



HAMAKUA JODO MISSION OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2026



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“Honoring Tradition, Embracing Community”

NEHAN-E



Nehan-e, also known as Nirvana Day, is a Buddhist observance commemorating the passing of Shakyamuni Buddha. In Japan, it is observed each year on February 15, while other Buddhist traditions mark the occasion on different dates, often around mid-February.

Buddhist teachings recount that Buddha, at the age of 80, laid down between two sal trees in Kushinagar and entered deep meditation before peacefully passing into *Parinirvana*, the complete release from the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth (*samsara*).

Having already attained enlightenment during his lifetime, Buddha’s physical death signified the final cessation of suffering.

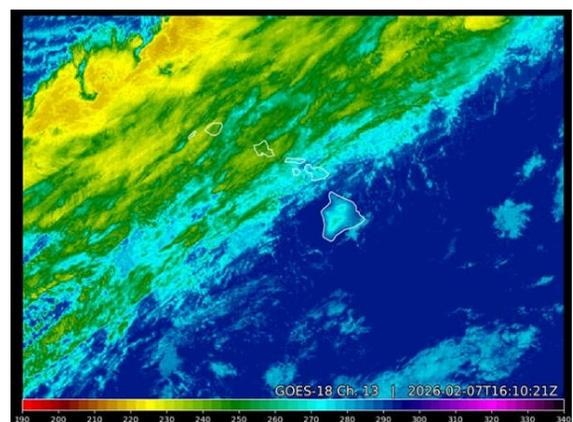
Nehan-e is more than a memorial. It is a time for reflection, and invites people to contemplate impermanence, express gratitude for the teachings of Buddha, and renew their commitment to walking the path of awakening.

SEVERE STORM SYSTEM HITS THE ISLANDS

Earlier this month, all of us here in Hawai’i felt the impact of the severe storm system that brought days of heavy rain and strong winds across the islands.

The prolonged weather event caused widespread flooding, landslides, fallen trees, power outages, and property damage throughout the state. In the Honoka’a area alone, more than 10 inches of rain was reported.

In anticipation of the storm, and in response to warnings from weather forecasters, we took proactive steps to ensure the safety of our members and visitors. Outdoor items were secured, and the temple was closed to the public during the period of inclement weather.



Graphic by: NOAA

Thankfully, our property sustained only minor damage - primarily broken tree branches and one outdoor security camera that was damaged by high winds and has since been replaced.

Our Executive Team is developing a comprehensive storm preparedness plan, including updated safety measures and checklists, to ensure readiness for future weather events affecting the islands. For the safety of our members and visitors, the temple will be closed to the public during severe weather conditions.

Mahalo to HJM member Pickens Kehrer for conducting daily inspections of the temple and surrounding property throughout the storm to ensure there was no significant damage or flooding, and that the premises remained safe and secure.

MAHALO, KASSIE!



Kassie & Kale'a

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

We are saddened to share that Kassie Tarpley has stepped down from her role as a Director on the HJM Executive Team this month.

As many of you may have read in our October 2025 edition, Kassie welcomed a healthy baby girl, Kale'a, last year. Since then, she has returned to her full-time teaching position, commuting from Kona while balancing the demands of motherhood and her many civic commitments.

In making the difficult decision to step down, Kassie put the welfare of the temple first, recognizing that she was unable to continue to devote the time and attention that the role of a Director requires. She felt that HJM would be best served by someone able to dedicate the focus that this important work deserves.

We understand Kassie's situation as many of us have been in her shoes before - starting a family and balancing a career. Oh to be that young again!

Kassie's selflessness and love for our temple is something to be commended. We are deeply grateful to her and we look forward to her continued presence and contributions as a member of our ohana. Thank you, Kassie!

OTHER NOTEWORTHY HAPPENINGS

- Thank you to Carol Renick who donated a pre-owned outdoor storage deck box. It will be put to good use!
- Our monthly Beautification Work Day resumes on **Sunday, February 22, 2026**, beginning at 8am. Please **RSVP** if you plan to attend. Your response helps us plan accordingly, ensuring there is enough food for our volunteers while minimizing waste.

Additionally, in the event of severe weather, having an accurate list of attendees allows us to communicate quickly and directly if a cancellation becomes necessary. This helps ensure those who are planning to attend receive timely updates, especially as some may not see an email in time or may already be on their way.

- Recently, a known homeless individual was observed walking up our driveway after hours, but promptly left upon noticing someone working on the property.

In a separate incident, our security cameras recorded a suspicious-looking pickup truck entering the driveway, circling the yard, and then leaving. Both incidents have been reported to the police.

If you notice trespassers or any suspicious activity, contact the Honokaa Police Department or the County of Hawaii Police Department Non-Emergency Call Center immediately.

