



HAMAKUA JODO MISSION OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2024



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“Honoring Tradition, Embracing Community”

AUTUMN OHIGAN



September is a significant month for Buddhists around the world when they observe *Ohigan*.

Ohigan (“the other shore”) is observed twice a year that coincides with the Spring and Autumn equinoxes, symbolizing the spiritual journey from the shore of suffering to the shore of enlightenment.

It is a time for self-reflection and honoring our ancestors, aligning with the equinoxes when day and night are of equal length, symbolizing balance, peace, and harmony.

Please help us celebrate Ohigan by visiting the final resting place of your loved ones. *Namu Amida Butsu*.

TEMPLE STAIRS REPAIRS

We’re happy to report that the long-awaited replacement of the bottom two rows of the temple’s stairs has been successfully completed. This essential repair was initially slated for inclusion in the Historic Hawaii Foundation grant-funded projects. However, the

work was deferred when funds were redirected to address urgent siding repairs following the Kona Low storm in December 2022. The extensive wood rot found in the stairs and the two adjacent eight-sided columns were more severe than anticipated, underscoring the importance of timely maintenance.

The deterioration of the stairs did not occur overnight; it stemmed from the original construction, where the stairs were built directly on the dirt without a concrete foundation. It wasn’t until we cleared out decades of accumulated items stored underneath the stairs that the root of the problem became evident.

The lack of a proper foundation meant that rainwater would pool around the base of the lower stairs and columns every time it rained, leading to extensive wood rot.



Eight-sided column wood rot

By addressing issues proactively, we can ensure the structural integrity of the temple and mitigate safety risks for our members and visitors.

The deteriorated sections of the two, eight-sided columns have been replaced, and cosmetic painting of them are underway.

We want to thank carpenter Nate Adams for his craftsmanship and HJM member Pickens Kehrer for assisting him. Teamwork at its best!



Photo of stairs & column repairs while in progress

HJM EXECUTIVE TEAM MEETING WITH BISHOP KOSEN ISHIKAWA

On September 15th, the HJM Executive Team (also known as your Board of Directors) met with Bishop Kosen Ishikawa in-person for a long overdue meeting about long-standing concerns that have persisted at our temple.

The Executive Team questioned him on a wide range of concerns, from general inquiries about when we might be assigned a new resident minister to more pressing issues such as why serious concerns about financial, management, and leadership have remained unaddressed.

Many of the questions posed were challenging and not easy ones to ask, but asking them was essential to the future survival of our temple, and to restore transparency and accountability.

There were many questions that were left unanswered. Bishop Ishikawa has agreed to follow up on these questions, which includes following up with the Hawaii Council of Jodo Missions (HCJM) for answers he was unable to address.

Kyodan President Sandy Takahashi received a personal apology from Bishop Ishikawa for enduring years of undue scrutiny and criticism simply for raising questions and highlighting

critical issues. He agreed that significant achievements have been made through her efforts to preserve HJM and to make it a point of pride in the community.

During his visit, he was given a comprehensive tour of the property to illustrate HJM's pressing financial needs and the needs of other small temples, which require support from HCJM and/or Japan Headquarters.

The tour highlighted ongoing challenges at HJM, including necessary structural repairs, erosion mitigation to prevent gravesites from falling into a gulch within the next few years, and repairing the many headstones that are cracked and toppled over.

Bishop Ishikawa documented these issues with photographs, and we are hopeful that this experience has enhanced his understanding of our situation, goals, and the critical needs that must be addressed under his role as a Bishop.

We thank him for his time and hope it marks the beginning of open communication and a commitment to addressing our concerns seriously. He acknowledged the importance of the Executive Team's questions and the dangers of making statements about individuals and our temple without proper fact-finding, and expressed his regret for his ignorance.

We wish to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the six outstanding women serving on HJM's Executive Team. Their resolve in asking challenging questions, holding firm against wrongdoing, and upholding the legacy of our ancestors is commendable. Their dedication and advocacy are vital to our organization and do not go unnoticed.

A special mahalo goes out to Dr. Crystal Moon, a Director on the Executive Team, for her presence at the meeting. Her dedication was evident as she traveled from Las Vegas, Nevada, specifically to attend this critical discussion!

IN BLOOM

Flowers have long held a special place in religious institutions worldwide, symbolizing respect and honoring our departed loved ones.

From humble, cut flowers from gardens to elaborate floral arrangements, flowers serve as a poignant reminder of our connection to our ancestors.

Back in the day, many of us were fortunate to have easy access to flowers, often picked fresh from our kupuna's yards without any cost. However, as times have changed, many people do not have the time to plant and tend to flower gardens at home, making the ease of acquiring them much harder. Nowadays, purchasing flowers can be surprisingly expensive, especially from stores and florists.

To address this difficulty and bring a touch of natural beauty back to our grounds, we're excited to announce a new initiative at HJM: the creation of our very own flower garden. This garden will provide a sustainable source of flowers to adorn the cemetery and the interior of our temple.

