



# HAMAKUA JODO MISSION OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER APRIL 2024



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*“Honoring Tradition, Embracing Community”*

## HANAMATSURI



April 8th is a significant date in the world of Buddhism. It marks the date when Buddha was born in Lumbini, a province in Nepal.

Buddhists around the world celebrate his birth by staging *Hanamatsuri* (flower festivals) and also holding a service during the month of April. A flower pavilion called *hana-mido* with a baby Buddha statue inside, is displayed within temples where worshippers are able to pour *amacha* (sweet tea) onto the statue's head.

This scene recreates the moment after Buddha he was born in a flower garden when he took seven steps and faced four directions. He stood with his left hand pointing towards the earth, and his right hand pointing towards the sky.

This symbolized he was foremost, and would unite heaven and earth.

The pouring of *amacha* on the statue's head represents Buddha's first bath, where sweet rain from the heavens fell upon him.

Back in the day, the HJM Sunday School students regularly put on plays during the *Hanamatsuri* celebrations at our temple.

In 1969, a three-part play directed by Rev. and Mrs. Kogan Ekuan was presented to the congregation. It was done entirely in Japanese and featured the following students: Yoshino Fujita; Lynette Kawashima; Norman Doi; Nicolette Enanoria; Kay Higashi; Wade, Wayne, Jason, and David Higaki; Denis, Alan, and Arthur Oketani; Renee and Norine Watanabe; Jeffrey, Blaine, and Nadine Takamine; Lani, Joyce, and Cary Matsumoto; and Lisa and Keith Higaki.

We are happy to report that decades later, some of these students are current members of HJM, making our ancestors very pleased!

## DRIVEWAY GATE ACCESS UPDATE

Due to the increase in visitors over the last few months, the HJM Executive Team has arranged to have the driveway chain gate open to the public from 9am to 5pm, 7 days a week until further notice.

Members and vendors who have the code to open the combination lock are still able to access the premises outside of these visiting hours using the numerical code.

## 2024 MEMBERSHIP DUES

Per HJM's Amended & Restated Bylaws, the deadline for 2024 membership dues for existing members was on **March 31, 2024**. If you missed the deadline, your membership has now lapsed to an honorary status.

If you want to reinstate your membership to an active status, please remit 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, please feel free to contact us by calling (808) 775-0965 or via email at: [contact@hamakuajodomission.org](mailto:contact@hamakuajodomission.org)

## OTHER NOTEWORTHY HAPPENINGS

- HJM held a successful 2024 Annual Meeting on April 14, 2024. We want to thank all the members, both new and old, who participated via Zoom and in-person!
- We are happy to welcome Shigeyo Ricci as a new member of HJM! Shigeyo has been a friend of HJM for many years and an active volunteer.
- Bishop Ishikawa requested that all Jodo Shu temples submit an Annual Report to him about our respective temples. The Executive Team submitted a detailed report to him on March 30, 2024.

He thanked them for their *“outstanding efforts and activities to keep the temple alive,”* and wanted to include HJM's newsletters on the Hawaii Council of Jodo Missions website.

- Hawaiian Telcom removed two old, cracked, rotten poles on the property.
- Hilo Fire Extinguishers performed their yearly inspection and servicing of the fire extinguishers located in the cottage, sheds, dining hall, kitchen, choba room, and temple.
- It didn't rain on March's Beautification Work Day, but it sure was windy! That didn't deter the 16 dedicated volunteers who showed up and accomplished a lot that morning.



Missing from photo: David Higaki, George Higaki, Lani Matsumoto & Pickens Kehrer (photographer)

Weed whacking, cleaning of the temple interior, and the start of decluttering the back room were tackled.

Two large dump runs were done, once again courtesy of Jim Adams letting us use his pick up truck. He is not a member, but graciously lets us use it for our dump runs. Mahalo, Jim!

Thank you also to our teen volunteers, Dani and Dylan Matsui who applied wax on the temple sliding door tracks to help the doors glide easily. You two did a fantastic job!

All volunteers were treated to teriyaki beef bentos and brownie treats after pau hana time.

The Big Island experienced a lot of rain over the last month which made the weeds grow twice as fast and tall. Your kokua at the next Beautification Work Day on April 28, 2024 is greatly appreciated.

