



# HAMAKUA JODO MISSION OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER APRIL 2026



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*“Honoring Tradition, Embracing Community”*

## HANAMATSURI



*Hanamatsuri* is observed by Buddhists on April 8, 2026, which is to celebrate the birth of Prince Siddhartha Gautama, who later became the Buddha. This day is an opportunity to honor Buddha's life and teachings, reflecting on compassion, wisdom, and mindfulness in our daily lives.

A small pavilion called a *hanamido* is decorated with flowers to symbolize the beauty of the world into which Buddha was born. An important ritual involves pouring sweet tea over a statue of the infant Buddha located inside the *hanamido*, representing purification and respect.

*Hanamatsuri* is both a celebration and a time for spiritual reflection, reminding us of the values of renewal, gratitude, and care for all beings.

## ANNUAL MEETING REMINDER

Our Annual Membership Meeting is coming up on **Sunday, April 26, 2026, at 10:00 am HST**. The meeting will be held in a hybrid format, both in person in our dining hall and via Zoom.

As mentioned in our previous newsletter, we encourage members who live on the island to attend in person whenever possible, as this provides the most reliable way to participate given occasional internet service connectivity issues.

This meeting is open to all current dues-paying members. If you are unable to attend, we kindly ask that you submit a signed proxy to help us meet quorum requirements. Mahalo!

## POINCIANA MANOR SHOWER TREE UPDATE



Following an assessment by a licensed arborist, it was recommended that the shower tree be professionally trimmed to remove dead wood and reduce the load on its major branches. The arborist also identified a wound in the tree that increased the risk of branch

failure. This preventative work was necessary to help avoid splitting, loss of large limbs, or potential overall tree failure.

We engaged Long Limbs Tree Service LLC to complete the work, as they have successfully provided professional tree trimming services for the property in the past.

Please be assured that the tree **was not** removed. It was carefully trimmed in accordance with professional recommendations for liability reasons. While the canopy may appear more open than before, this is due to the removal of dead and weakened wood to promote the tree's long-term health and safety.

### OTHER NOTEWORTHY HAPPENINGS

- The Hawaii Council of Jodo Mission will host their Laypersons Biennial Conference via Zoom on Saturday, April 25, 2026 from 1:00pm HST.
- Thanks to the efforts of our dedicated volunteers, the temple's sliding door tracks have been carefully waxed, allowing the doors to glide smoothly with ease. The hallway doors have also been adjusted and modified to prevent sticking, making them easier to open and close.
- We've recently seen a noticeable increase in visitors stopping by the temple, with guests arriving almost daily from both near and far.

Among them was Leo Yoshida, author of *Honokaa Boy*, the best selling novel that was later adapted into a beloved movie. He visited alongside three members of his Porter Classic fashion team from Japan, including two designers and their store manager.

- Mahalo nui loa to Richard Leman, Donna Ching, Linda Thompson, Faith Elarionoff, Wayne Kawakami, Jeri Kawakami, and Susan Horie for volunteering hours of their time this month outside of our monthly Beautification Work Days!

- The Hawaii Jodo Shu Rengo Fujinkai is currently accepting applications for the Namiye Nakamura Scholarship. For details on the qualifications and an application, interested parties can contact the Jodo Mission of Hawaii (Betsuin) office directly at (808) 949-3995.

### TRESPASSERS

Our security cameras have recorded unidentified individuals riding ATVs onto our property by bypassing the chain gate and entering through the narrow grassy area beside the gate post. These incidents have occurred several times in the early morning hours while it is still dark.

We have conducted thorough walkthroughs of the property to ensure that nothing was stolen or damaged after each occurrence.

These individuals have been driving up along the Kona side of the property, skirting the edge of the cemetery and trespassing onto our neighbor's pasture. This activity is evidenced by fresh skid marks and clear signs that gates have been opened. On one occasion, an ATV was also observed slowly driving across our front yard.

All incidents have been reported to the Honokaa Police Department, which has since increased patrols in the area and will continue conducting additional drive-bys to monitor the situation.



