



HAMAKUA JODO MISSION OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2024



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"Honoring Tradition, Embracing Community"

HAMAKUA JODO MISSION JOINS THE FUN AT HAMAKUA SUGAR DAYS FESTIVAL!



On October 12, 2024, Hamakua Jodo Mission proudly participated in the Cultural Village at the Hamakua Sugar Days Festival, held outside the Honokaa Heritage Center.

This event attracted many visitors from near and afar as it celebrated the 30th anniversary of the closure of the sugar industry in Hamakua. Our table featured an educational display showcasing the history of our historic temple, including complimentary postcards and brochures that were distributed throughout the day.

We were surrounded by many vendors and nonprofit organizations, such as our friends from the Lyman Museum, Honokaa Hongwanji Mission, and the Historic Hawaii Foundation to name a few.

Our participation marked a significant step in engaging with the community and an excellent opportunity to share our mission with a wider audience.

We anticipate participating in many more events in Honokaa Town in the future and invite our members, friends, and volunteers to join us in celebrating and promoting our temple!

BEAUTIFICATION WORK DAYS UPDATE



Fall is here, marking the year's end in a couple of months and the approaching holiday season!

With this in mind, we want to inform interested volunteers that the schedules for our monthly Beautification Work Days *may* vary to accommodate holiday weekends and the availability of volunteers during the holiday season.

We encourage everyone to keep up to date with the upcoming Event and Services Schedule that is published within our monthly newsletter, bulletin board at the temple, and the official HJM website.

Our next work day is on **Sunday, November 24, 2024 starting at 8am**. We hope to see you there!

OTHER NOTEWORTHY HAPPENINGS

- HJM's Annual Report was filed with the State of Hawaii Department of Commerce & Consumer Affairs earlier this month. HJM remains in good standing.
- Thank you to HJM member Pickens Kehrer for fixing our Honda riding mower. There was a gas leak in the fuel line and he was able to make the necessary repairs.
- The Hawaii Council of Jodo Missions observed 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 this past weekend on Oahu.
- There have been recent sightings of fruit thieves trespassing on the property. An older red SUV was observed entering the premises to steal bananas from our banana patch.

Upon confrontation, the individual was informed that they were not permitted to take our fruit and subsequently left the area. Their vehicle information has been turned over to the Honokaa Police Department.

- The HJM Executive Team received acknowledgement from Leonard Chow, the President of the Hawaii Council of Jodo Missions ("HCJM"), regarding their recent letter expressing concerns and questions about the HCJM budget and assessment dues invoiced to HJM.

Mr. Chow informed the team that the HCJM was currently focused on preparations for the 850th Anniversary of the Founding of Jodo Shu in Hawaii, as well as the 130th anniversary of the arrival of the first Jodo Shu ministers.

He indicated that the HCJM will address the Executive Team's concerns following the celebrations. These concerns were also raised and discussed with Bishop Kosen

Ishikawa during his meeting with the Executive Team in September.

UPCOMING EVENTS & SERVICES SCHEDULE

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>TIME</u>
10/26/24	Private Service	11:00am
10/27/24	HJM Executive Team Meeting	10:00am
11/24/24	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

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.

REMEMBERING A COMMUNITY LEADER

We extend our heartfelt condolences to the family of Kevin Vinluan, who served as the President of the Paauhau Village Community Association ("PVCA") for many years. Kevin passed away peacefully on October 5, 2024, after a courageous battle with cancer.

Many of us who grew up in Paauhau and Honokaa fondly remember Kevin for his love and dedication to our community.

A notable example of his commitment was during a time of increased break-ins and thefts at HJM. We wanted to install a chain gate, however we needed metal posts for it. Former Kyodan President Masa Nishimori approached

Kevin and asked about a long, unused metal post that was being stored by the old Paauhau Store.

Kevin facilitated the PVCA's donation of the long metal post, which was repurposed into the two yellow posts at the bottom of our driveway. His actions helped enhance our safety and also demonstrated his deep care for our neighborhood. We are forever grateful for his support and contributions. *Namu Amida Butsu.*

A JOURNEY TO PAAUHAU: REDISCOVERING MY ROOTS

By: Julie Yamashita



Julie & her family at HJM

Driving towards Paauhau, the landscape was serene. The winding roads of the Hamakua Coast were framed by tall green trees and lush foliage, evoking a sense of tranquility that wrapped around me like a warm hug. I felt a pull towards this place, an invisible thread connecting me to generations long gone.

