



HAMAKUA JODO MISSION OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2024



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"Honoring Tradition, Embracing Community"

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!



As we celebrate this season of gratitude, we want to take a moment to express our appreciation to each and every one of you for your contributions and support over the past year.

Whether you are a member, a friend, or a dedicated volunteer, your efforts have been integral to the growth and success of our temple.

We are also reminded of the deep connection we share with those who came before us - the generations of ancestors whose sacrifices and dedication helped pave the way for the life we know today and made HJM a reality.

On this Thanksgiving, we are deeply grateful for the warmth, kindness, and dedication you bring to our temple family. We also honor our ancestors, whose physical presence may no longer be with us, but whose memory and spirit continue to guide and inspire us.

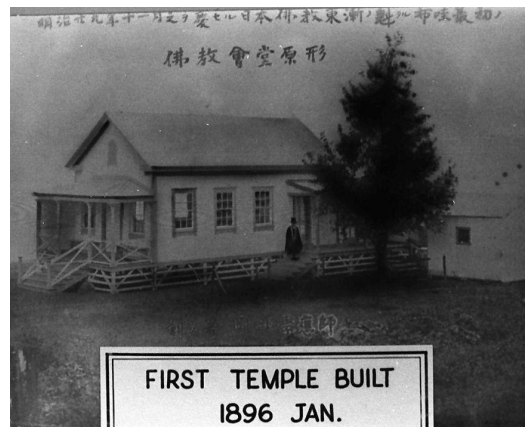
May your hearts be filled with peace, joy, and gratitude, as we look forward to another year of spiritual growth and strengthening bonds within the community!

HAMAKUA BUKKYO KAIDO ESTABLISHED IN 1896

The month of November holds a special place in the history of our temple, as it marks a significant milestone for the Japanese community in Hawaii.

On November 26, 1896, the Hamakua Bukkyo Kaido, Hawaii's first sanctioned Buddhist temple, held its grand opening. This momentous occasion included the installation of the Amida Buddha ceremony, officiated by Rev. Gakuo Okabe.

The members who served on the Board of Directors during the construction of the original temple were Masakazu Hino, Yoshi Fujitani, Shigejuro Tagawa, and Taro Suwa.



Some of you might be wondering, "Wasn't HJM the first Buddhist temple built in Hawaii and who is the Hamakua Bukkyo Kaido?" Here's a fun fact: HJM was originally called the Hamakua Bukkyo Kaido when it was first established. It wasn't until 1951 that they renamed it to Hamakua Jodo Mission.

OJUYA



Ojuya is traditionally observed in October or November when Buddhists gather to chant the *nembutsu* (also spelled *nenbutsu*) repeatedly, invoking Amida Buddha's name with gratitude over ten days and nights.

The length of the observance has been shortened in modern times, with most temples in Hawaii now marking *Ojuya* with a single-day service.

Join Buddhists around the world for the 18th Zoom Nenbutsu on *Saturday, November 30, 2024 at 1pm HST*, where participants will gather for an hour of chanting *Namu Amida Butsu* together.

You can use the following Zoom login information to participate:

Meeting ID: 781 552 5934

Passcode : jodo

OTHER NOTEWORTHY HAPPENINGS

- HJM's *keiro* members (members who are 80 years old or older) received a certificate of appreciation from the Hawaii Council of Jodo Missions, as part of the Jodo Shu's 850th Anniversary and the 130th Anniversary of Jodo Shu in Hawaii celebration last month.

The certificates were mailed to HJM and we will be forwarding them to our *keiro* members via USPS.

- HJM Kyodan President Sandy Takahashi attended an informative cemetery preservation webinar on October 30, 2024 hosted by the American Association for State and Local History.

Sandy gained valuable insights into the challenges faced by religious organizations across the United States in maintaining their cemeteries, and learned about the strategies and professional efforts being used to preserve these sacred sites.

This knowledge has provided a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in cemetery upkeep and the innovative solutions being employed to ensure their continued care and respect.