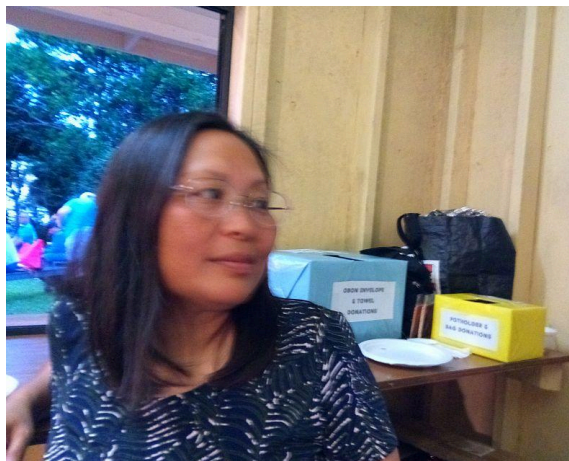
- After a welcomed absence, wild pigs have started to return due to multiple trees bearing fruit. They have been leaving behind fecal matter in the yard and cemetery, so please be careful of where you step.
- Many thanks to George Higaki for donating a pre-owned battery-powered weed whacker. It is a much-needed tool that is truly appreciated!
- More scholarship opportunities are now available for students graduating high school this year. The Aloha State Meisho Senior YBA is currently accepting applications now through May 31, 2024. For more information, please contact us at: (808) 775-0965 or send an email to: [contact@hamakuajodominion.org](mailto:contact@hamakuajodominion.org)

The Honokaa Business Association is also accepting applications from 2023 graduates and those graduating this year for their Hamakua Grown Scholarships. Information can be found via their application link: <https://tinyurl.com/hba24scholarship>

- We want to extend our appreciation to HJM member Pickens Kehrer and community member Keith Burkhardt for helping us coordinate and transport the used tractor Gary Rapozo donated to us. They have both also been busy servicing the tractor.

HJM is grateful that community members are making a concerted effort to help our temple in many ways. Embracing our community by welcoming their participation and help is proving beneficial to our temple.

## KHON2 HAWAII'S REMARKABLE WOMAN FINALIST 2024



If you didn't catch KHON2's Hawaii's Remarkable Women 2024 segment on their multiple news broadcasts on March 20, 2024, you missed seeing Kyodan President Sandy Takahashi and HJM on your TV sets.

She was bestowed the honor of being one of their four finalists selected out of 47 candidates. Veteran television journalist Jodi Leong and camera man Jason Sakamoto flew over to the Big Island and interviewed Sandy, filming for over 1.5 hours at HJM.

Sandy kept talking about HJM's history and the great strides the Executive Team have made over the last year, so much so that Jodi had to remind her that the spotlight was not on the temple, but on herself.

Sandy kept this recognition and segment air date underwraps for weeks so many were pleasantly surprised when they saw her on the evening news!

If you missed it, you can view the segment on on KHON2's website:

<https://www.khon2.com/top-stories/remarkable-women-sandy-takahashi/>

Sandy may not have won the title of Hawaii's Remarkable Woman of the Year, but we can all agree that she is deserving of it and makes us PROUD to have her serve as our Kyodan President.

It is of note that Jodi was so impressed with HJM, that she managed to get a segment devoted to the history of HJM to air on three time slots on KHON2 during Merrie Monarch week, too. You can watch it on HJM's website:

<https://hamakuajodominion.org/v/>

### IN MEMORIAM BEBE PONCE



Our heartfelt condolences go out to the Ponce Ohana. We learned of the recent passing of Bebe Kodani Ponce, who, although she was not a member of our temple, was a supporter of HJM for many years. Rest in Love, Mrs. Ponce. *Namu Amida Butsu.*

### SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESSES



This month's feature does not spotlight a business entity, but instead a group of men and women who help make our Obon festivities a success year after year, providing cultural entertainment.

They are the Taishoji Taiko group, a group of young men and women who have gained the reputation of being the best taiko drumming group on the Big Island.

Formed in 1989 under the direction of Yoshihumi Ono at the Taishoji Soto Mission in Hilo, their energetic performances have become a staple at festivals, parades, conferences, and more!

Taishoji Taiko is led by Chad Nakagawa, who is their artistic director. He has over 20 years of experience and was once under the direction of taiko masters such as Kenny Endo and Yoshikazu Fujimoto.

Chad's family, the Nakagawas, have familial ties with our temple, too. Many of his relatives were members and their final resting place is at HJM. His great-grandfather, Sadao Nakagawa, was also an active member who served on various committees in the past.

If you are interested in booking Taishoji Taiko, give them a call at (808) 557-0715 and ask for Lei. They can also be reached via email at: [taishoji.taiko@outlook.com](mailto:taishoji.taiko@outlook.com)

### YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

This month's question we received is about our bathroom facilities.

*Question: "Why are there limited amounts of toiletries left in the outdoor bathroom facilities?"*  
- T.N.

Trespassers have been stealing the toilet paper, paper towels, and hand soap on the property. This ongoing problem heightened when homeless individuals were squatting in a vacant home located nearby.

They would wash themselves with the outdoor sink, leave a mess, and take all the toiletries in the process. They also dumped their trash into the gulch and also filled up our garbage cans.

Fortunately, the police were able to clear the house of the squatters when the property went on the market for sale. We have since seen a significant drop in theft of our toiletries after the house was sold and occupied.

Occasional trespassers still come up to the property, so a minimal amount of toiletries are being left on hand in the bathroom facilities.

The police are aware of this problem, and they continue to do their drive-by checks of the property as a courtesy to HJM.

### STAIRS SIGNAGE



For many years, the cement stairs located near the driveway leading to the shower tree area have been a concern.

