



## HAMAKUA JODO MISSION OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER MARCH 2026



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*“Honoring Tradition, Embracing Community”*

### 2026 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING



Our Annual Membership Meeting will be held on **Sunday, April 26, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. HST**. The meeting will be offered in a hybrid format, taking place in person in our dining hall and via Zoom.

Because of our location and limited connectivity infrastructure, internet service at the temple can sometimes be inconsistent. While we will do our best to provide a smooth Zoom experience, occasional audio, video, or connection interruptions may occur beyond our control, especially during inclement weather.

For this reason, we kindly encourage members who reside on the island to attend the meeting in person, as this will provide the most reliable way to participate.

Please note that attendance at the meeting is limited to Hamakua Jodo Mission members whose membership dues are current.

We have also had several meeting notices mailed to members' last known addresses returned by USPS as undeliverable. If your membership dues are current but you have not

received your meeting packet, please contact us so we may update our records and ensure that you receive the necessary materials. You may call (808) 775-0965 and leave your current mailing address on our voicemail, or email us at [contact@hamakuajodomission.org](mailto:contact@hamakuajodomission.org)

We look forward to seeing you and having a productive and informative meeting!

### IN LOVING MEMORY



**SUEICHI KAWASHIMA**  
**May 13, 1928 - March 7, 2026**

With profound sadness, we share the passing of one of our beloved temple elders, Sueichi “Suei” Kawashima who passed away earlier this month.

Mr. Kawashima was a devoted member and a steady presence at our temple. He generously gave his time, energy, and wisdom, always ready to quietly help without fanfare or expectation of recognition.

For many years, he served on our Board of Directors, contributing his wisdom and steady guidance to help the temple grow and flourish.

In 1950, he married his beloved wife, Betty, in a ceremony at our temple officiated by Rev. Kogan Ekuan - a joyful occasion that reflected his deep connection to this sacred place.

His dedication, humility, and warm smile and spirit touched many, and his example of selfless service will long be remembered by those who had the privilege of knowing him.

As we honor him with gratitude and appreciation, we also reflect on the many ways his life enriched HJM. Mr. Kawashima was a class act in every sense of the word - a rare and remarkable person that is increasingly impossible to find in today's world.

We extend our deepest sympathies to the Kawashima Family. May they find comfort in knowing how much he meant to us and how deeply he will be missed. *Namu Amida Butsu.*

## HIGAN



Higan, which means “*the other shore,*” is a special Buddhist observance held twice a year during the Spring equinox in March, and the Autumn equinox in September.

In Buddhist teachings, life is seen as a journey between two shores: the one we inhabit and the Pure Land. Crossing from this world to the Pure Land symbolizes following the path of

Buddhist practice with mindfulness and compassion.

Higan is also a time to honor our ancestors and departed loved ones. Similar to Obon, many people visit gravesites to clean and decorate them, place food offerings, and recite sutras and prayers. It is an opportunity to reflect on life, express gratitude, and maintain a connection with those who have passed.

## OTHER NOTEWORTHY HAPPENINGS

- Mahalo to the members of Hokuloa United Church of Christ, who spent a day at our temple last month. Their retreat included a private tour of both the temple and cemetery, and we truly enjoyed having the opportunity to host them!



- Save the Date! Our 2026 Obon festival will be held on **Saturday, August 8, 2026**. More details will be available as we plan our annual event honoring our ancestors!
- Our commercial property, fire, general liability, and directors & officers insurance policies have been successfully renewed for another year.
- We are interested in purchasing vetiver grass starts or slips in bulk at a discounted rate. Vetiver is needed to plant along the perimeter of the cemetery to help mitigate the erosion that has been happening over the years.

If you know someone who is interested in selling vetiver or willing to donate it to our temple, please contact us by leaving a

voicemail message at (808) 775-0965 or sending an email message to: [contact@hamakuajodominion.org](mailto:contact@hamakuajodominion.org)

- HJM members, friends, and volunteers are invited to visit the Hawaii Beekeeper Legacy Project Exhibit at the Anna Ranch Heritage Center in Waimea.

We received a personal invitation to this free community event that runs Tuesdays through Fridays until May 30, 2026. The exhibit highlights the contributions of local beekeepers.