- We extend our heartfelt condolences to the Takamine Family on the recent passing of Kimiko Takamine, a long time donor and friend of our temple. *Namu Amida Butsu*.
- The HJM Executive Team has been patiently awaiting the Hawaii Council of Jodo Missions (HCJM) to answer to their concerns and questions about the HCJM budget and assessment dues invoiced to HJM.

The Executive Team sent their original inquiry in June, and followed up with a letter to Leonard Chow, HCJM's President, in September.

- If you visited recently and wondered why the lemon tree is toppled over, there's an explanation for it. The tree fell over and is still connected by its roots.

We are waiting for the rest of the fruit to ripen on the tree before we prune it way back, and make a support to hold the tree up in an effort to save it.

- Happy Birthday to HJM *keiro* member Sadako Kato! She turned 94 years young on November 4th!

2025 MEMBERSHIP DUES

We are accepting membership dues for 2025 now through March 31, 2025. Dues remain at \$60 for the upcoming year.

If you missed the deadline to pay your 2024 membership dues, you can still reinstate your membership to an active status by remitting your 2024 dues along with any outstanding dues you may owe for previous years.

Dues are to be sent in the form of a check or money order made payable to Hamakua Jodo Mission to:

**Hamakua Jodo Mission
Attn: Membership
P.O. Box 7
Honokaa, HI 96727**

We also welcome individuals who are interested in becoming members of HJM. For more information on how to join, or if you are unsure of your membership status, feel free to contact us at (808) 775-0965 or via email at: contact@hamakuajodominion.org

SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE COMING SOON!



We are excited to announce that we have a new volunteer helping us with HJM's online presence!

Sam Lee Joon, a student who visited us this past August as part of the Stanford University and Foothill College Hawaii Indigenous Archaeology Field School program, will be helping us set up and manage our social media accounts.

Sam expressed interest in volunteering with us after hearing about our need for tech-savvy support - exactly the kind of expertise that

young adults like him are often well-equipped to provide.

Recognizing the opportunity to help us enhance our digital engagement, he enthusiastically offered his skills. We're thrilled to have him on board and are excited to see how his fresh ideas and technical abilities will help us expand our digital reach and spread our mission around the world. Welcome aboard, Sam! We look forward to working with you!

HILO SENIOR CITIZENS GROUP STOPS BY FOR A TOUR



On November 19, 2024, we had the pleasure of welcoming twenty-nine visitors from the Seniors Lectures Class at the Kamana Senior Citizens Center for a memorable tour of our temple, dining hall, and cemetery.

HJM was one of several scheduled stops on their special field trip to Honokaa organized by Carol Lafond. These fabulous seniors learned about the history of HJM and the legacy of Katsu Goto. They also gained insight about the significance of the temple and its architecture, our traditions, and the vision we hold for the future.

HJM Executive Team member Nicole Garcia took time off from her day job to assist Sandy and HJM member Pickens Kehrer in hosting the large, enthusiastic group. We received some helpful hints, referrals, kind donations, and suggestions from the seniors, too.

It was truly a heartwarming experience to share our history with them, and we are grateful to Carol for making this trip possible!

THE WEEDS OF HJM PART II

By: Pickens Kehrer, Volunteer & Newsletter Editor



Back in July, I wrote an article highlighting the ongoing challenges I face while volunteering for the day-to-day upkeep of the property, with a particular focus on cemetery maintenance. The most pressing issue is keeping the cemetery in good condition, especially as we work to maintain a non-toxic environment, free from pesticides.

One of the most time-consuming tasks is mowing around the headstones and clearing debris from fallen or broken headstones. Due to the narrow spacing between rows, steep slopes, and gullies, using a riding mower is nearly impossible in the cemetery.

Despite our ongoing efforts to recruit more volunteers, we continue to face a shortage of able-bodied individuals who can assist regularly. Many who would like to help are either elderly, physically unable, or live too far away to volunteer.

As a volunteer, it has become clear to me that this task is simply too much for one person - particularly for someone who is not retired - to handle. Currently, I dedicate 25-30 hours a week to maintaining the property, with most of the time dedicated to the cemetery alone.