In downtown Honokaa, historic buildings like the Honokaa People's Theatre and the Botelho Building, now the Honokaa Heritage Center, tell the area's story. This town once served as a bustling center for Paauhau and neighboring sugar mill camps. It's also where my great-great-grandparents worked and lived in the 1900s, harvesting sugar cane until their passing.

As I rounded the last curve of the scenic highway, the road sign I'd been waiting for came into view. My heart raced with anticipation as we turned off and headed down a steep and bumpy road toward the former sugar plantation of Paauhau.

The sea was visible before me in the distance, with densely overgrown cane fields on either side - this is where three generations of my family lived during the 1900s. I had been holding this vision in my mind for years, beginning the day my *tutu* passed away four years ago. Something surreal came over me as

I stood in the very same place my ancestors once did; the energy was comforting, and I felt a sense of calm. I could feel my beloved *tutu's* presence. *I took a moment to take it all in.*

As I continued on my journey along the Hamakua Coast, I turned onto a small road tucked away and hidden, not easily visible to the outside world - like a sacred sanctuary only meant for those who truly understood its significance.

We arrived at the Hamakua Jodo Mission, a historic site established in 1896 under Reverend Gakuo Okabe, marking it as the first sanctioned Buddhist temple in Hawaii. I walked up the driveway to find an unassuming, neatly organized list of deceased buried there.

I gently traced my finger down the list until I finally found my family name. In that instant, time seemed to stand still. Over a century had passed, yet there I stood, fortunate enough to reconnect with my roots.

The night before, my daughter and I had crafted ti leaf leis, our hands and toes still sticky from the twisting of the leaves. Yet, something truly special unfolded when I discovered the gravesite of my great-great-grandmother and cousins. The love and care we poured into making the leis came to surface, and with heartfelt reverence, I placed the ti leaf lei upon the *hakaishi*, honoring their memory in this sacred space.



Hamakua Jodo Mission was a profoundly spiritual place. My feet planted on the very soil where my ancestors once walked felt otherworldly, a moment that has etched itself into the fabric of my core memories. I realized how great a *kuleana* it is, and how important it is for me to give back, take care of, and stay connected to this special place - a place which is the keeper of my ties to the 'āina, and where the iwi hold the most sacred mana.

Later, I made my way to a nearby lookout point, closing my eyes to soak in the ocean's soothing sounds. I imagined my ancestors gathered there, sharing stories and laughter, their spirits one with the waves.

It was a sacred moment of connection - an affirmation that they were with me, guiding my path. Just the day before, we had even spotted a majestic 'io soaring overhead, a beautiful omen of their presence.

As the sun dipped below the horizon, I felt an overwhelming sense of belonging. I planted my feet, grounded by the knowledge that this place wasn't just a beautiful backdrop for visitors to pose in front of on their summer break; it was a part of MY identity.

Each breath I took was a tribute to the legacy of resilience, culture, and love that my ancestors had woven into the fabric of Paauhau.

My ancestors, and my beloved tutu, will always be with me.

I took one last look at the shimmering sea, promising to carry their stories with me. This heritage trip was more than just a visit; it was a

reconnection to my roots, a reminder that my journey is built upon the strength of those who came before me.

As I drove away, I knew that Paauhau would forever hold a piece of my heart, a sacred link to my past and a guiding light for my future.

Thank you Julie, for sharing your experience visiting our temple and your interest in helping us. We hope that you and your Ohana will visit us again soon!

DID YOU KNOW?



Photo © 2024 Nic Tanaka

Visitors to the Hilo side of the cemetery will encounter a prominent headstone on the way to Katsu Goto's gravesite. Known as "*Muen no haka*," which translates to grave ("*haka*") for the dead with no relatives to mourn them ("*muen*"), this headstone symbolizes the legacy of immigrants who sought a better life in Hawaii.

Many early Japanese laborers arrived in the islands without family, and upon their passing, they were interred in cemeteries like this one, often marked only by a simple rock without a name. Due to the geographical distance and limited communication with their families abroad, these immigrants were left without mourners to honor their memory.

Prior to the introduction of Buddhism, the Japanese believed that deceased individuals could become ancestral deities if they were

prayed for consistently over 33 or 50 years. While this belief differs from Buddhist teachings, elements of it have been integrated into Buddhist practices.

As a result, it is important for Buddhist temples to offer prayers for the *muen*, ensuring that these forgotten souls are remembered and honored.

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED



This month, we received an inquiry about HJM's Fujinkai club. The Fujinkai is a club affiliated with Buddhist temples consisting of women members.

Question: "What happened to the Fujinkai club?" - M.W.

HJM's Fujinkai club disbanded in 2017 due to a declining number of active women members, many of whom were aging.

