



An Obon 2026 Message from Reverend Hirosato Yoshida

Bon season returns to us once again—a time of remembrance, gratitude, and deep connection. As we gather in the warmth of summer, surrounded by lantern light, chanting, and the joyful spirit of Bon Dance, we also pause to remember those who came before us. Our lives are not separate from theirs. We are here because of the love, sacrifice, and care of our parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and generations beyond what we can name.

Bon reminds us that the bonds between past and present are never truly broken. In offering incense, chanting sutras, and remembering our ancestors, we express our deep gratitude for all that has been given to us. Their lives continue in us—in our bodies, our memories, our values, and in the path we now walk. This year, our Bon Service and Bon Dance will be held separately because the date coincides with Betsuin's Bon Service. For that reason, we will hold one **Bon Service on June 6** instead of two. Even so, the meaning and significance of Bon remain unchanged. The heart of this season is still the same: to remember our ancestors, to express gratitude, and to recognize the deep interconnection of life across generations.

We are honored that **Rev. Jigaku Takenouchi, resident minister of Taishoji in Hilo, will join us at our Bon Service as guest minister.** We are also grateful that **Rev. Cam Shinzen Williams will be with us at the Bon Dance to serve the temple and community in my absence.**

Whether you join us in service, in quiet prayer, or in the spirit of Bon Dance, your presence is a gift. I look forward to sharing this meaningful time with all of you.

In Gassho, Rev. Hirosato Yoshida

President's Message

The final months of 2025 and early 2026 were a busy season of writing and implementing grants, including a State of Hawaii submission in January and a new program launched in February. That work helped us clarify who we are as a temple and how we serve our community.

Rooted in Zen, we look within for wisdom and strength so we can offer compassion and practical support to others. Guided by the Sutras—selfless giving, kind speech, helpful deeds, and understanding—we reaffirm our mission to serve everyone, regardless of race, creed, background, or means.

Building on a century of proud service to the Japanese American community, we are enthusiastically embracing a future focused on diversity and inclusion. To our members, *ohana*, partners, and all residents—both long-time *kama'āina* and newcomers—we invite you to join us. Help shape our new initiatives and events as we work together to strengthen our island community." Mahalo nui, with warmth and gratitude, *Gerald Hirata*



"There is something about putting your heart and soul into what you do, that make it seem ordinary. This ordinary little thing becomes quite extraordinary when you think about the impact it has in the community, what it has done -- and this kind of fame sets Kauai apart from the other islands. There is something special about the west side community of Kauai that allows that to happen."

PBS-Hawaii
Home is Here, "Flying Saucers on Kauai



OBON is a time to remember...

In this issue, note the following and fill out your Obon requests forms.

The Obon service this year will NOT take place during the festival week of July 10-11.

The scheduled date is scheduled for Saturday, June 6, at 11 am.

Call in your requests if late: 808-651-0728 (Evelyn) or 808-346-4650 (Gerald)

- (1) Obon Toba Memorial Service -fill out a list of names for a **toba**.
- (2) Chochin request – fill out the information for a nametag; if one was made before in that person's name, you need not request another one. The lantern with the name tag is hung every year at Obon.
- (3) Obon donations - in Memory Of (someone)
- (4) General Obon donation to help defray festival food costs, festival expenses.
- (5) Columbarium donations for maintenance and upkeep
- (6) Membership dues (if it slipped by you in January) - dues supports our activities and events.
- (7) Building fund - fixing shoji doors, replace temple and hall roofs.

[1] 2026 Obon Toba Memorial Service Saturday, June 6, 2026, 11 am

Dear Members and Friends,

Obon is a time for families to gather. It is a time to reflect upon our journey in life and to appreciate the people who came before and those who are still with us. Obon gives us an opportunity to say "Thank you" to those who gave us life. We should never forget that we exist because of our parents and the long line of ancestors who came before them. By lighting a candle and offering incense, we honor and extend our gratitude and hospitality to visiting spirits.



Names are written on a light wooden plate called a **toba**. During the service, the names are recited, honoring and remembering loved ones. Provide the names on the form below. Rev. Hirosato Yoshida will officiate the service with assistance from Rev. Takenouchi of Hilo.

In Gassho, Evelyn Masaki 808-651-0728

Remember an earlier deadline purchasing a Toba for the service: May 31st.

Tobas may be dedicated to:

1. An individual, e.g. John Smith
2. Family, e.g. Jane & John Smith or Jane & John Smith Family
3. Family ancestors, e.g. John Smith Family Ancestors
4. An individual who passed since the last Obon, making this year a first Obon service called a Hatsu-Bon e.g. John Smith (H)

Please fill out the form on Page 5.

[2] 2024 The Chochin Project: Remember your loved ones forever

This project was started in 2008, to remember our loved ones. For a one-time donation of \$25.00, a **commemorative name tag** of your honoree will be attached to a chochin and strung around the temple during our Obon festival. Every year hereafter, a chochin with the name tag will adorn the temple, i.e. in perpetuity. The **chochin** (lantern) is an iconic symbol of Obon, lighting the way home for our ancestral spirits who return to join us in a celebration of dance and joy. Over 600 cochins are strung around the temple and its surrounding area. Please fill out the form on Page 5.