The shower tree's large, overgrown roots have been protruding from the ground and pose a tripping hazard for those who use this access way to reach the temple, and during evening events such as our bon dance.

We do not want anyone tripping, falling, or getting injured. To avoid this situation, posts, a chain barrier, and signage were installed notifying visitors that the stairs are closed and to use the driveway entry instead.

Our insurance carrier agreed that this is the best course of action we can take to avoid potential mishaps.

### UPCOMING EVENTS & SERVICES CALENDAR

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SERVICE / EVENT</u>	<u>TIME</u>
4/28/24	Grounds Beautification Work Day	8:00am - 10:30am

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](mailto: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 from the Fujitani Family Collection

Akira and Kimie Umamoto were active members for many years. Mr. Umamoto served on the Board of Directors and various committees, while his wife was a member of the HJM Fujinkai club. In 1986, they relocated to Hilo to be near family.

A farewell dinner was held at the Hotel Honokaa Club honoring their selfless contributions to HJM and to celebrate the lifelong friendships they made among members.

Margie Doi, Iris Nakagawa, Haruyo Takata, Ethel Nishimura, and Kimie Umamoto are featured in this memorable photo taken at the dinner.



Photo © 2019 Sarah Anderson

### MAY 2024 NENKI MEMORIAL SERVICES

DATE	NAME	YEAR
5/05	Yukichi Uema	47th
5/07	Kinji Kawasaki	50th
5/09	Norine Watanabe	33rd
5/14	Kakuichi Yano	50th

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

### DID YOU KNOW?

HJM's driveway was repaved in 2007 by DeRego's Service for \$15,180. The driveway was originally paved in 1954.

### IN APPRECIATION

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

The Higaki/Kawahigashi Family, Evangeline Kato-Barney, Mr. & Mrs. Darrel Tajima, and Ron Takata

2024 Membership dues received:

Shigeyo Ricci, John Arsenault, Nicole Garcia, A.A. Yoshikatsu Kehrer, Sueichi Kawashima, Cindy Coronel, Evangeline Kato-Barney, Marvin Kato, Lani Matsumoto, Irving Kawashima, Sandy Takahashi, Pickens Kehrer, Cary Matsumoto, and Sadako Kato

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Amy Yatopolous, a Director for the Stanford Center on Longevity wrote an interesting article titled *“Three Reasons Why People Don’t Volunteer and What Can Be Done About It.”*

The three reasons she listed are the following:

1. *“I don’t have enough time and volunteer schedules are too inflexible.”*
2. *“I don’t have enough information and most volunteer roles aren’t interesting.”*
3. *“No one asked me to.”*

At HJM, volunteering schedules are super flexible. You can volunteer any day of the week during the day performing maintenance work such as pulling weeds, weed whacking, cleaning, and more.

Not a manual labor type of person? No problem! You can help us with administrative work, which can be done at the comfort of your home, too. Things such as data entry, stuffing envelopes, etc., can be done while watching your favorite TV show or Netflix movie!

You will be amazed at how much you can learn about the history of our temple with the educational tools that have been implemented on-site, in addition to information via our websites, newsletters, and co-volunteers.

If you or someone you know are interested in volunteering at HJM, please feel free to contact us at (808) 775-0965 or via email at: [contact@hamakuajodominion.org](mailto:contact@hamakuajodominion.org)

## CONTRIBUTIONS & SUBMISSIONS

We are always accepting ideas, articles, suggestions, and photo submissions for our publication. Letters to the Editor are welcomed, too!

Submissions are due before the 15th of each month in either Word, PDF, JPEG, or PNG file formats. They can be emailed to:

[contact@hamakuajodominion.org](mailto:contact@hamakuajodominion.org)



Here's some feedback we received recently about our newsletters:

*"You folks are doing a great job!" - L.H.*

*"I've been enjoying the monthly HJM newsletters which really give a good sense of what is going on at the temple." - T.O.*

*"Thank you for the monthly newsletters which I enjoy reading and receiving every month." - R.S.*

*"News that affects the temple's livelihood is finally being reported." - A.N.*

*"Very interesting and informative, and well designed." - K.O.*

## 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 have them contact us via email at: [contact@hamakuajodominion.org](mailto:contact@hamakuajodominion.org) or (808) 775-0965 for more information. Mahalo!

*Mahalo for reading & your continued support!*

*- The Hamakua Jodo Mission  
Newsletter Committee*

This month's quote comes from one of the most prominent leaders our Country has ever had, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He was a minister and activist, but most importantly, led the civil rights movement.

Dr. King, a Christian, was exposed to Buddhist philosophies through Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Buddhist monk and activist, who was a major influence on Western practices of Buddhism. Dr. King was strongly moved by Thich Nhat Hanh's teachings and embodied many Buddhist traits.

We felt it was appropriate to honor Dr. King on the 56th anniversary of his assassination, with this quote :

*"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."*

*-Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.  
1/15/1929 - 4/04/1968*

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