I recently discussed this dilemma with a supporter of HJM, who is committed to the temple's longevity. I explained that if we cannot recruit enough help, HJM may need to hire an external vendor to manage the cemetery mowing and its surrounding areas. I also shared my thoughts on using robotic mowers as a potential solution.

Robotic mowers, which have significantly advanced in recent years, could provide an efficient and cost-effective alternative. These mowers now use GPS and radar technology to navigate, eliminating the need for a perimeter wire. They are battery-powered, recharging themselves through solar panels or standard 110V outlets, and many models include weather sensors to prevent mowing in rain.

After conducting several months of research, I believe robotic mowers could help HJM save both time and labor costs. These mowers can range from affordable models around \$500 to high-end machines costing up to \$4,000.

After recently discussing the idea with the HJM supporter, he was so enthusiastic that he made a \$500 donation toward the purchase of a good, robotic mower.

In the meantime, I have narrowed my search to a few models, and am continuing to research customer reviews and consult with suppliers in Hawaii to address any logistical challenges, such as shipping.

If you believe in the value of this technology and its potential to help HJM, I encourage you to consider making a small donation towards the purchase of a robotic mower.

Your support, whether financial or through feedback, will be instrumental in helping us find a sustainable, affordable solution for cemetery maintenance. Thank you for your time and consideration!

DID YOU KNOW?

Last month we featured the *Muen no haka* headstone and its significance in our cemetery, but did you know that just to the left of this headstone lies the grave of an unknown Japanese soldier?

According to stories that have been passed down through generations, there is a mysterious story tied to this particular grave. It is said that the only remains of this soldier - a head - were buried beside the *Muen no Haka* headstone, though the identity and the

circumstances surrounding this burial remain unclear.

If you were told about it by an elder or have any historical documentation or photographs, we would greatly appreciate hearing from you!

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED



This month, we received a question relating to our temple's stairs.

Question: "Was there a ramp of sorts put in for people using walkers and similar apparatus because the temple itself has so many steps to reach the top?" - E.B.

At present, HJM does not have a ramp, although the need for one has been discussed for many years, especially as some of our members find it more difficult to navigate the stairs as they age.

We are committed to installing a ramp in the future to make the temple more accessible, but there are several factors that must be carefully considered.

Currently, the Executive Team is prioritizing critical structural repairs due to years of deferred maintenance. These repairs are necessary for the safety and integrity of the building and take precedence over other projects.

Given the significant cost of such work, HJM is addressing these repairs as funds permit, and we have been actively fundraising to support these efforts - something that has not been prioritized by previous leadership.

A few years ago, we consulted with historic preservation experts, who advised us that if we pursue placement on the National Register of Historic Places in the future, any additions such as a ramp or wheelchair lift would need to be carefully designed to maintain the historical integrity of the building.

In the meantime, members who have difficulty with the stairs are encouraged to use the less steep stairs at the cottage and crossing the bridge walkway to access the temple.

We ask for your continued understanding and patience as we work toward securing the necessary funding to undertake this important project.

SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES



Ace Hardware Hawaii is a division of House Mart, a family-owned operating chain of independent craft and hardware stores in our State since 1951.

Owned by three Kamitaki siblings and a cousin, this third-generation family is known for their philanthropic efforts and dedication to supporting the local community. They have consistently demonstrated their commitment to supporting local organizations, including our temple. When we humbly reached out to them for our donation campaigns, they generously donated gift cards to support our efforts.

Many of us in the Honokaa area are regular customers of their Kamuela location, which has recently undergone renovations to better serve our community.

In addition to Kamuela, Ace Hardware Hawaii operates stores in Hilo, Waikoloa, and Kona, making it a convenient resource for residents across the Big Island. A fun fact: Housemart is

responsible for bringing us our guilty shopping pleasure, Daiso Hawaii!

FLASHBACK PHOTO OF THE MONTH

UPCOMING EVENTS & SERVICES SCHEDULE

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>TIME</u>
11/24/24	Beautification Work Day	8:00am - 10:30am
12/08/24	HJM Executive Team Meeting*	10:00am

These are events and services that have been confirmed by HJM's Executive Team. If you have made arrangements for a service or event and do not see it listed, please leave a message at (808) 775-0965 or send an email to: hamakuajodoexecteam@gmail.com

For the booking of future events, services, and facilities, please feel free to reach out to the Executive Team at the contact info listed above.

