



HAMAKUA JODO MISSION OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2026



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“Honoring Tradition, Embracing Community”

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Akemashite omedetō gozaimasu!

Guided by the compassion and wisdom of Buddha, may this Year of the Horse bring renewed hope and gratitude into our lives.

In keeping with tradition, we prepared a *kadomatsu* and adorned the stairway entrance with bamboo and pine - symbols of longevity, resilience, and good fortune, to warmly welcome auspicious energy and blessings for the year ahead!

SAVE THE DATE

HJM's Annual Membership Meeting has been scheduled for **Sunday, April 26, 2026** at 10am HST.

This hybrid meeting will be held in person in our dining hall and also via Zoom. All members will be sent meeting information via USPS as time approaches closer to the meeting date.

To ensure timely delivery of your meeting packet, please notify us if you have recently

moved or have a new mailing address.

We encourage members residing on the island to attend the meeting in person, as our remote location can affect internet and WiFi reliability, particularly during inclement weather.

2026 MEMBERSHIP DUES

We are accepting membership dues for 2026 now through March 31, 2026. Dues remain at \$60 for the upcoming year.

If you missed the deadline to pay your 2025 membership dues, you can still reinstate your membership to an active status by remitting your 2025 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@hamakuajodomission.org

GYOKI-E



Hōnen Shonin

Gyoki-e is an annual memorial service observed each January to honor Hōnen Shonin (St. Hōnen), the founder of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism, known as the Jodo Shu sect.

Hōnen Shonin taught that all people could attain rebirth in the Pure Land of Amida Buddha through the sincere recitation of the *nembutsu*, “*Namu Amida Butsu*,” a teaching that made Buddhism accessible to the general public.

The service commemorates Hōnen Shonin’s passing in 1212, the age of 80. Originally, the term *Gyoki* referred to memorials for imperial figures only, but in 1524 Emperor Go-Kashiwabara officially designated Hōnen Shonin’s memorial as *Gyoki-e*, signifying royal recognition of his life and teachings. This endorsement contributed to the widespread acceptance of Jodo Shu Buddhism.

Today, *Gyoki-e* services are held at Jodo Shu temples worldwide and includes chanting the *nembutsu*, offering prayers, and paying homage to Hōnen Shonin’s enduring spiritual legacy.

OTHER NOTEWORTHY HAPPENINGS

- We will take a pause from our Beautification Work Day this month and instead gather on our usual work day for a Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon.

This luncheon gives our volunteers a well-deserved month off and honors those who consistently supported our efforts by participating in three or more work days during 2025. Invitations have been sent to these hardworking volunteers - this is our way of saying thank you for helping care for and preserve our historic temple.

Our monthly Beautification Work Day will resume on **Sunday, February 22, 2026**, beginning at 8:00 a.m.

- The unstable metal handrail along the dining hall walkway, which had been affected by ongoing property erosion, has been repaired.
- During the recent Kona Low storm, strong winds caused numerous fallen branches and resulted in a broken window.
- In September, we reported about an underground water leak that resulted in an unusually high water bill.

After applying to the Department of Water Supply’s leak adjustment program, we are happy to report that HJM’s application was approved, and a \$203.86 credit has been applied to our account.

- Thank you to HJM member Maren Lambeth who generously donated white and purple spider lily plants for our property.

During our recent Beautification Work Day, volunteers helped plant them, and we are looking forward to seeing them in full bloom!

- We’ve noticed that some of the temple’s sliding doors aren’t being fully closed when visitors are leaving the temple, leaving

gaps large enough for feral cats and birds to enter inside.

Please help us keep the temple clean and secure by making sure the doors are completely closed when you leave. Mahalo!

- Our friends at the Hakalau Jodo Mission will be holding a rummage sale on Sunday, January 25, 2026 in their social hall from 10am to 2pm.
- We are happy to welcome Laura Newland, our newest volunteer, who generously lent her time and energy at December's Beautification Work Day.
- Mahalo to volunteers Faith Elarionoff and Linda Thompson for gifting us with bottles of hand soap and potholders. These gifts will definitely be put to good use.

IN MEMORIAM



We are saddened to share the passing of one of our members, George Ito of Hilo, who passed away earlier this month on January 4, 2026.

Many members, especially our elders, came to know George when he married his wife, Toshiko "Shirley" Kato. Shirley's family, hailing from Paauhau, has been members of our temple for generations, and through their marriage, George became a familiar presence among us.