- The HJM Executive Team will convene for their next scheduled Zoom meeting on March 15, 2026 at 10am. This is not a membership meeting, but a meeting for the Officers and Directors of Hamakua Jodo Mission.
- Last month, historians Wendy Tolleson and Ross Stephenson of Oahu, spent a morning exploring the area behind the dining hall, searching for archaeological evidence to determine whether a hospital

once stood near the temple, as has been suggested by elders.

In addition to this field research, Wendy has been providing ongoing historical research on HJM, helping us maintain an accurate and detailed record of the temple's history.

- HJM's Annual Membership Meeting will be held on **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.

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION LUNCHEON

For many years, HJM hosted an annual New Year's Luncheon for its members and guests. The event was paused during the COVID-19 pandemic and, sadly, never reinstated.

This year, we felt that if anyone truly deserved a luncheon, it was our dedicated volunteers, and we didn't think anyone would object to honoring the people who keep HJM thriving!



On January 25, 2026, we held our first annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon at the Jade Palace Restaurant in Waimea. Volunteers who contributed three or more times during 2025 were invited to celebrate their commitment, hard work, and the often-unsung efforts that keep our temple in excellent care.

The Jade Palace was chosen not only for its delicious Chinese cuisine but also to preserve a touch of tradition, as it had long hosted the former New Year's Luncheon.

We were delighted to welcome special guests to our luncheon: Ross and Carol Stephenson and Wendy Tolleson, who happened to be on the island for a business trip and joined us in celebrating our volunteers.



While three of our faithful monthly Beautification Work Day volunteers Louli Yardley and Wayne & Jeri Kawakami could not attend, their presence was deeply felt, and many shared how much they were missed.

It was wonderful to gather together, relax, and enjoy each other's company without the hot sun, sweat, and aches of a clean-up day!

This occasion was a heartfelt reminder of the invaluable role our volunteers play at HJM. We are deeply grateful for their continued kokua and support!

We're currently seeking additional volunteers who are physically able to assist us with our fabulous crew. If you can't make it to one of our Beautification Work Days, please remember that support is appreciated at any time that works best for you.

And if volunteering isn't an option right now, we kindly invite you to consider making a donation to help maintain the temple and cemetery, whether it goes toward gardening supplies, equipment, or providing meals and refreshments for those who generously give their time. To learn more on how YOU can help, please call us at (808) 775-0965 or send an email to: contact@hamakuajodominion.org



REMEMBERING MEMBERS OF THE PAST



Since its founding, our temple has been blessed with devoted members who have generously given their time, energy, and heartfelt dedication to ensure its growth and success. Through their quiet acts of service and steadfast faith, they have built the strong foundation we stand on today. In this new column, we shine a spotlight on members from the past, honoring their legacy and expressing our deep gratitude for all they have done.

This month, we proudly recognize Kazumi “Special” Nakagawa, a lifelong member of HJM. Special was born on May 16, 1915, in Paauhau, the son of Jiroku and Yai Nakagawa.

In 1932, he began working for the Paauhau Sugar Company. Through dedication and hard work, he became a truck driver in 1943, later advancing to senior truck driver before being promoted to utility supervisor in 1956. His strong work ethic and leadership earned him the respect of colleagues and community members alike.

Together with his wife, Iris, Special raised three children - two sons and a daughter, instilling in them the same values of service and community that guided his own life. Even with the demands of work and family, he remained deeply involved in community activities.

He served as an assistant coach for the Hamakua League’s Paauhau Baseball Team and contributed his time to numerous

organizations, including the Paauhau Credit Union, Paauhau Boy Scouts Troop 34, the Paauhau School PTA Board of Directors, and the Paauhau Dancing Club.

In 1950, Special was among fifteen Paauhau residents who formed a co-partnership known as the Paauhau Community Store, ensuring the continuation of the beloved plantation general store.

Despite his hectic schedule, Special always made time for our temple. Even after his retirement, he faithfully volunteered at HJM, helping with clean-up days, setting up for events, and serving on committees. His steady presence and willingness to help exemplified true dedication. He was, indeed, a busy man, but always one who gave selflessly.

Special passed away in 2007 in Cypress, California, at the age of 92. Though he is no longer with us, his legacy of service continues to inspire.

Last year, his daughter, Elaine Bickerstaff of New Mexico, visited HJM with her husband, Robert, along with her son and daughter-in-law. During her visit, she shared warm memories with Kyodan President Sandy Takahashi, reminiscing about her parents, her childhood in Paauhau, and the cherished moments at the temple.

We honor and remember Kazumi “Special” Nakagawa with gratitude and appreciation for a life so generously lived!

