



A New Year's Message from Reverend Hirosato Yoshida



Akemashite Omedeto Gozaimasu, Happy New Year.

As we welcome 2026, I offer deep gratitude to each of you. Your steady presence, service, and care keep our temple alive. You show the strength of sangha through your actions.

Last year, we welcomed three individuals who began a deeper journey of commitment and study here at Zenshuji: Cameron Shinzen Williams, Todd Donin Cowdery, and Kim Shokan Loh. I offer sincere gratitude to each of them for their continued dedication to strengthening our community.

I also extend my thanks to Gerald, our temple president. The temple cannot function at its present level without his commitment. I am grateful to all board members who support the temple throughout the year, especially during Bon and other major events, and to the many volunteers who give their time and energy in service.

2026 is the Year of the Horse. The Horse moves with energy and forward motion. It reminds you to act with purpose, to trust your steps, and to remain upright even when the path feels long. In the Dharma, forward motion means practice. Step by step. Breath by breath. Action rooted in awareness.

The Horse also teaches balance between effort and rest. Move when the moment calls. Pause when the mind needs stillness. Through this balance, wisdom grows.

This year, we will move like the Horse and create more ways to share the Dharma with you. I am grateful to share that the three trainees will complete their training and take on greater roles by the end of the year.

With the Buddha's teachings of compassion, interdependence, and mindfulness as our guide, let us continue to serve our families, our community, and all.

New Year's Blessing Service (10 am) & Mahalo Luncheon (11 am) Sunday, January 18

President's Message

Dear Zenshuji Members, Friends, and 'Ohana,

Please join our New Year's Blessing Service and Mahalo Luncheon!

It's a wonderful opportunity to reconnect and strengthen our bonds.

Respond to this invitation with your email and phone number when you complete your **Donation Form**. We look forward to seeing you and sharing updates about our temple, the challenges we face, and the direction in which we are pursuing. When was the last time we saw each other and chatted? At Obon? Hanamatsui, Peace Day, or a columbarium visit? Let's meet and target January 18, as an opportunity to meet, talk story, and discuss the future of our Temple. There are so many of you I would like to see once again. And more importantly, I would like YOU to meet the next generation of leaders for OUR temple.

In Gassho, Gerald Hirata, President, Board of Directors (808-346-4650) Call me if you have ANY questions.

Postscript:

Travel is one of my passions. On my recent visit to Japan this past November, I ran into Fiamalu Penitani. Remember him? A group of us attended The Grand Sumo Tournament in Fukuoka, and there he was, sitting alone in the hallway of the third floor! He was very friendly and amiable. We all had a nice chat with him. He is doing well as a former Yokozuna, and now has his own Sumo Stable. He has been living in Japan since he was 18, now a Japanese citizen, married to a Japanese national and is 55 years old. Yet, he is still a local boy. He said "Try wait," several times, in adjusting himself for another pose. Our ALOHA to Musashimaru, who continued the Hawaiian Dynasty – Takamiyama, Konishiki, & Akebono – who ruled Sumo from the early 70's to the early 2000's, and made us glued to our TV and very proud!



Year of the HORSE



ZENSHUJI TENTATIVE CALENDAR 2026

FOR YOUR INFORMATION Events/Activities 2026

+ Island wide event * State-wide Soto Shu event Zazen every Sunday at 9am

Jan	18	Sun	10 am	New Year Blessing Service- Rev. Yoshida
	18	Sun	11 am	New Year Party (Mahalo Luncheon)
Feb	8	Sun	11 am	Nehan-e Service – Rev. Yoshida
*	21	Sat	9:30 am	Hawaii Soto Mission Minister's Meeting
*	22	Sun	9:30 am	Hawaii Soto Mission Assn Spring Conference
Mar	8	Sun	11 am	Spring Higan Service – Rev. Yoshida
Apr	+ 5	Sun	9:30 am	Kauai Buddhist Council Buddha Day Service
*	25-26	Sat-Sun	TBA	United Hawaii Soto-Shu Women's Assn Conf. (Host: Kona Daifukuji)
May	TBA			Training
	TBA			GIA County (Family Discovery Nights)
Jun	6	Sat	11 am	Soto Zen Bon Service – Rev. Yoshida
Jul	10-11	Fri-Sat	5-10 pm	Soto Zen Bon Festival
Aug	TBA			Training
	TBA			GIA County (Family Discovery Nights)
Sep	20	Sun	10 am	Fall Higan Service
	21	Mon	TBA	United Nations International Day of Peace
Oct	11	Sun	11 am	Darumaki and Ryosoki
	TBA			GIA-County (Family Discovery Nights)
Nov	* 7-8	Sat-Sun		2026 HSMA Fall Conference (Host: Zenshuji)
	*	Sat		Kessei Ango – Hossenshiki Ceremony
Dec	6	Sun	9:30 am	Kauai Buddhist Council Bodhi Day Service (Jodo-E)
	31	Tue	9:00 pm	Joya-no-Kane (Ringing of the Bell)

Funeral and Memorial Services

Call for arrangements: 808-335-3521

Families may want to schedule a memorial or inurnment services on those Sundays when Rev. Yoshida is scheduled to come to Kauai.