Originally from Lahaina, Maui, George was deeply involved in the community. One could

say he was even busier in retirement, as he devoted his time and energy to numerous organizations. George was an active member of numerous organizations, including the Hilo Lions Club, Family and Community Education (FCE), and the County of Hawai'i Committee on Aging.

He also held several leadership roles, serving as former President of the Niigata Kenjin Kai and as co-editor of the *Halai Kumiai* newsletter. In addition, George, along with Shirley, was a volunteer cameraman for KTA's television program *Seniors Living in Paradise*.

George will be remembered for his dedication to service, his community involvement, and his warm presence alongside Shirley. We extend our heartfelt condolences to Shirley and to their family during this time of loss. *Namu Amida Butsu.*

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that two former HJM members, Kakuichi Yano and his son Sanshiro, played important roles in the development of honey bee production on Hawaii Island?

Honey bees were successfully introduced to Hawaii in 1857 after several failed attempts. Three hives of German dark bees were shipped to Honolulu and purchased by the Royal Hawaiian Agricultural Society. The bees were placed under the care of Dr. William Hillebrand in Nuuanu Valley on Oahu, where they thrived and quickly multiplied. Additional bee species were later introduced, leading to the establishment of feral colonies throughout the islands.

Bees were brought to the Big Island in the late 1890s for experimental purposes, but the effort was abandoned after three years. As the cattle industry expanded and large tracts of land were developed, honey bees were reintroduced to improve kiawe bean yields and support the growth of kiawe forests, which provided a nutritious food source for cattle.

In 1907, Parker Ranch established apiaries on the northwest and western sides of the island, where drier conditions were favorable for beekeeping. Kakuichi Yano was hired to manage approximately 400 hives. The honey produced was sold to Davis & Company, which brokered it on the New York exchange.

Then in 1936, Parker Ranch leased the apiaries to Mr. Yano, and together with his son Sanshiro, he expanded the operation to about 600 colonies. They managed the hives until 1950, when control returned to Parker Ranch. Honey production declined shortly thereafter due to the kiawe moth, which devastated kiawe blossoms in 1952.

The hives were subsequently sold to Allan Luce, who revitalized production by relocating them to ohia lehua forests. Luce later sold the business, named Hawaiian American Honey Company, to Woodrow Miller, who moved the operation to Puunahulu and built it into the largest honey producing enterprise in the State of Hawaii.

Miller sold the business to Powers Apiaries, Inc. in 1973 and relocated operations to Kealakekua. Both Allan Luce and Sanshiro Yano were hired to further improve honey production. Sanshiro remained with Powers Apiaries as foreman until his retirement.



Sanshiro Yano

Both Kakuichi and Sanshiro Yano were long-standing and active members of our temple. Sanshiro served with distinction as Kyodan President for many years, and both men are remembered for their dedication to the temple and their significant involvement in the

honey bee industry. Their final resting place is within the temple's hondo.

SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESSES



In recent months, we have highlighted several florists who generously contributed flowers for our 2025 Obon Festival. We have one final contributor to recognize, Green Point Nurseries. Though not a florist, this beloved Hilo establishment has made a lasting impact in our community not only for their beautiful tropical plants, but also for its spirit of generosity and aloha.

The nursery was founded by Harold Tanouye, who returned to his hometown after college and saw an opportunity in Hawaii's flower market by growing and selling tropical blooms, especially anthuriums, to mainland buyers.

His part-time, backyard venture in the late 1950s grew into a full-fledged business by 1976, and over the decades the nursery has become known for its quality tropical flowers, foliage, and exceptional customer service.

Today, Green Point remains a family-run operation, with Harold's son Eric Tanouye leading the company and continuing his father's commitment to horticultural excellence and community support.



Photo by: Green Point Nurseries

We are very grateful for their support and the many buckets of anthuriums and tropical flowers that helped adorn our cemetery, bringing joy to the spirits of our ancestors.

Thank you to Paolo Navalta, who is part of their sales team, for helping to make it happen!

If you need flowers locally or shipped, give Green Point Nurseries a call at (808) 959-3535 or visit their website:

www.greenpointnurseries.com

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Kountry & Mrs. Kato

Pictured here are Kountry Garcia and Sadako Kato, two of our volunteers from the most recent Beautification Work Day. This photograph is more than a simple snapshot. It represents a remarkable **92-year** age difference between them, yet both worked side by side, ready and willing to care for our temple and help get the job done.

Kountry, at just five years old, is our youngest volunteer. Some may wonder how much help a child can truly be. The answer is: a **GREAT** deal. Kountry assists with packing to-go lunches, wiping down benches and tables, and picking up rocks around the property.