Growing our own flowers is not just a cost-saving measure but also a way to reconnect with the tradition of using homegrown blooms. Tome Oda, Rev. Ekuan's beloved mother-in-law, was known for growing flowers on the property, providing beautiful blossoms for our sacred spaces. Re-establishing a flower garden in honor of her memory will continue her legacy and bring a personal and heartfelt touch to the flowers!

While it will take some time for the garden to reach its full potential with flowers blooming throughout the year, we are thrilled to share that we are already off to a promising start. Thank you to HJM member and volunteer Pickens Kehrer for spearheading this wonderful project and clearing the overgrowth!

In the meantime, if you have floral plants that you would like to donate to us, please let us know. Stay tuned for updates on our garden's progress!

OTHER NOTEWORTHY HAPPENINGS

- The Hawaii Council of Jodo Mission will be observing the 850th Anniversary of the Founding of Jodo Shu in Hawaii and the 130th anniversary of the arrival of the first Jodo Shu ministers in Hawaii, with a ceremony on October 20, 2024.

This event will be held at the Betsuin on Oahu and is open to all dues paying members. If you are interested in attending, please contact us for more information at: (808) 775-0965 or sending an email to: contact@hamakuajodominion.org

- Our temple had the honor of hosting Dr. Erika Hori, a distinguished scholar and professor at Sugiyama Jogakuen University in Nagoya, Japan, late last month.

Known for her extensive research on Katsu Goto, Dr. Hori visited us to pay her respects to Katsu Goto's gravesite and view our educational display about him.



She is currently writing an English version of her book, which will include HJM and our efforts to keep Katsu Goto's legacy alive. Thank you for stopping by, Erika and we hope you visit us again soon!

- A detailed report of our temple's accomplishments for the period of 2022 - 2024 was submitted to the Hawaii Jodo Mission's Layperson's Association and Hawaii Jodo Shu Rengo Fujinkai Committee. They held an informal

statewide Zoom meeting on September 22, 2024 in lieu of a convention.

- Our deepest sympathy goes out to the family of Daisy Ikeuchi, who passed away earlier this month. The Ikeuchi Family has always been very kind and generous to our temple over the years and we extend our thoughts and prayers to them. *Namu Amida Butsu.*

DID YOU KNOW?



The Honokaa Heritage Center is hosting the Hamakua Sugar Days Festival, an inaugural event commemorating the 30th anniversary of the closing of Hamakua Sugar Company, Inc.

The festival kicks off on October 5, 2024 with a special luncheon honoring former sugar plantation employees at the Honokaa Gym and will continue for a period of two weeks in Honokaa Town, ending on October 20th!

Some of the highlights of activities include: a festive parade, fun-filled fair, ethnic cultural nights, a movie premiere, and a fabulous golf tournament, to name a few! To learn more, please visit their official festival website at: www.hamakuasugardays.org

Don't miss out on the chance to purchase an exclusive heritage cookbook showcasing cherished recipes from Hamakua kamaaina, including those from past HJM members Tsuruye Hirayama, Haruno Takahashi, Betty Kawashima, and new member Earl Tanaka!

To pre-order your cookbook for just \$20, contact the Honokaa Heritage Center at (808) 437-1947.

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

This month's question is a question we have been asked a lot lately so the Executive Team asked Bishop Ishikawa for a response during their in-person meeting.

Question: "When are we getting a new minister?" - A. L.

Per Bishop Ishikawa, a young minister from Japan has been selected to serve the Jodo Shu community in Hawaii. Currently, he is in the process of obtaining his visa, which is expected to take approximately two years. Several administrative details, including salary, health insurance, vehicle expenses, and other financial considerations, will also need to be addressed.

In the meantime, the guidelines established in November 2023 remain in effect. For any service requiring a minister, the Executive Team is to contact Bishop Ishikawa with preferably at least 30 days notice. He will then assign a minister accordingly to officiate the service.

Given the absence of monthly services (*hoyo*) at HJM for over two years, the Executive Team reminded Bishop Ishikawa of their previous request back in November if it was possible to have our members join monthly services held at other Hawaii Jodo Shu temples that offer online broadcasts via Zoom.

Bishop Ishikawa agreed to email them the links to upcoming services. Information on virtual service attendance will be shared in an upcoming newsletter.

Additionally, Bishop Ishikawa has agreed to send a communique to our membership and the broader Jodo Shu community. This letter will reaffirm that HJM continues to hold religious services, despite the absence of a resident minister, and will outline the available options of

ministers when requesting services during this interim period.

SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESSES



If you're on the Big Island and craving some authentic Thai cuisine, Thai Nong Khai Express is a must-visit!

This popular food truck, led by chef Walailak Phangphuth, brings delicious Thai cuisine and generous portions to neighborhoods across the island.

Thai Nong Khai Express has become a favorite among locals and visitors alike, especially during events like our recent Obon, where their lines were long and attendees gave rave reviews. From classic Pad Thai and juicy chicken satay to rich green curry and savory chicken dumplings, every dish will transport your taste buds straight to Thailand.