For more information: Gerald Hirata 808-346-4650



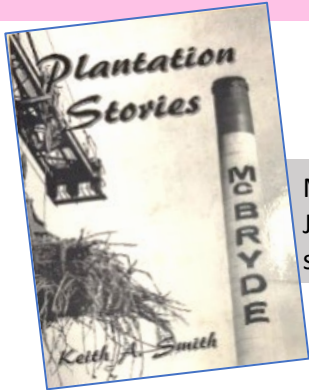
Soto Zen Bon Festival July 10-11, 2026

The largest most colorful Bon dance festival on the island!



Exhibits on
Plantation Life

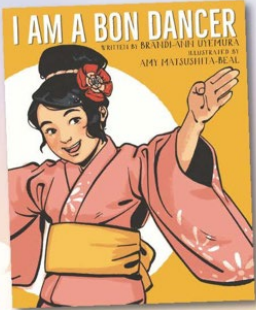
McBryde Sugar Company sugar company's workforce was largely Japanese, Portuguese, Filipino, Puerto Rican, Okinawan, and smaller numbers of Chinese, Korean, Spanish, and German.



“Celebrating Our Roots”

I AM A BON DANCER

New Picture Book Captures the Obon Festival in Hawai'i



The Soto Zen Temple will host Brandi the week of the Soto Zen Bon Festival of July 10-11.

During the week there will be book signing at the Talk Story Bookstore, a presentation at the Hanapēpē Public Library, another book signing in Lihū'e, and a chance to meet the author at the festival itself (both evenings).

Copies of the book will be distributed to the Talk Story Bookstore, the Kaua'i public libraries, and the elementary schools.

For more information contact Gerald Hirata at 808-346-4650.

MEET BRANDI UYEMURA Children's Book Author Descendent of a Wahiawa Camp Family



Brandi-Ann Uyemura is a Hawai'i gosei and writer from Oahu. The story is inspired by going to the Kaua'i Soto Zen Temple in Hanapēpē for Obon with her grandparents, Wakamatsu and Natsue Iwamoto. They lived in a McBryde Sugar Company village, Wahiawa Camp 3.



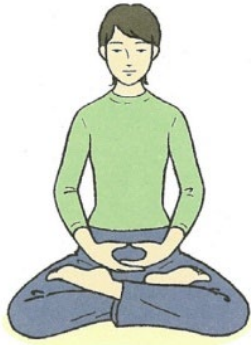
 **We are the Original Home of the Flying Saucers!** 



Our short intermission program will spotlight Japanese and Filipino cultures. Two different dances with umbrellas.



ZAZEN



Join us on Sundays
9 am

Our Sunday
Zazen meditation
group continues
to grow. Come sit
with us!



Charity Walk May 2, 2026
Over \$4,000 raised so far!

GENEROSITY: Giving to the Temple

As members of the Soto Zen (or Buddhist) community, we aspire to emulate the Six Perfections—the first of which is giving. Our Kauai Soto Zen Temple was built and has been sustained by the generosity of individuals and families giving their time, talent, and treasure. Annual membership gifts and special donations support the essential operations of the temple. With all of us giving what we can, we will maintain our rich history and ensure our future.



Giving
THAT
Grows

THE GIFT OF GIVING

Soto Zen in the process of establishing an Endowment Fund to receive your gifts and donations as part of a Last Will and Testament or Living Trust. For more information, please contact Gerald Hirata. All inquiries will be confidential.



The County of Kauai Grant-in-Aid Program awarded us funds to serve the social needs of the west side families. The Grant period extends from Jan-Dec 2026.

The Kauai Soto Zen Temple is looking for volunteers, parents and professionals who have ideas & suggestions that can enrich the lives of Families on the Westside of Kauai. Movie nights, karaoke, music, song, dance, & game nights. Help us plan creative recreational activities & outlets for our children.

Family Discovery Nights

*Gerald Hirata,
Temple President*




Please contact us!
by phone, text, email, website

P.O. Box 537, 1-3500 Kaunualii Highway, Hanapepe, HI 96716
kauaisotozen@gmail.com • kauaisotozen.com • 808-346-4650

IKEBANA WORKSHOP

THE ART OF JAPANESE FLOWER ARRANGEMENT

Classes ongoing
Please call

KAUAI SOTO ZEN TEMPLE
Hanapepe



DONATION \$35

Includes supplies, flowers, gratuity

REGISTRATION INFORMATION:

Email: hula11233@gmail.com Phone: 808-245-2841

Leave message with name and phone number

Class size limited to 15 students

Instructor: Rie Ombrello
Ikebana Grand Master of Misho Ryu School



Kauai Soto Zen Temple
PO Box 537
1-3500 Kaunualii Highway, Hanapepe, HI 96716