We were notified that the Yano family is featured as part of this year's exhibit. More information is available on their website:

[www.historyofkonabeekeeping.com](http://www.historyofkonabeekeeping.com)

- Many thanks to HJM member Cindy Coronel for donating multiple bottles of hand soap which will help keep our kitchen, bathrooms, and workstations clean and well-stocked.
- We would like to express our gratitude to volunteers Wayne Kawakami and Susan Horie, who have been helping with weedwhacking on days beyond our regular monthly Beautification Work Day.

### TREE SAFETY EVALUATION



We are currently in the process of consulting with licensed arborists to evaluate the poinciana manor shower tree located in the

front yard and to provide professional recommendations.

The tree's large, exposed roots have posed a tripping hazard for some time, and our insurance agent previously recommended posting a "No Entry" sign near the stairs off the driveway leading up to the tree, to discourage foot traffic in that area. This precaution was implemented a couple of years ago.

More recently, several large branches have broken off particularly during periods of severe weather. In the interest of safety and responsible management, the HJM Executive Team (Board of Directors) is taking proactive steps by having an arborist inspect the tree and advise us on appropriate measures.

Their professional assessment will help guide any necessary actions to reduce potential liability and ensure the safety of our members and visitors.

### SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY



The Hawaii Jodo Shu Rengo Fujinkai is now accepting applications for the Namiye Nakamura Scholarship.

This \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded to a Hawaii high school graduate or a member of a Jodo Shu temple who is pursuing an undergraduate or advanced degree at an accredited college, university, or institution of higher learning.

To be eligible, the applicant's family or legal guardian must be a member of their respective Jodo Mission. Applications must be submitted by June 15, 2026.

We encourage our members and their family members who are pursuing college degrees or higher education opportunities to apply for this scholarship and take advantage of this opportunity to support their academic journey.

Last year, Dylan Matsui, whose parents are HJM members Destry and Dawn Matsui, was selected as a recipient of this prestigious scholarship!

For an application and more details on the qualifications, interested parties can contact the Jodo Mission of Hawaii (Betsuin) office directly at (808) 949-3995.

## REMEMBERING MEMBERS OF THE PAST



### 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](mailto:contact@hamakuajodomission.org)

March is Women's History Month, a time to recognize and celebrate the women who have made lasting contributions to our communities.

This year, we honor Tsuruye Hirayama, a devoted member of HJM who generously shared her time, talents, and heart with our temple for many years.

Tsuruye, the daughter of Tsunematsu and Tsuta Takahashi, was born on October 14, 1919 in Paauhau. She was the third oldest of eight children, and began working at a young age to help support her family.

At just 15 years old, Tsuruye became the cafeteria manager at Paauhau Elementary School. After the school permanently closed, she continued her career in food service as the cafeteria manager at Waimea Elementary and Intermediate School, where she worked until her retirement.

Together with her husband, Naoto, Tsuruye was deeply involved in temple life. She was also an active member of the Fujinkai Women's Club and was especially known for her incredible cooking. She had a true passion for cooking and baking, and while balancing her career and volunteerism, she also raised two children, Melody and Craig, alongside Naoto.

Tsuruye often took the lead in preparing delicious dishes for HJM services and events, ensuring that everyone who attended left with a full and happy stomach.

After retiring, Tsuruye and her husband enjoyed traveling and spending time with their children and three grandchildren.

Tsuruye passed away on February 8, 2009, at St. Francis Hospital on Oahu.

Many years later, following the passing of HJM member Tomiko Fujitani in 2022, the Fujitani Family donated a handmade recipe book to the temple that was compiled from Tsuruye's recipes, many specially created for cooking in large quantities.

From homemade English muffins and gobo kamaboko tempura to her famous coconut turnovers, Tsuruye's recipes continue to be remembered, shared, and cherished.

Tsuruye will always be remembered not only for her devotion to the temple, but also for the warmth, kindness, and delicious meals she shared with so many throughout the community.

## SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESSES



If you have been following our newsletters over the years, you may recognize the name Takamine Construction.

This local Hilo-based company has completed several projects at our temple, most recently completing a major siding repair on the Hilo side of the temple in 2023.

