its fall meeting to discuss various topics that concern the Soto Mission temples statewide.

### **Preliminary Memorial Ceremony for the 700<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Daihonzan Sojiji's Founder Taizo Keizan Jokin Zenji Special Decoction-offering**

Late Saturday afternoon, a special ceremony offering "sweet hot water" to Taizo Keizan Jokin Zenji was held as a prelude to Sunday's memorial service dedicated to him. Rev. Shinko Miura, the Director of Education at Kasuisai Monastery in Japan, officiated this ceremony. Rev. Miura humbly offered a series of prostrations to pay homage to and show his deep respect to the co-founder of our Soto Zen School.



Priests entering the temple hall



Rev. Shinko Miura pictured with hands in gassho



# The Preliminary Memorial Ceremony for the 700<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Daihonzan Sojiji's Founder Taizo Keizan Jokin Zenji and the 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Hawaii Soto Mission

## Sunday, October 22, 2023

The HSMA Conference attendees returned Sunday morning to the Soto Mission of Hawaii Betsuin and were joined by nearly 100 attendees and 30 ministers from Hawaii, the mainland, Japan, and South America to observe three very special services.

### **120<sup>th</sup> Year Memorial Service for Deceased Ministers, Jizoku, and Members of the Hawaii Soto Mission**

Bishop Shugen Komagata officiated a memorial service dedicated to all deceased Hawaii ministers, their spouses, and to all members of the Hawaii Soto Mission who passed over the course of the last 120 years. Acknowledging the many hardships endured and sacrifices made for the sake of the Hawaii Soto Mission, Bishop Komagata led the ministers and congregation in solemn prayer for the repose of the deceased.



Bishop Komagata reads his invocation as Rev. Shuji looks on from the side



Rev. Konjin Godwin

### **Hawaii Soto Mission 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Service**

Rev. Konjin Godwin returned to the spotlight to officiate the auspicious 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Service for the Hawaii Soto Mission. We were all extremely grateful for her presence and participation at these events. Just as Bishop Komagata has been able to do with the congregation in Hawaii, Rev. Godwin was able to make an instant connection with the English-speaking crowd at Betsuin.



## Preliminary Memorial Ceremonies for the 700th Anniversary of Daihonzan Sojiji's Founder, Taiso Keizan Jokin Zenji

A very warm mahalo is extended to Rev. Tenyu Fukagawa, Director of Education and Dissemination at the Administrative Headquarters of Soto Zen Buddhism, for officiating the memorial service dedicated to Keizan Zenji. During this “preliminary” service—held a year ahead of the 700<sup>th</sup> Memorial Service at head temple Daihonzan Sojiji in 2024—Rev. Fukagawa offered Dharma words, sweet hot water, rice, alms, cakes, tea, incense, and 18 prostrations (yes, that’s a lot of bows!)—to Keizan Zenji. Joined by the 29 other ministers, Rev. Fukagawa chanted the holy sutras while walking in circumambulation—a reverent processional on the altar. Albeit long, this ceremony was extremely beautiful and intriguing to witness.

Thank you to our very own Bishop Shugen Komagata, Rev. Tenyu Fukagawa, Rev. Konjin Godwin, Rev. Shinko Miura, the many other ministers in attendance, and of course to all the people who attended the ceremonies.



Rev Tenyu Fukagawa offers sweet tea to  
Keizan Zenji



Ministers chant and walk in circumambulation

## Saturday, December 16

### 16 Bodhisattva Precepts Class

On Saturday, December 16, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., the Soto Mission of Hawaii will host a study session on the 16 Bodhisattva precepts, which serve as the foundation of all Buddhist thought and practice in the Soto Zen tradition. This study session is open to anyone, including those who have already studied the precepts in the past. The class will be held at the Soto Mission of Hawaii (1708 Nuuanu Avenue, Honolulu, 96817). Registration is \$50 per person, and includes refreshments and lunch. Please contact Rev. Shuji by December 1 if you are interested in attending this class.

## Sunday, December 17

### Lay Confirmation Ceremony

A Lay Confirmation Ceremony will be held on Sunday, December 17 at 10:00 a.m. at the Soto Mission of Hawaii. During this ceremony, participants formally receive the 16 Bodhisattva Precepts and confirm themselves as Buddhists.

The Lay Confirmation Ceremony is open to those who attended the Precepts Class on December 16 and to individuals who participated in previous Precepts Classes. Please contact Rev. Shuji if you are interested in studying and formally receiving the Buddhist Precepts on December 17.