You can find Thai Nong Khai Express at a few key spots around the island each week. They're at the Waimea Midweek Farmers Market every Wednesday, located at Pukulani Stables. On Fridays, head to the King's Shops Night Market in Waikoloa for a taste of their onolicious food!

Be sure to keep an eye out for their food truck at various locations around the island throughout the week and at special events, too!

For the latest updates on where to find Thai Nong Khai Express next, check out their Instagram page @thainongkhaiexpress or give them a call at (808) 542-4545.

UPCOMING EVENTS & SERVICES SCHEDULE

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>TIME</u>
10/20/24	Grounds Beautification Work Day	8:00am - 10:30am
10/26/24	Private Service	11:00am

*Monthly work day will be on the 3rd Sunday in October.

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.

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

FLASHBACK PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Photo © 2021 Sarah Anderson

This month's flashback photo was taken in 2021 when photographer Sarah Anderson held a photoshoot session of some of our Keiro members (those over 80 years young).

Masa Nishimori, Sueichi Kawashima, Nadao Honda (honorary member), and George Higaki

assembled at the temple and posed for many photos that morning.

The significance of this photoshoot meant different things for those who were involved. For the men, it provided an opportunity to gather, talk, and reminisce about the old days. The photoshoot was originally intended as part of a project at the Honokaa Heritage Center, aimed at highlighting the faces of Honokaa.

What emerged from this session is priceless. It captured a moment when the enduring, lifelong friendships of these remarkable men spoke volumes and were forever recorded in time. Thank you, Sarah!

Organizations looking to contribute their time and effort are also welcome to join us. Interested parties can reach out to us via email: contact@hamakuajodominion.org by leaving a voicemail message at (808) 775-0965.

TRACTOR ATTACHMENTS WANTED

If you or anyone knows of someone who would like to donate their used tractor attachments, specifically a box scraper and a mower deck, please contact us by sending an email to: contact@hamakuajodominion.org or by phone at (808) 775-0965.

OCTOBER 2024 NENKI MEMORIAL SERVICES

<u>DATE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>YEAR</u>
10/20	Kimie Umamoto	33rd
10/28	Midori Enanoria	25th

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 APPRECIATION

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

IN SEARCH OF VOLUNTEERS



We're seeking volunteers who aren't afraid to get their hands dirty and perform manual labor!

Some of the ongoing tasks we need help with are: washing windows, weed whacking, power washing, tree trimming, walkway maintenance, and basic cleaning around the property.

Dr. Erika Hori, Sonoko Kaya, Toyoko Saeki, Nadine Bondallian, Mr. & Mrs. Harlan Asano, Lynn Higashi, Luana Ogi, Mr. & Mrs. Steve Toma, Mila Burton, Tania Bondallian, Hoku Martins, Traeston Berdon, Lee McMillion, Yvette Deponte, Keith Higaki & Eric Page, Mayette Drake, Kazue Kimura, Jason Higaki, Thelma Ryusaki, Marie Honda, Angeles Valdez, Terence Kato, Earl Tanaka, Ken Fujiwara, Mr. & Mrs. Jason Imamura, Leslie Matsukawa, Lester Okunami, Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Ohta, Robin Hara, Daryl Phillips, Kim Labrador, Mr. & Mrs. Greg Jakob, Lani Matsumoto, Donna Mah, Margie Kaiser, Deborah Yoshiyama, Lacey Nakamoto, Alice Fujii, Lisa White, Berni Botelho, Deborah Chang, Debbie Aldrich, Linda (Kazu) Takamine, Tammy Takamine, May Fukui, Colleen

Matsuura, Pepe Hernandez, Diane Imada, Jerby Ito, Mr. & Mrs. Casey Takamine, Mr. & Mrs. Esteban Rabang, Jr., Sueichi Kawashima, Helen Matsui, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Ikoma, Mr. & Mrs. Jim Waddington, Thai Nong Khai Express, and TakoyaTea.

We also received monetary donations from people who wish to remain anonymous. We want to thank them for their contribution and support!



CONTRIBUTIONS & SUBMISSIONS

Are you interested in contributing to our next newsletter?

We welcome articles, photos, personal stories, questions, and suggestions for topics you'd like to see in our publication. This is a wonderful opportunity to connect with others and share your insights and memories about our historic temple!

We also encourage Letters to the Editor, too, so feel free to share your thoughts and feedback with us.

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

We have been receiving a lot of positive feedback about our newsletter that has been incredibly encouraging. It keeps us motivated to continue delivering a balanced mix of newsworthy items, whether they are positive, challenging, or difficult to address. It is our goal to keep you informed and engaged!

We will highlight some of the feedback in next month's edition!

2024 MEMBERSHIP DUES

The end of the year is a few months away and membership dues for 2025 will be coming up. 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 \$60 for the year. They 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

Mahalo for reading & your continued support!

*- The Hamakua Jodo Mission
Newsletter Committee*

*"Your mind is a garden.
Your thoughts are the seeds.
The harvest can either be flowers or weeds."
- William Wordsworth*

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@hamakuajodominion.org

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