HAWAII BEEKEEPER LEGACY PROJECT EXHIBITION

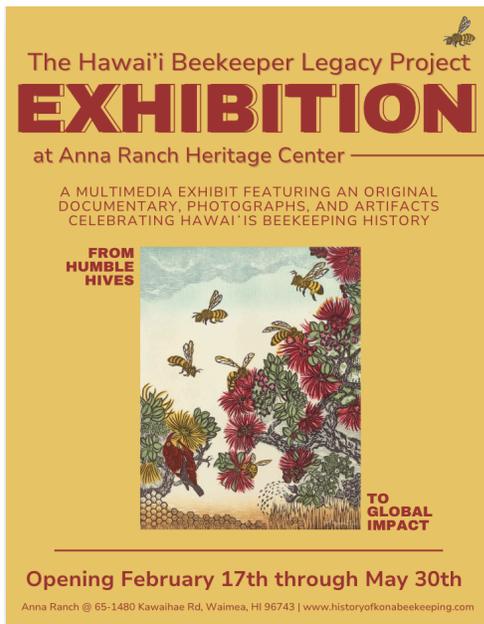
We were pleasantly surprised when Leandra Rouse, founder of the Hawaii Beekeeper Legacy Project, reached out to us after discovering our newsletter from last month.

Leandra is spearheading a new exhibit at the Anna Ranch Heritage Center in Waimea, opening this month, celebrating the pioneers of Hawaii’s beekeeping industry.

She was particularly interested in our “Did You Know?” column featuring former Kyodan President Sanshiro Yano and his family, who played a significant role in developing beekeeping on the Big Island.

Leandra asked if we could provide more information about Sanshiro and his father, Kakuichi, and requested permission to include Sanshiro’s photo in the exhibit honoring their remarkable contributions.

We forwarded her email to the last known contact for the Yano family we have on file and hope they were able to connect - it would be a fitting tribute to recognize their pioneering work and lasting impact on Hawaii’s beekeeping history.



The exhibition runs through May 30, 2026. For more information please visit the following website: www.historyofkonabeekeeping.com

SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESSES

This month, we’re changing things up and featuring not a business, but Phil Hulbert, an avid bonsai enthusiast who generously volunteers his time hosting free workshops and classes on bonsai and pruning here on the Big Island.

We first met Phil when Ron Takata, a longtime friend of HJM, brought him to the temple to help care for a kuromatsu black pine tree planted in 2021 by Ron and former Kyodan President Masa Nishimori.



Phil Hulbert next to the kuromatsu black pine

Over time, Phil has fertilized, pruned, and “trained” the branches, helping the kuromatsu thrive and flourish under his guidance.

Phil’s passion for bonsai dates back decades. In the 1980s, he founded Tsuki Nursery Inc. in Olympia, Washington, a landscaping and nursery business specializing in bonsai, Japanese maple trees, and other plants, before relocating to Honouliuli.

Today, Phil continues to share his expertise with the community. He hosts a free bonsai workshop at the Hakalau Jodo Mission dining hall every second Saturday of the month from 12:30pm to 3:30pm.

Those interested in attending can register directly by texting (360) 791-8091 or via email to: philhulbert1611@gmail.com

Phil occasionally teaches free tree pruning classes at Liliuokalani Gardens in Hilo, with announcements for new workshops published in local newspapers.

**MARCH 2026
NENKI MEMORIAL SERVICES**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>YEAR</u>
3/10	Yoshiko Kawashima	3rd
3/10	Isami Okunami	37th
3/18	Mitsuo Nakagawa	13th
3/26	Paul Osako	33rd
3/31	Arlene Watanabe Pullen	1 year

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!*

IN APPRECIATION



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

Yoshiko Dacanay, Hillary Chang, Melody Ross, Ron Takata, Mr. & Mrs. George Higaki, Mr. & Mrs. Edward Honda, and Mr. & Mrs. Ross Stephenson.

Membership dues:

Melody Ross, Pickens Kehrer, Kihana Moon, Mr. & Mrs. Edward Honda, Austin Kehrer, Eugene Okamoto, Sr., Jan Kamiya, Hillary Chang, Mr. & Mrs. George Higaki, Iris Nakagawa, and Dr. Crystal Moon.

CONTRIBUTIONS & SUBMISSIONS

Whether it's an article, a favorite memory, or a candid photo, we'd love to feature it in an upcoming newsletter! Send your submissions in Word, PDF, JPEG, or PNG formats. Please send your contributions by the 15th of each month to: contact@hamakuajodominion.org to be considered for inclusion.

**UPCOMING EVENTS & SERVICES
SCHEDULE**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>TIME</u>
2/22/26	Beautification Work Day	8:00am
2/28/26	Private Tour & Presentation	10:00am
4/26/26	2026 Annual Membership 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

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

Mahalo for reading & your continued support!

*- The Hamakua Jodo Mission
Newsletter Committee*

"Nothing can dim the light which shines from within." – Maya Angelou

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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Hamakua Jodo Mission

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