



## Daifukuji Soto Mission

P.O. Box 55 Kealahou, HI 96750

808-322-3524 [www.daifukuji.org](http://www.daifukuji.org)

*Treasuring the Past,  
Embracing the Present*

*April, 2009*



## Hanamatsuri Buddha Day Service

*Sunday, April 12*

*9:30 a.m.*

Members and friends are cordially invited to our temple's Hanamatsuri Buddha Day service on **April 12**.

Siddharta Gautama, who became Shakyamuni Buddha upon enlightenment, was born on the 8th of April in beautiful Lumbini Garden in northern India (present-day Nepal) over 2,500 years ago.

We celebrate his birth by pouring sweet tea over a small statue of the baby Buddha, for it is said that sweet rain fell from the heavens at the time of his birth. By doing so, we also water the seeds of awakening within ourselves and within all sentient beings.

The Dharma message will be given by Daifukuji members **Bob Shozan Bowman and Coral Mack**, who will be

telling us about the Lumbini Project.

Lunch will be prepared by members of the **Daifukuji Zazenkai**. Lunch prep will begin at 8 a.m. on Saturday, April 11. Zazenkai members, please get in touch with Jan Bovard (322-2167) for further information.

Teen Sangha members, please help Avis and Brian decorate the hanamido (flower shrine) on Saturday, April 11 at 8:30 a.m.

Flowers are needed for the hanamido and the altars. Please bring flowers to the temple by Friday morning, April 10.

## UHSSWA Conference

The 44th Annual UHSSWA (United Hawaii Soto Shu Women's Association) conference is happening this month and there's excitement in the air. Fujinkai members have been making leis and bags, and preparing to welcome ministers, Fujinkai members, and guests from our sister Soto temples throughout the state. It all happens the weekend of April 25-26 at Daifukuji and the Sheraton Keauhou Bay Resort and Spa.



## Fujinkai Sushi Sale Mahalo

The Daifukuji Fujinkai extends a warm mahalo to the many members and supporters who helped make this year's sushi sale fundraiser a success. Special thanks go to Kellear Deguchi who chaired this event for the first time and did an outstanding job. The proceeds from this sale, a net profit of \$3,423, will be used to defray Fujinkai members' conference expenses. Thank you to all who supported this sale. We hope your sushi was delicious.



## Welcome, New Members

We warmly welcome the following new members to our sangha:

Captain James Harai

Mr. William Lundquist

## Nokotsudo Mahalo

Have you visited the Daifukuji columbarium lately? If so, you may have noticed the new name labels on the niche windows. Thank you to Elaine Fernandez and Ann Nakamoto for volunteering their time to this project.



## Congratulations!

Congratulations to Ayako and Lance Sasaki who were married at Daifukuji on February 28, 2009. Their ceremony was officiated by Rev. Jiko, with the assistance of Jill Teiho and guest sensei, the Reverend Nishiumi of Yokohama, Japan. Best wishes to Ayako and Lance!



## The Making of 2 Sand Mandalas

Once upon a time, there were five Tibetan monks who came from the Dzongkar Choede Monastery in South India. They came to the Paleaku Gardens Peace Sanctuary in Honaunau, Hawaii, to create two sand mandalas in five days. The monks cleared out the old mandalas, prepared the surface, laid out the designs for the new ones, and then started creating the new mandalas by laying down the colored sand one grain at a time through their grooved metal funnels.



Photographer Randy Magnus was there to capture the making of the sand mandalas. The result is a 11"x13" 80-page book which beautifully shows the making of these very spiritual works of art by five very dedicated Tibetan monks, spreading the love, peace, and happiness that they put into each piece during their creation. It's a beautiful book, full of color and insight and can be ordered by going to this website: <http://www.blurb.com/bookstore/detail/578238>

Randy Magnus has, over the years, filmed our Bon dances & taiko performances. He's also donated his DVDs to our temple library. Mahalo, Randy!



