



TEACHINGS OF SHINGON BUDDHISM

By Reverend Myokyo Shigemitsu-Coy

On February 19, 2025, Sokanbu Bishop Yuju Matsumoto from the Los Angeles Beikoku Betsuin arrived in Sacramento in the afternoon after he visited Seattle Koyasan Temple and Jingoji Temple. Liz Yokoyama, President of the Koyasan Temple Cabinet, took the Bishop on a scenic sight tour around Sacramento. We drove around downtown Sacramento and old town Sacramento.

Several Cabinet members and members of the Temple invited the Bishop to dinner at the Riverside Club; and Gary Matsumoto of the Karate generously paid for the dinner for everyone who attended. Thank you, Gary!



On the following day we had a potluck lunch at the Temple in honor of the Bishop. Bishop Matsumoto conducted a short service following the lunch; and we discussed future plans and exchanged opinions and questions about our Temple. Bishop Matsumoto was very pleased that our Cabinet, Temple members, Karate and Taiko groups all help and volunteer helping with the property maintenance and management; support the services and rituals (ie: Taiko drumming); fundraising and other duties. He also indicated that he was planning on future meetings with other Temples to meet to discuss and exchange ideas and learn from each other for the benefit of all Temples in the future.

SANGHA SPOTLIGHT

By Margie Sunahara

Kaori Sakauye has many brilliant facets like a diamond. She's a caring and loving wife and mother, an incredible Taiko instructor, active in the community and makes time for athletic activities.

Kaori was born and raised in Saitama, Japan which is located near Tokyo. She attended a childhood temple for funerals and memorial services when she was young, but didn't know it was also a *Shingon* Temple. When her father became very ill in 2008, Reverend Fukuda gave her a booklet containing the Heart Sutra to read every day. When her father passed, she learned that her whole family in Japan follows *Shingon* Buddhism and she felt that it wasn't just a coincidence that she teaches taiko at the Koyasan Temple. She travels to





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Japan twice a year to visit her 92-year old mother and older brother. She also video chats often. Other relatives include a niece in Hong Kong and a niece in England.

Did you know Kaori and Dave got married in the Koyasan Temple officiated by Reverend Asahi in 2002? Dave and their son, David, have been involved in Karate for many years and support the Temple's fundraisers. David currently attends CSU, Sacramento and you may remember David's Boy's Scout Eagle Scout project of painting the interior of the Social Hall, Hallways, and bathrooms. A great improvement to our facilities!



Taiko led Kaori to Koyasan. She was part of the Sacramento Taiko Dan when her instructor, Tiffany, asked if she would assist her teaching at Koyasan. Tiffany stated if she wanted to be a great instructor she should go to Japan and learn from a professional Taiko instructor. So off she went to Japan for two years to study and then returned. With her leadership, the Taiko group performs an average of 40 performances per year. Wow! The exposure has been great as the number of performances grow each year. She has recruited Greg Wada to assist her in classes. She also teaches at the Hart Senior Center on J Street once per week.

Her love for taiko also led Dave and her to the Drum Circle at a Dignity Health memory care facility twice a month. Some residents cover their ears when they see her coming. Class ends with drumming to John Denver's "*Country Road*" and the American favorite, "*Take Me Out to the Ballgame*." What an hour of enjoyment for the residents!

An activity that brings her joy is volunteering in the Asian Community Center Senior Services Friendly Visitor/In-Home Respite Program. She spends two hours, twice a week with different families to provide respite for the caretaker and an opportunity for the resident to visit and share with Kaori.

Kaori loves the outdoors: standup paddle boarding at Lake Natoma and Lake Tahoe and in Japan; has completed 10 full marathons and 70 half marathons (wow, many hours of training); and enjoys walking or slow jogging around her neighborhood!





BUT her real passion is Hello Kitty! While in Japan, she was in heaven when visiting the Hello Kitty 50th Anniversary exhibit. Look for her Hello Kitty and friends when you see her. Hint: purse or necklace!

Kaori is surely one of Buddha's shining jewels!

“Embracing ‘Wasshoi, Wasshoi!’ on My Study Abroad: Developing Deeper Connections to Taiko”

by Madeline Do, Koyasan Spirit of Children Taiko

When people go to a foreign country, whether for a two-week vacation, school, or career, I think they can all relate to the fact that it's overwhelming. Even the airport itself, or any airport, for that matter, is overwhelming.

Today marks a little less than one year since I departed from Haneda Airport and returned home from my study abroad program in Japan. I was in my final year of undergraduate studies at UC Davis and decided to spend my fall semester abroad—and, of course, play taiko! After graduating in June, this article is a reflection of my taiko experiences there and an homage to the relationships cultivated with new and old friends and mentors.