Memorial Service Year for 2026

1st year services for those who passed away in 2025

3rd year services for those who passed away in 2024

7th year services for those who passed away in 2020

13th year services for those who passed away in 2014

17th year - 2010; 23rd year - 2004; 27th year – 2000; 33rd year-1994; 50th year - 1977

Makuragyo Services:

Call Gerald at 808-346-4650. The Minister should be compensated for their service.

Please save this calendar for reference.

Call to confirm the date of an event.

Check our Website at KauaiSotoZen.org

MAHALO!

Cameron Shinzen Williams: Ministerial Training

This season, the temple and its grounds seem to be soaking up the refreshing rains, the sunlight between the clouds, and the steady, generous work of our members. Each week I'm reminded how many hands keep this temple alive. During evening practice recently, while chanting and offering incense, I felt the presence of everyone who has shaped this temple: those who built its walls, those who tend its gardens, and those who cook and feed thousands of people over the years.

Uncle Russell Kuboyama shared with me how, in his youth, he carried cinder blocks for the masons who built the hondo walls. I think of that often. His story reminds me that this temple is a living body made of many people's devotion. Today, I see Scotty Kimata and Roy Miyashiro refreshing the lawn with that same spirit of care. I feel it each time members diligently dust the altar, butter bread for saucers, or pause to offer flowers in the columbarium.

As part of my ministerial training, Rev. Yoshida is guiding me in rituals and chanting, but also in what it means to care for the temple as an ohana. Through my studies I recognize how deeply we are all connected, in our practice and in the shared responsibility of tending to a place that has supported generations. Each day I train, I feel the accumulated kindness of those who came before us. Their efforts echo in the hondo when we chant together.

I'm grateful for the trust and encouragement you've offered as I step into this path. Ministerial training wouldn't be possible without the community that surrounds it. Thank you for being part of that community.

I look forward to seeing you again, or meeting you for the first time. I'll be at the Mahalo Luncheon and hope we can connect there.

Todd Donin Cowdery: Meditation Reflections

When the Buddha experienced enlightenment, he was sitting meditation. The practice of zazen, the form of meditation at the heart of Zen practice, returns us again and again to this same sitting meditation.

The instruction for the practice of zazen in Soto Zen is simple, "just sit". What is meant by this is to sit in an upright posture, paying careful attention to one's breathing until one is fully alert and present. If a thought arises, see it, let it go and return to just sitting. This practice is called Shikantaza, quiet awareness.

I began practicing zazen with the Mountains and River Order Zen Temple in New York City and Monastery in upstate New York in 2005. Learning to "Just Sit" took time, experimentation and guidance to experience quiet awareness. I tended to consider body, breath and mind separately. Zazen unified them.

Reflecting on practice questions asked of me when hosting the meditation group here I offer a few considerations:

Body - What happens with our mind and breath has a lot to do with how we position the body. Lowering our center of gravity and balancing our body creates stillness. Stillness in the body helps bring stillness to the mind. In a chair achieving balance can be helped by sitting upright towards the edge of the chair with the feet flat on the floor. On a cushion this can mean sitting up straight from a "tripod base", a triangle of equal contact with the cushions between sit bones and each knee.

Breath - The practice of counting the breath can help to build concentration and settle the mind. Following the breath begins by exhaling. Upon inhaling counting "1", then exhaling counting "2" and so on up to 10. If the mind wanders and the count is lost, an exhale returns to the inhaling count "1" again and so on. When a count of 10 is reached one returns to 1 to count again.

As concentration builds and a count of 10 is reached consistently, consider counting each cycle of breath. Inhalation and exhalation counts as "1", inhale exhale counts "2" and so forth.

Mind - Sometimes tension arises in practice. Thoughts, unfamiliar sounds, smells, the proximity of other practitioners, physical pain can all cause tension. Relief can be found by exhaling and relaxing into the tension, focusing breath to a space just below the navel, the "hara".