## Blessing Our High School Graduates

Each year at the end of May, we bless those high school graduates who are members of Daifukuji and temple groups and whose grandparents are members of Daifukuji. This year's baccalaureate ceremony and luncheon will be held on Sunday, May 24 at 9:30 am. So far, we have the names of the following graduates: Megan Miyata, Zadoc Watson, Michael Ide, and Alyssa Tokumura. Please call Rev. Jiko at 322-3524 with additional names & addresses. Invitations will be sent.

## **Dogen Kigen (1200-1253)**

***Founder of Soto Zen  
Buddhism***



Dr. Alfred Bloom  
Emeritus Professor  
University of Hawai'i

Zen master Dogen (1200-1253) was one of the most significant Japanese Buddhist teachers in the history of the Zen tradition. However, he is relatively little known outside the scholarly world and the denomination which he founded. Born to an aristocratic family, Dogen became an orphan at an early age, with a deep sense of impermanence. Growing up within the monastery on Mount Hiei, like Shinran and Nichiren, he became critical and dissatisfied with his spiritual life and the conditions in the monastery. Mount Hiei, by virtue of its history and location in the northeast mountains adjacent to the capital Kyoto, was often deeply involved politically in the court or the country. It guarded a spiritual danger point in ancient Japanese understanding. While Shinran had become concerned with his personal religious destiny and Nichiren with the fortunes of the nation, Dogen turned to Zen Buddhism in search of authentic Buddhism as his personal path. Shinran followed the Pure Land teaching of Honen, while Nichiren attempted to revive Tendai teaching and promote the supremacy of the Lotus Sutra as a means to resolve the spiritual and political crisis confronting the nation, following the Shokyu war (also

Jokyu) in 1221. At this time Emperor Go-Toba (1180-1230) and numerous nobles were sent into exile by Hojo Yoshitoki. The Emperor went to Oki island. Other Imperial personages were also exiled: Juntoku to Sado, and Tsuchimikado to Shikoku.

Despite all the political turmoil, Dogen set out on a journey to China in 1223 to seek authentic Dharma, motivated by his criticism of contemporary religion and encouragement from his teacher Myozen, a disciple of the prominent Zen teacher Eisai. Dogen travelled to China with Myozen who died there.

While in China, Dogen sought a suitable teacher. Along the way, the young monk encountered an aged Zen monk who exemplified for him the dedication and simplicity of Zen discipline. Through this monk he also learned the significance of daily life for religious practice. For the aged monk, kitchen work was also the practice of the Way.

Failing to find a teacher who satisfied him, Dogen was about to return to Japan, when he heard about master Ju Ching (1163-1268), head of the Tsao-tung (jpn. Soto) monastery on Mount T'ien-t'ung. Here Dogen achieved deep insight and enlightenment, as well as certification from his teacher Ju-ching which permitted him to establish Soto Zen Buddhism in Japan.

Initially on his return Dogen established a center in Kyoto. However, because of opposition from the authorities on Mount Hiei and competition of other Zen teachers, he moved to Fukui province and opened Eiheiji monastery where he

practiced pure Zen. Eihei-ji has remained a major center of the Soto Zen sect. Dogen resided at Eihei-ji until he passed away. While undergoing treatment for an illness in Kyoto, he died in 1253, the eighth month fifth day. He was attended by his successor Ejo (1198-1280).

At the start, Dogen welcomed laypeople and women to practice Zen, declaring that ordinary people, including women, could become enlightened. When he opened the monastery, however, he focused on rigorous discipline and a style of life for which lay people were unsuited. He later accepted only male practitioners

Dogen has gained high respect in modern times with his strict approach to Zen discipline and his philosophical depth. He gave direction on life in the monastery, while grappling deeply with the principles emerging from Zen experience in his major work: *Shobogenzo* (The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye). However, Dogen drew on the spirit and perspective of the Zen tradition, which traces back to Bodhidharma who is said to have introduced Zen to China. Bodhidharma's teaching is summarized in five basic principles which are the basis of all Zen practice:

A special transmission outside the scriptures;  
No dependence upon words and letters;  
Direct pointing to the human mind;  
Seeing into one's own nature and attaining Buddhahood.