*Executive Team meetings are not membership meetings, but are meetings for the Officers and Directors of Hamakua Jodo Mission.

This calendar is being provided to avoid visitors from stopping by during private functions/services, and to prevent double bookings.



This month's flashback photo was taken outside the Hilo Meishoin in 2001, capturing a moment with beloved HJM members Tomiko Fujitani, Tomoe "Violet" Oketani, Joyce Tami Yuki, and Fumie "Margie" Doi, who were active participants in our temple's *goeika* club.

Photographed with them is Rev. Kobun Yachi, the sixth minister of the Hilo Meishoin. The group spent the day with other Jodo Shu *goeika* clubs from across the Big Island, practicing the singing of short Buddhist poems, accompanied by the ringing of hand bells.

How many of you remember attending services at HJM and watching the *goeika* club perform in the alcove on the Hilo side of the main altar? If so, we would love to hear your memories and share them with our readership!



DECEMBER 2024 NENKI MEMORIAL SERVICES

<u>DATE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>YEAR</u>
12/08	Roland Doi	7th

Please contact the HJM Executive Team at hamakuajodoexecteam@gmail.com or call (808) 775-0965 if you would like to schedule a memorial service.

IN SEARCH OF VOLUNTEERS

At HJM, we believe in the power of community and service. We are always looking for dedicated individuals to help with a variety of projects around the temple. Whether it's lending a hand with physical tasks, offering

your computer skills, organizing events, consulting on different projects, or simply sharing your time and energy, we have something for you!

While there is no financial compensation, the rewards are immeasurable. The satisfaction and sense of accomplishment you'll feel after helping others and giving back to this cherished landmark are priceless.

For decades, our kupuna, many in their 80s and 90s, shouldered the responsibility of maintaining the temple. They've done it all with love and devotion, but now it's time for them to enjoy a well-deserved break.

We need **YOU** to step up to the plate. Let's show our elders that they are not alone and that our community is ready, willing, and able to pitch in. Together, we can ensure Hamakua Jodo Mission remains a beautiful, thriving temple for generations to come!

If you are interested in volunteering, please reach out to us at (808) 775-0965 or by emailing: contact@hamakuajodomission.org

IN APPRECIATION



We want to acknowledge those who generously gifted us with monetary donations:

Sidney Doi, Faith Ciriako-Kalehua, Mr. & Mrs. George Higaki, Mr. & Mrs. Earl Takahashi, Mr. & Mrs. Warren Osako, Mr. & Mrs. Tilden Osako, Mr. & Mrs. Elmer Lau, Gail Yamasaka & Family, and Mr. & Mrs. David Kohara.

Membership dues received:

Arlene Pullen

A heartfelt thank you goes out to the Nadao Honda Family for their generous donation of several used tractor parts to our temple. These valuable contributions will enable us to clear the acre of land that was included in our amended lease, removing overgrowth and transforming the area into a functional space.

With these improvements, we will be able to create additional parking for Obon and expand our flower garden, further enhancing the beauty and accessibility of our grounds. We deeply appreciate their support and commitment to helping us advance our goals!

CONTRIBUTIONS & SUBMISSIONS

If you would like to submit an article or photo, feel free to send them to us! We also take suggestions and feedback on ways we can improve our newsletter. Letters to the Editor are welcomed, too.

Please submit your materials in Word, PDF, JPEG, or PNG formats by the 15th of each month. Send your contributions to: contact@hamakuajodomission.org

Mahalo for reading & your continued support!



Happy Thanksgiving!

*- The Hamakua Jodo Mission
Newsletter Committee*

"Only when we are brave enough to explore darkness will we discover the infinite power of our light." – Buddha

For those of you that have email addresses but receive our newsletters via USPS, please consider saving a tree and a stamp by receiving them electronically! Sign up by sending an email to: contact@hamakuajodomission.org

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Hamakua Jodo Mission

*The First Sanctioned Buddhist Temple Built in
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