Takamine Construction and its founder, Craig Takamine, have deep connections to our temple and community. Craig's grandfather, Yoshinobu "Nobu" Takamine, was an active member of HJM and served for many years as treasurer on our Board of Directors and his maternal great-grandparents, Kinjiro and June Haruyo Chio, are laid to rest in our cemetery.

Our experiences working with Takamine Construction have been excellent. Operations Manager Ikaika Tiogangco kept us informed throughout the siding project and managed to accommodate our needs despite a busy schedule.



Siding Repair underway in 2023

Their team consistently demonstrated punctuality, professionalism, and conscientious workmanship, delivering outstanding results. They worked through rainy weather and completed the job on time as scheduled.

Takamine Construction is a full-service general contracting company specializing in commercial projects, design, custom cabinetry, and high-end residential construction.

For quality work and a team you can trust, contact them at (808) 961-9090 or visit their website: [www.takamineconstruction.com](http://www.takamineconstruction.com)

## VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Volunteering plays a vital role in helping us care for and preserve our temple and cemetery that hold deep significance, history, and connection for so many. It takes consistent effort to

maintain their beauty and respectfulness, and that work is made possible by the generosity of our volunteers.



What's especially inspiring is the majority of those who volunteer at HJM are not members or connected through family ties. Some travel all the way from Hilo and Keaau, giving their time and energy simply out of a shared sense of respect and the aloha spirit. Their dedication is a powerful reminder of how meaningful HJM is beyond just our immediate circle.

If you're unable to join us during our monthly Beautification Work Days, there are still plenty of opportunities to contribute. You're always welcome to volunteer on a day that works best for your schedule. Every bit of help truly makes a difference!

For those who may not be able to personally tend to your family's gravesite, we kindly ask you to consider making a small donation to support ongoing maintenance. These contributions help ensure that all areas remain cared for with dignity and respect.

Contributions also help us provide to-go lunches for our volunteers as a small token of appreciation for their hard work and dedication. Supporting volunteer efforts in this way allows us to care for the grounds at a much lower cost than hiring outside labor, while continuing to strengthen a strong sense of community.

We especially welcome volunteers who are able to assist with more physically demanding tasks, such as climbing ladders, operating

power tools, bending, pulling weeds, washing windows, and general upkeep. These jobs are essential to maintaining the grounds and facilities, and extra hands are always needed.

No matter how you choose to give, whether it's your time, your effort, or your support - every contribution matters. Together, we can continue to care for this special place for generations to come. Your consideration is greatly appreciated!



#### APRIL 2026 NENKI MEMORIAL SERVICES

<u>DATE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>YEAR</u>
4/09	Waku Fukaura	50th
4/21	Tami Yuki	7th
4/25	Sandra Nakagawa	33rd

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 *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:

Larry Higashi, Maren Lambeth, Hokuloa United Church of Christ, and Kazue Kimura.

Membership dues:

Kristina Adams, A.A. Yoshikatsu Kehrer, Cindy Coronel, Nicole Garcia, Maren Lambeth, Sandy Takahashi, Jason Higaki, Mr. & Mrs. Destry Matsui, Kazue Kimura, Mayette Drake, and Mr. & Mrs. Yoshiaki Masuo.

## CONTRIBUTIONS & SUBMISSIONS

Do you enjoy writing or maybe you have a collection of old photos, stories, or memories that deserve to be shared? We'd love to see them! Our newsletter is always looking for fresh voices and contributions.

Whether it's a personal story, a creative piece, a reflection on a special moment, or even a snapshot that captures a bit of history, your submission could be featured in an upcoming issue.

We also welcome Letters to the Editor - share your thoughts, feedback, or responses to past newsletters and help keep the conversation going!

Submitting is easy: simply send your work in Word, PDF, JPEG, or PNG format. Our newsletter committee will review all entries and

selected pieces will be included in future publications.

Please send your contributions by the 15th of each month via email to:

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

## UPCOMING EVENTS & SERVICES SCHEDULE

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>TIME</u>
3/22/26	Beautification Work Day	8:00am
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: [hamakuajodoexecuteteam@gmail.com](mailto:hamakuajodoexecuteteam@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*

***"The difference between ordinary and extraordinary is that little extra."  
- Jimmy Johnson***

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

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**Hamakua Jodo Mission**

*The First Sanctioned Buddhist Temple Built in  
Hawaii*

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