Through the writings of Dr. D.T. Suzuki, however, modern Western students became largely familiar with the Chinese

Lin-chi (jpn. Rin-zai) tradition of Zen. This form of practice employed mind-bending and mind-breaking stories called Koan as a means to liberate practitioners from their human addiction to reason, analysis and words as the gateway to truth and reality. Zen shows how they may be obstructions to the deepest realization.

Dogen's Soto Zen teaching set aside concentration on the Koan, while urging their study and use as illustrations of Zen principles. Rather, dedication to the sole practice of sitting meditation (Zazen) was central for him. Dogen's approach to practice is given in the famous phrase: *Shikantaza*, which means to practice Zazen alone or "just sitting." In this form of practice one just sits, permitting the flow of thoughts to remain, with thoughts coming and going as they will.

For Dogen, practice and enlightenment are identified. Sitting (as all life activities such as working in the kitchen) is itself Enlightenment. Nothing is outside the context of the Buddha's Enlightenment or Buddha-nature.

Dogen re-interpreted the famous Mahayana phrase that "all beings have Buddha-nature" to read "all beings are Buddha-nature." The significance of the change in reading is enormous. Buddha-nature is not an eternal element in things; but things are, as they exist in their concreteness, Buddha-nature. Sitting in meditation is the activity of the Buddha. It means we do not seek a reality apart, behind or within things, and in meditation practice we do not seek to become Buddha, but are the Buddha in action. Such a perspective gives new meaning to our awareness of

the world and people and to the basis for practice.

The reality of Enlightenment/Buddha-nature is present in our pre-reflective consciousness, before we apply concepts to our experience. This dimension embraces both the lay as well as the monk. In that sense they are equal. Through “just sitting” “without thinking,” letting thought flow, not suppressing it, or reflecting on it, we eventually break through our bondage to reflective thought, though we do not abolish it.

Reflective thought is based on subject-object relations and concepts. In the process of meditation we go beyond reflective thought, becoming aware of its nature. In this process, we become aware of our fundamental, true nature which transforms our lives. This transformation involves not being attached to the concepts we engage. It does not mean to have no concepts, but to see through them as something which overlays true reality. It opens one to spiritual freedom and creativity by liberating the person from the narrowness that can attend our grasping concepts, particularly those concepts or beliefs that oppose other concepts and beliefs. We can have beliefs but without dogmatism or exclusivism. All our discriminations are delusory and obstruct the Enlightenment that embraces life.

*(To be continued in the May newsletter)*



***One of my favorite poems by Dogen Zenji goes:***

***In the spring, cherry blossoms,  
in the summer, the cuckoo,  
in autumn, the moon,  
and in winter, the snow, clear, cold.  
(trans. by Edward Seidensticker)***

***Here at Daifukuji, the cherry blossoms  
in the front yard are scattering in the  
wind, while, behind the temple, a  
persimmon tree stands, its leaves  
yellow and orange.***

***The sakura tree is living its life; the  
persimmon tree is living its life. No  
one tells them what season it is or  
what clock to follow.***

***So, too, should we honor the life of  
each living thing and have faith in its  
natural unfolding.***

***In gassho,  
Rev. Jiko***

### **Coming Up In May...**

- May 10 Family Sangha Mother's Day Service
  - May 24 Memorial Day Service & Baccalaureate
  - May 7, 14, 21, 28 Evening Dharma Study and Zazen
- (There will be no Thursday evening Dharma study or zazen in April.)

# Sangha Photo Gallery



Aloha from the Family Sangha!



Sushi Wrappers Mitsue, Eleanor, & Sets



33 Kannon Set Up Volunteers



Rowena, Mayo, & Miyeko



Project Dana March Birthdays