For many years, the club was led by the late Tomiko Fujitani, who, along with fellow women members, dedicated their time to cleaning the temple, engaging in community service, and participating in Buddhist events. They also attended conventions and prepared delicious meals for gatherings, services, and other HJM functions.

While we have seen an increase in women members in recent years, many of the new members reside off-island. Therefore, reinstating the Fujinkai club would not be beneficial at this time.

We hope to encourage female members who live on-island to participate in more temple activities, so we can possibly have another Fujinkai club in the future.

SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESSES



Historic Hawaii Foundation ("HHF") is a passionate, nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the unique historic buildings, sites, and communities that tell the story of Hawai'i.

Established in 1974 by concerned citizens committed to safeguarding the islands' invaluable cultural heritage, HHF has emerged as a key advocate for preservation in the state.

HJM is incredibly fortunate to have received two grants from HHF, which have allowed us to undertake essential repairs that would have otherwise been financially out of reach. The first grant enabled us to replace the temple's roofing.

Years later, our current Kyodan President, Sandy Takahashi, who was not a Board member at that time, reached out to HHF to inquire about any potential grant opportunities. She was initially told that HJM was ineligible to apply for a second grant, as HHF typically awards grants only once per organization.

Sandy explained the numerous costly repairs we still faced and the challenges we encountered in applying for funding from other organizations due to our lack of 501(c)(3) status from the Internal Revenue Service.

Her persistence paid off when HHF granted HJM a one-time exception to apply for another grant in 2021.

We were thrilled when we were awarded funding, which allowed us to address several pressing issues: overgrown trees encroaching on power lines and headstones were professionally trimmed, termite fumigation was completed, structural repairs were made, erosion mitigation was implemented, and other necessary repairs were undertaken across the property.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the entire HHF team, especially Executive Director Kiersten Faulkner and Educational Programmer Andrea Nandoskar. Their ongoing support, consideration, and encouragement have been a guiding light for us.

Thanks to their assistance, HJM is now in a stronger position, preserving our temple for future generations.

FLASHBACK PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Some of you may know him as the “Man & The Pan” and the charismatic host of the beloved local TV show “Seniors Living in Paradise,” while others recognize him as the Executive Vice President of KTA Super Stores.

To us at HJM, Derek Kurisu is not just a public figure; he is a friend and supporter of our temple. Our friendship began in February 2020, thanks to Dwight Takamine, who arranged for Derek to visit. He spent a memorable morning at HJM, filming a segment that aired daily throughout March 2020 on Spectrum cable channel 129.

This photo captures that special day, where Masa Nishimori and Sandy Takahashi gave him a tour, sharing stories, laughter, and creating lasting memories.

If you missed the episode, it’s still available for viewing on KTA’s Seniors Living in Paradise YouTube Channel!

NOVEMBER 2024 NENKI MEMORIAL SERVICES

<u>DATE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>YEAR</u>
11/09	Stanley Miranda	7th
11/24	Shigeo Fujitani	27th

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

While we host a Beautification Work Day every month, there are countless opportunities to lend a hand throughout the year.

Whether it’s weed whacking, mowing, tree trimming, or general cleanup, your support makes a huge difference! If you have some spare time and want to contribute to a meaningful cause, we would love to hear from you.

We also welcome organizations eager to make an impact! Please reach out to us at contact@hamakuajodominion.org or leave a voicemail at (808) 775-0965.

Together, we can ensure that our historic temple and the final resting place of our loved ones remains a beautiful and welcoming place for all!

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.

IN APPRECIATION



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

Denis Oketani, Mr. & Mrs. David Kohara, Kazue Kimura and Mr. & Mrs. George Higaki, Masao Tasaka, and Mr. & Mrs. Ross Stephenson.

Membership dues received:

Mr. & Mrs. Charles Anderson

CONTRIBUTIONS & SUBMISSIONS

Want to submit an article, memories, questions, suggestions, or feedback? Feel free to send them to 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

As promised in our last edition, these are some of the feedback we have been receiving from our readership:

"It's the best!" - Bishop Kosen Ishikawa (when asked if he reads our newsletters.)

"Very good newsletter...so much information in it." - P.O.

"I really enjoy reading the newsletter and learning much from it." - L.Y.

"Fantastic!" - J.M.

"I like that you are letting us know what's going on." - E.M.

"Thank you for the excellent HJM Newsletter. Very skillfully written." - R.T.

"Enjoyed very much reading about Obon." - J.W.

"I must say I enjoy reading the HJM newsletters." - E.H.

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*

"Strength doesn't come from what you can do. It comes from overcoming the things you once thought you couldn't." - Rikki Rogers

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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