To discuss how I experienced taiko in Japan, I need to start with the groups that I played with in the United States. I could only have fully enjoyed and appreciated playing taiko in Japan with the connections and camaraderie that developed out of my time with Bakuatsu Taiko Dan, my collegiate taiko group, and later, Koyasan Spirit of Children Taiko. These connections that I made playing taiko in Davis and Sacramento stayed with me, carrying forward as both new and old friendships that would shape my experience abroad.



Part I: Kodo Earth Celebration 2023, Sado Island, Niigata

I mentioned the overwhelmingness of airports. I don't think that you can ever be just "whelmed". Airports are overwhelming. What can negate that, you ask? By having someone direct you to exactly where you need to go!

That person for me was a fellow taiko player (also an extremely talented Tsugaru shamisen player) and one of my mentees from Bakuhatu Taiko Dan, Taichi Kitagawa, who had studied abroad at UC Davis from 2022-2023. For the first few days, I stayed with Taichi and his family in Saitama. We were joined by another Bakuhatu Taiko Dan member and my mentee, David Gee, and then we set off for Sado Island for the 2023 Earth Celebration.

Sado Island in Niigata Prefecture is home to several traditional folk arts and also home to the internationally acclaimed taiko ensemble Kodo. Since 1988, Kodo has hosted a three-day arts and culture festival called Earth Celebration. Each year, the festival features different guest artists who perform in collaboration with Kodo, including former members such as Chieko Kojima and international performing acts like the Voices of South Africa. The evening concerts were the main event of each festival day right next to Ogi Harbor and its market. The Harbor Market also features dozens of small shops and food stands that are open from morning to evening selling various goods.

Another aspect of the festival is the various workshops, such as taiko drumming and traditional dance workshops. David and I took a fun fundamentals course called "Exadon for All with Sammy" with Kodo's Masami Miyazaki (Sammy), where we went through different hits and improvisation and met taiko players and non-taiko players from around the world. Even without the workshops, there were many opportunities to play and watch even more taiko. Hachijō players from Hachijō-jima led a "100 Minutes of Hachijō" activity where they invited anyone to come up and improvise on the taiko, and Sado's local Ondeko (demon/deity drum dance) group led a few performances near the shrine.

One particularly moving experience was watching four selected taiko groups perform at the Big Little Taiko Fest, a set of fringe performances held for one day. One of the groups was Naruwan Taiko, a San Diego-based group led by Diana Wu. What added to that magical and heartwarming experience of watching them play taiko was connecting with taiko friends whom I had first met and played with in California. Taiko players from Stanford Taiko (Stanford University), Jishin Taiko (CSU Northridge), Kazan Taiko (University of Southern California), and Jiten Daiko (Buddhist Church of San Francisco) attended the festival, along with Rieko Ivaska and Sawako Ama, taiko artists based in Sacramento who perform as the group Kohaku.

It's difficult to describe the feelings I had while watching Naruwan with my friends. Touched. At home. A North American taiko player coming to Japan and not feeling homesick



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because the taiko they played felt so familiar. It made me reflect a lot about how taiko is a language that speaks to the souls of those playing. How taiko can build a community and how I can fit into that community.



Photo 1: California Collegiate Taiko Players after the Friday Harbor Concert. Special acknowledgements to: Taichi Kitagawa and David Gee (Bakuhatsu Taiko Dan); Shaun Riel, Kyle Dang, and Patrick Ranada (Jishin Taiko); Elena Alturi (Stanford Taiko); Helena Lu (Kazan Taiko); Hiromi Inaba (Jiten Daiko).



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Photo 2: Naruwan Taiko performing “Haruka” with Kodo and 3 other performing taiko groups.



Photos 3 & 4: Ondeko performance.



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Photo 5: Posing with Chieko Kojima and friends.



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Photo 6: San Photo Francisco Taiko Dojo Former Rising Star, Bakuhatu Taiko Dan alumnus, current Kodo performing member Taiyo Onoda.

Continue reading [Embracing 'Wasshoi, Wasshoi!' on My Study Abroad: Developing Deeper Connections to Taiko](#)



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DID YOU KNOW?

- It is said the flame at the Hiroshima Peace Park was lit by the fire Kobo Daishi lit at the temple on Mt. Misen in Hiroshima on his way back from China in the year 806.
- Kobo Daishi was born on July 27, 774. His original name was Kukai and was posthumously named Kobo Daishi. Kukai 's Shingon followers usually refer to him by his honorific title of Odaishi-sama ("The Grand Master") and the religious name of Henjo Kongo.
- The Temple's main deity is Kannon, the Goddess of Mercy in Japanese Buddhism. Her statue is situated prominently in the center of the altar. Kannon is known for her boundless compassion and commitment to relieving the suffering of all sentient beings.