May we all find refuge in our practice and be of service to others.



*U.S. Soto Conference, October 23-26, Honolulu
Five of the seven Kauai Representatives, starting
left, Gerald Hirata, Dr. Todd Donin Cowdery,
Kimberly Shokan Loh, Rev. Hirosato Yoshida, and
Cameron Shinzen Williams.*



Kimberly Shokan Loh: Dharma Class

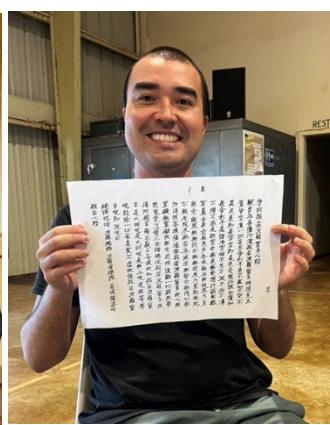
This Fall, our sangha heartily welcomed the wonderful resident (and first female) minister of Daifukuji in Kona Hawai'i, Reverend Jikō Nakade, to lead a special Dharma class for us at Zenshuji. Founded in 1914, Daifukuji means The Temple of Great Happiness. In wonderful spirits, Reverend Jikō flew over for the day on November 8 to teach on *Tracing the Sutras. Dedicating the Merit.*

She began the day with a song she had written herself: Morning Star, which celebrated the Buddha's awakening and the coming of a new dawn for humankind. Her teachings went on to explore the Bodhisattva vows (Shigu Seigan Mon): to save all the numberless sentient beings, to end all inexhaustible delusions, to master all boundless dharma gates (teachings), and to attain the unsurpassable Buddha Way. These are understood as an eternal and all-inclusive commitment to a path of compassion and wisdom and are often chanted by monks and Zen practitioners. Reverend Jikō then taught about the dedication of merit and gently guided participants in tracing sutras and images of bodhisattvas, known as *Shakyo* and *Shabutsu*.

Our atmosphere was inspiring and quietly miraculous; participating in a practice that has been kept alive since ancient times, and yet we brought it to life on a Saturday morning by our hands and intentions. We closed the session with Reverend Yoshida officiating a beautiful special blessing service where all participants humbly offered up their tracings to the benefit of all beings, and especially for any people or life that is currently suffering or unwell.

For Cam Shinzen, Todd Donin and Kim Shokan, this Dharma class provided another wonderful opportunity to be guided by Reverend Yoshida in our minister and deacon training program. Our chanting, playing instruments and bowing have come a long way since we ordained in May! We have the pleasure of being able to observe our progress, while also often laughing and smiling at our mistakes and human-ness as we go. Mahalo Reverend Jikō and Reverend Yoshida for bringing light on this beautiful day. It was a perfect lead into this winter season, where December 8th marks *Rohatsu*, the awakening of the Buddha under the Bodhi Tree, also known as Bodhi Day. We invite you to join with us in appreciating and honoring this incredible emergence for humankind.

Gassho!



Dharma teacher, Rev Jiko Nakade of Kona Daifukuji Soto Mission, interested and eager Dharma students, and Brendan Smith displaying his exceptional sutra tracing skills.

Diane Delorenzo: Discover the Power of Giving

“Looking Back and Looking Forward”

The year 2028 will mark the 125th anniversary of the founding of the Kaua'i Soto Zen Temple, Zenshuji, Inc. and the 50th anniversary of the building of the temple in Hanapepe. One more milestone of note is the Charter of Incorporation, officially filed with the State of Hawai'i in April 1968. The charter reveals the names and signatures of the 25 individuals who committed themselves to the future of the temple:

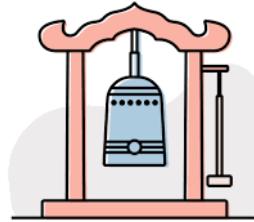
Kiyoshi Kimata, Tooru Hirano, Toshio Ishida, Tadao Hirata, Nobuto Hanada, Kazuya Kuboyama, Rev. Zendo Matsunaga, William M. Iida, Kiyoshi Miyazaki, Jitsu Nosaka, Masaichi Takeshita, Yoshizo Yamagata, Atsushi Hirano, Yatsugu Nakagawa, Masaji Toyofuku, Kunisaburo Akazawa, Shokichi Hijirida, George Takaharu Hirano, Manjiro Ehara, Kozo Miyasato, Richard U. Onzuka, Masumi Teraoka, Wakamatsu Iwamoto, Edward Y. Shimono, Peter Hideichi Tsuha



Decade after decade, we have depended on members of the community to give their time, talent, and financial support. If you have been a member of the temple, we hope you will renew your membership today for the year ahead. If you are not a member, we hope you will join. Your membership enables the Kauai Soto Zen Temple to be a place of homecoming for families with roots in our community, a source for learning and meditation for Kauai residents and visitors, and the center for spiritual practice and traditions through the years.