Most importantly, he shows up alongside his grandmother, Nicole Garcia, learning by example the values of respect for elders, compassion, and selfless service. These are lessons that cannot be taught by words alone.

At the other end of the spectrum is Sadako Kato, age 97, whose dedication and work ethic, highlighted in our previous newsletter, continue to inspire us. Her presence is a powerful reminder that contributing to the temple is not about age or ability, but about heart and commitment.

This photo also underscores a pressing reality: **our temple is in great need of volunteers**. Currently, an average of 7 to 12 people attend our monthly work days, two of whom quietly care for the temple on a day-to-day basis, while managing their day jobs. With more than five acres to care for, it is simply too much for so few hands.

We hope this image inspires more members and friends to step forward in gratitude to those who came before us. *Okage sama de* - it is because of the selfless efforts of past generations that we are able to gather, worship, and live the lives we lead.

If you have loved ones whose final resting place is at HJM, we respectfully ask that you help care for your family's gravesite. If not for the temple, then for those who are no longer with us physically, but remain with us spiritually.



If you are unable to attend a Beautification Work Day, please know that help is always welcome at times that fit your schedule. And if

volunteering is not possible, we humbly ask you to consider a donation to support the upkeep of the temple and cemetery whether for gardening tools, power equipment, or meals and refreshments for our volunteers.

Together, let us honor the past, support the present, and preserve our temple for future generations.



FEBRUARY 2026 NENKI MEMORIAL SERVICES

DATE	NAME	YEAR
2/06	Mina Ota	43rd
2/14	Shoichi Fukaura	3rd
2/15	Clyde Yano	7th
2/25	Kikue Wachi	17th
2/28	Taneo Hayakawa	43rd

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

***If you come across any errors, we kindly ask that you notify us so we can promptly update our records.

We have identified discrepancies in certain entries and greatly appreciate the assistance of individuals who bring these issues to our attention. Thank you for your cooperation!

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

We recently received a question about the significance of white flowers during Buddhist services.

"I always see a lot of white flowers when I attend services. Is there a reason why?" - T.L.

You may notice that white flowers, especially chrysanthemums, are often used during Buddhist services. This tradition is rooted in Buddhist teachings and carries symbolism.

In Buddhism, the color white represents purity, sincerity, and truth. It reflects the aspiration to purify the mind and approach life with humility and clarity. White flowers are offered not for decoration or display, but as an expression of respect and reverence, free from worldly excess.

Chrysanthemums, in particular, are commonly used for Buddhist services, memorials, and funerals as they symbolize impermanence. Like all flowers, they bloom beautifully and eventually fade, serving as a reminder of the transient nature of life, which is one of Buddhism's central teachings. This awareness encourages gratitude, compassion, and mindfulness in our daily lives.

IN APPRECIATION



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

Gerard Bergers, JoAnn Tengan, Tilden Osako, Dr. & Mrs. Justin Ekuan and John Pfeifer.

Membership dues:

Susumu Fujii, Diana Nui, John Pfeifer, Irving Kawashima, Sueichi Kawashima, Shigeyo Ricci, Donna Ching, and Richard Leman.

UPCOMING EVENTS & SERVICES SCHEDULE

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>TIME</u>
1/25/26	Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon**	11:00am
2/22/26	Beautification Work Day	8:00am
2/28/26	Private Tour & Presentation	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

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

*** Invitation-only luncheon*

CONTRIBUTIONS & SUBMISSIONS



Our temple newsletter is more than just announcements. It's a reflection of our members, friends, volunteers and the stories that connect us across generations. And that's where we need your help!

Do you have a favorite memory, photos tucked away in an album, or a story that makes you

smile? Maybe you'd like to share reflections on a service, a family tradition, or a loved one you'd like us to remember. Your contributions help keep our newsletter informative and personal.

We welcome submissions of all kinds whether it is short articles, personal reflections, historical tidbits, photos, artwork, and even lighthearted anecdotes. You don't have to be a writer - just share from the heart! Let's continue building a newsletter that tells HJM's story, together.

We welcome submissions in Word, PDF, JPEG, or PNG formats. Please send your contributions by the 15th of each month to: contact@hamakuajodomission.org to be considered for inclusion.

CONTACT INFORMATION REQUEST

Have your mailing address, email address, or phone number changed recently?

Please help us keep our records up to date by contacting us at (808) 775-0965 or send us an email with your updated information at: contact@hamakuajodomission.org

Mahalo for reading & your continued support!

- The Hamakua Jodo Mission Newsletter Committee

“Never let the fear of striking out keep you from playing the game.” – Babe Ruth

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

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