



# **SOTO MISSION OF HAWAII**

## **BETSUIN NEWSLETTER**

**July 2021**

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# Bon O-Toba Online Viral Service

As we approach the dates of Bon O-Toba Online Viral Service, we are preparing for the service to go online viral on the four days, July 1, 3, 4, and 6. If you have not signed up, please do so as soon as possible.



To view your Bon O-Toba service, you can visit our homepage at [www.sotomission.org](http://www.sotomission.org). Click on

the top where it says Bon Service. You will be directed to the site with the information to double check your requested date and to view the video and hear the Bishop read the O-Toba placed on the altar. If you are having trouble finding the page, please feel free to call us or email us and we can help you with accessing the page.

## Reminder: Sign up for Bon Service

This is a friendly reminder that if you have not yet signed up for your families Bon Service, you have just a few days. Please call the temple to sign up.

### BON O-TOBA SCHEDULE

Thursday, July 1 at 6:00 pm

Saturday, July 3 at 9:30 am

Sunday, July 4 at 9:30 am (Closed)

Tuesday, July 6 at 6:00 pm



## Chochin Order

We are still accepting Chochin orders. Chochin will be hung until middle of August so it is not too late to order a chochin in dedication for your loved ones. If you are interested please contact us.

## Bon Dance

As previously announced, this year, we will not be having our annual bon dance due to COVID-19 restrictions. However, Oahu Bon Dance Association is planning an online Bon Dance function to share with our members and the community. More information will be shared in the upcoming newsletter.

## Let's Learn about Soto-Shu:

### What is a Shakyo, Sutra Tracing

The Buddhist practice of Shakyo is a means of spreading the Buddha Way among people. It is also for praying for the fulfillment of one's greatest wish. But today, besides these overtly religious purposes, we can do shakyo in order to reflect on ourselves, or to attain mental well-being by mindfully tracing the sacred scriptures. It does not matter if one has faith in Buddhism or not, or if one's writing is good or not.

When we look back at the history of shakyo, we first find this passage in the Nihonshoki; "...gathering a group of transcribers, the Buddhist Tripitaka was transcribed at Kawaharaji temple<sup>1</sup> for the first time..." Later at the time of Emperor Shomu (701~756), specialists in sutra transcription were appointed and they transcribed the sutras to store or to distribute to Kokubunji temple<sup>2</sup> in various locations. Then after around the Heian Period (794~1192) people started privately doing shakyo as a Buddhist practice, or as a prayer/wish for healing and consoling the souls of their ancestors. Thus, shakyo has a long history.

Shakyo has been wonderful nourishment for many people to bring about peace of mind in their spiritual lives. It is so because when we do shakyo with harmonized body and mind, we are immediately in tune with Buddha's teaching. Shakyo has been a great spiritual support for way-seekers of all time. As people living in the present-day situation, we can cherish quiet and serene moments fostered by shakyo, and make this calligraphy as Zen to deeply look at the self an essential part of our everyday life.

The Heart Sutra is very short but it beautifully captures an outline of the Buddhadharma. Thus, we encourage beginners to start shakyo from this sutra.

<sup>1</sup> This temple was located in Nara prefecture but does not exist any more.

<sup>2</sup> These temples were built by Emperor Shomu to appease unstable state of affairs in a country.

## Preparation

Tool: Calligraphy pen

Template: Scripture or prototype for shakyo

Paper for shakyo: Special paper for shakyo or paper which does not cause ink to blur and has a good touch with a pen

Room: Clean room beforehand. If you use a room with a Buddhist altar, offer incense, flowers and candles

Dress: Wash hands, rinse mouth and make your clothing neat



## Manner of Performing Shakyo

1. Sit with a good posture, regulate the breath, and allow the mind to calm down.



2. Do gassho (put palms together) and recite the Four Universal Vows and then the Heart Sutra.



3. Quietly, pick up a pen and start tracing from the title.



4. While tracing, take your time and use caution not to make a mistake. In the case of making an error, put a dot (•) right above the error and write the correct letter in the right or left margin of the same line.

5. Your wish or prayerful words may be added. In this case write the words of your wish on the underlined part after the main text. For example; “For the sake of the repose of deceased ancestors ...”, “In gratitude to ...”, “I pray for...” If just practicing shakyo itself is the purpose, then it is alright to skip this.

6. Write down your name and date, then “Humbly traced” at the end.

7. When tracing is over, recite the “Fueko (the Universal Transference of Merit)” with gassho, which concludes shakyo.

8. The traced sutra should be respectfully enshrined and can be dedicated to a temple or a Zen center at a suitable time. When mailing, fold the sutra or put it into a tube and send it off carefully.

### Things to keep in mind

1. A sutra traced wholeheartedly is very precious. Remember to treat it with special care as though treating a Buddha statue.

2. When tracing, keep a relaxed and natural posture as much as possible, without tensing up shoulders. If using a chair, sit upright at the right spot, neither too far forward nor too far back, and without leaning against the backrest. Good posture will help bring good results.

If you would like to try it at home, you can download the template from here <https://bit.ly/3vfS00o>  
(Article from Soto-Shu Administrative Headquarter)

## Cultural Classes and Practices are Returning

With more people in the community beginning to vaccinate, some of the groups are returning to the temple for class and practice. Below are some of the groups that have returned. Some of them are still restricting new members



from joining but with the vaccination and regulations changing rapidly, the groups are also adapting to the situation. As of the beginning of June, these are the groups that are back.

Hanayagi Dance: Monday 4pm-7pm

Tomonokai Ukulele Class: 4th Wednesday 10am-11am

Tea Ceremony: Wednesday 4pm-7pm

Kyudo: Thursday 7pm-9pm (Not open to new members yet)

Shodo and Sumie: Saturday 2:30pm-5pm

If you are interested in returning please contact your teacher or if you would like to join, please contact the temple for any updated information.

## Temple Hour Change

July 4 Temple Closed at Noon in observance of Independence Day

## Upcoming Events

July 1, 6:00 PM	Bon O-Toba Service Day 1
July 3, 9:30 AM	Bon O-Toba Service Day 2
July 4, 9:30 AM	Bon O-Toba Service Day 3
July 6, 6:00 PM	Bon O-Toba Service Day 4

# Acknowledgment of Donations

Thank you to the following individuals and organizations for their generous donations in May.

## Buddha Day & Mother's Day Service Donations

Ellen Nishimura, Bernice Koike, Katherine Higuchi, Linda Unten, Hiromi Shimada, Arden & Mary Loomis, Gertrude Kihara, Karen Motosue.

## Memorial Service / Funeral / General Donations

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