FUJINKAI'S "AJI CORNER"

Contributed by Shirley Kodani & Carol Ito

SOBA SALAD RECIPE

Ingredients

3 bunches of soba, break in half before boiling
6-8 oz. seaweed salad
1/2 sweet onion cut thin, rinsed and drained well
6-8 oz. imitation crab, shredded
Small package of spinach, watercress or spring mix
1 tomato sliced or 6-10 cherry tomatoes cut in half

Directions

Cook soba al dente (3-4 min.) and drain well. Place spinach or other greens on large shallow platter or in a large bowl. Top with drained soba, imitation crab, onions, seaweed salad, and tomatoes. Chill.

Dressing

1/3 cup sugar
1/2 tsp. black pepper
2 tsp. salt
1/3 cup rice vinegar
1/4 cup salad oil
1 Tbsp. sesame oil
Dash of soy sauce
3 tsp. lemon juice

Directions

Mix well until sugar is dissolved. Pour dressing over salad just before serving.



This is a recipe shared by Shirley Kodani, a member of our San Jose Daishiko. After my first bite of Shirley's salad, I couldn't stop eating it. It was so good! So, of course, I had to get her recipe. Growing up, I remember my mother making hot soba noodle soup in winter and cold zaru soba in summer, but this was my first experience eating a salad made with soba noodles. From this experience, my curiosity awakened, and I wanted to know more. So, I went to the internet and after doing a bit of research I've come to appreciate the benefits of eating soba. Soba is made from buckwheat, a gluten-free, grain-like seed and a nutritious source of protein. It contains 12 amino acids and is a rich source of flavonoids, which strengthens blood vessels and helps reduce inflammation. It contains fiber, antioxidants, and is rich in minerals which helps



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lower blood pressure, improves cholesterol levels, helps balance blood sugar, and promotes gut health and digestion.

Although soba noodles can be made solely from buckwheat flour, it is commonly made commercially with some refined wheat flour added to its mixture. Wheat flour contains gluten which makes the noodles more durable and less expensive to produce. Besides soba noodles, buckwheat can be used to make a variety of dishes. Try it in pancakes, cookies, breads, pasta, stir-fry, porridge, soups, salads, stews and much more. Be creative and make your own buckwheat recipe which we would love to feature in our newsletter!



BUDDHA'S WORDS

Live in Joy

Live in Joy, In love,
Even among those who hate.
Live in joy. In health,
Even among the afflicted
Live in joy. In peace,
Even among the troubled.
Look within, Be still.
Free from fear and attachment,
Know the sweet joy of living in the way.

There is no fire like greed.
No Crime like hatred.
No sorrow like separation.
No sickness like hunger of heart.
And no joy like the joy of freedom.
Health, contentment and trust
Are your greatest possessions.
And freedom your greatest joy.
Look within. Be still.
Free from fear and attachment.
Know the sweet joy of living in the way.

From the Dhammapada. Words of the Buddha



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ANNOUNCEMENTS

- If you haven't done so already, it's time to renew your Koyasan Temple Membership. We look forward to your renewal or new membership. Membership Forms can be found on our website.
- We're always looking for new and interesting articles for our Newsletter. Should you wish to contribute your article(s) to future Newsletters, please contact the Temple.
- A huge thanks to all the volunteers that have helped in our fundraising efforts. We appreciate each and every one of you for your service. Arigato!

Upcoming Services (In-house & Zoom at 1:30 p.m. unless posted otherwise)

April 27 – *Shomieku* Commemoration Service (1:30 p.m.)

May 18 – Monthly *Daishiku* Service (1:30 p.m.)

May 25 – Special Blessing Service with Goma Ritual “car blessing” (in person service 1:30 p.m.)

May 26 – Memorial Day Service at Buddhist Church of Sacramento (9:00 a.m.)

June 8 – Aoba Matsuri Service (1:30 p.m.)

For more information about the Northern California Koyasan Temple, please visit our website at www.nckoyasan.org



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Mark Your Calendars!



March 29 – Introduction to Sutra Tracing Class (Session1 - 1:30 p.m.)

April 12 – Temple Workshop – Details to be announced - (1:00 p.m.)

April 26 – Hands on Healing Class (1:00 p.m.)

April 26 – Meditation Class (2:00 p.m.)

April 27 – *Hanamido* Decorating prior to the service. (9:00 a.m.)

May 10 – Introduction to Sutra Tracing Class (Session 2 - 1:00 p.m.)

May 24 – Hands on Healing Class (1:00 p.m.)

May 24 - Meditation Class (2:00 p.m.)

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