In addition to membership, please take a moment to contemplate making a special charitable gift for the renovation and restoration of the temple and grounds. Several needs have been identified in the interior and exterior of the temple—including the temple roof—as well as on the grounds. As always, gifts can be made in honor of or in memory of a specific family or family member. We welcome any suggestions and the opportunity to talk privately should this be of interest.

ENSURING OUR FUTURE Please consider including a gift for the Kauai Soto Zen Temple in your Will or Living Trust. For more information on this or other ways of giving, please contact Gerald Hirata. All inquiries will be confidential.



Ringing of Temple Bell

December 31st, **New Year's Eve, 9:00 pm** 108 rings on the bonsho (large bell). You'll get your turn! **Meet at the bell tower 8:45 pm**
Enjoy a Soto Zen tradition – mochi & oden to start the New Year right!

Note the
change in time!

OMAMORI for Sale Omamori or ofuda are paper amulets that are good luck charms that are blessed to bring positive spirits and protection for someone possessing them.

- Personal safety & protection - \$3.00** 2"x2.5" fits in your wallet or purse
- Car safety and protection – \$7.00** 2"x 3.5" can be hung or placed on the dashboard area of your car. "Kauai Zeni" tag.
- House safety and protection - \$5.00** 2.75" x 7.5" placed somewhere near the entrance to your front door, in the foyer or even the back of the door itself. "Kauai Zenshuji" tag.



New Year Newsletter Donation Order Form

NAME _____

PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

EMAIL _____

CHECK THE AREAS THAT APPLY:

In Memory of \$ _____ Honoree's Name _____

OMAMORI :

Annual member (\$100) \$ _____

*Personal (wallet size) quantity _____ x \$3 _____

Building Fund \$ _____

*Car quantity _____ x \$ 7 _____

Columbarium \$ _____

*House quantity _____ x \$ 5 _____

General donation \$ _____

Postage (neighbor island/mainland) \$5 _____

OTHER (please specify) \$ _____

GRAND TOTAL DONATION \$ _____

New Year BLESSING SERVICE Yes _____ New Year MAHALO LUNCHEON – Number Attending _____

Grants

HTA-CEP & Kilohana by CNHA (Hawaii Tourism Authority-Community Enrichment Program)

In 2013, Soto Zen Temple applied for and was awarded its first grant from the HTA-CEP and the County of Kauai. The funding sources targeted programs in the community that would enhance the resident and visitor experience on the island, showcase local culture, arts, and traditions that foster community engagement. The funds are used to enhance The Soto Zen Bon Festival. The HTA-CEP grants ranged from \$12,000-18,000 for the past 11 years. The National Endowment for Arts, Folk & Traditional Arts Division, awarded Soto Zen a \$20,000 grant in 2023. The grant focused on the “Hole Hole Bushi,” a unique genre of songs sung by women working in the sugarcane fields, and the Flying Saucers, the most popular festival food fare that originated at the temple. These two folk traditions validated Kauai’s unique identity in the vast American landscape.



County of Kauai – GIA (Grants-in-Aid)

Awarded \$14,700 in October 2025 - Project title: Family Discovery Nights

Providing family activities such as movie nights, karaoke, music/dancing, board games, etc.

Shifts from pre-planned gathering to exploratory, interactive, problem-solving experience for families.

Aligns with “Kauai Kakou,” a General Plan theme, of preserving what we value as Kauaians, “we’re in this together,” “Keeping Kauai Kauai.” Part of temple’s vision that serves all ages, backgrounds, beliefs to help build vibrant and inclusive communities on the Westside of Kauai, using our diversity as strengths.



State of Hawaii – GIA (Grants-in-Aid)

Currently writing a Proposal -- Project title: Zenshuji Hall & Community Center

Approximate cost: \$650,000

Our project’s goal in Y2026 is to build a more cohesive community on the entire west side of Kauai, not just for temple members and its affiliate groups. The Zenshuji Hall, currently underutilized, would be the venue for educational & developmental uses, civic & community engagement, personal & family events, and creative & recreational outlets. The Hall will be renovated to accommodate this plan and fully serve our vision for a modern, accessible community space.