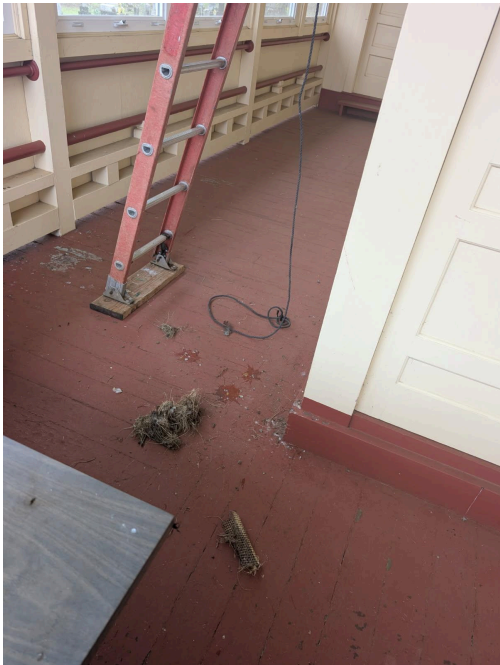
Temporary barrier

In response, a temporary barrier was installed along the right side of the gate post, to prevent

further access through the grassy area, which is too narrow for standard size vehicles.

## BIRD NEST REMOVAL & PREVENTION

Multiple bird nests have accumulated along the temple's roofline, particularly within the eaves, roof cavities, and gutter systems. Their presence created ongoing maintenance challenges, as bird droppings regularly accumulated across the veranda, railings, and stairway.



Bird nest removal

This necessitated frequent power washing of the veranda and stairs, and the wiping down the railings, which is time-consuming and physically demanding.

The nests themselves were located in elevated and hard-to-access areas beyond the reach of standard ladders. Additionally, the majority of our volunteers are not physically able to safely operate extension ladders at such heights, further complicating the removal process.

We were fortunate to receive assistance through the loan of a 30 ft extension ladder from community member Keith Burkhardt, which enabled HJM member Pickens Kehrer to carry out the removal safely and effectively.



Pickens power washing

In addition to removing the nests, Pickens power washed the areas including the veranda, stairs, and railings, then installed metal bird spikes in these elevated locations to serve as a long-term deterrent.

These measures are expected to significantly reduce future nesting activity and help prevent the recurrence of bird droppings and maintenance issues previously experienced.

## DECLUTTERING PROGRESS

Decluttering efforts beneath the temple have resumed and are making good headway! Some progress was made previously when we cleared a section under the temple stairs during stair repairs, but a substantial amount of items still remain.

Over the years, this area became heavily cluttered with large, bulky items, including broken equipment, household furnishings, and countless discarded materials. It appears to have served as an informal storage space, where items that should have been discarded decades ago were instead retained.

Among the items found were large, hand drawn sewing patterns that were rolled up and kept under the temple. The patterns are dated 1950 and the name Tsutae Okazaki is written on them.

If you know who Tsutae Okazaki was or if you are a descendant of this person, we'd love to hear from you. If you know whether she was a

seamstress or if the patterns were made for her, please reach out to us!



Sewing patterns found

Clearing this space will require time, and considerable effort given our limited number of able-bodied volunteers. This remains an ongoing project, and we will continue working steadily to restore the area to be clutter free.

## SAVE THE DATE



Photo credit: Sarah Anderson

Summer may seem to be a few months away, but temples like us across the islands have been busily starting to plan and organize their upcoming Obon festivities.

Our Obon festival returns on **Saturday, August 8, 2026**. We will have our gravesite service starting at 5:00pm, followed by an indoor service at 6:00pm and our bon dance at 7:00pm.

Last year we had the largest turnout to date and offered many activities for the young and

old besides the bon dance. We will be offering cultural activities and educational displays again this year and some surprises, too!

We were pleasantly surprised to receive our 2026 Obon *tenugui* (bon dance towel) shipment from Japan this month, a few weeks earlier than anticipated. Thank you to Tatsuji Maeda in Japan for his consistently outstanding customer service and dedicated support with all of our orders!

Kyodan President Sandy Takahashi, who holds an art degree, created this year's tenugui with a different approach.

Departing from past designs, this year's tenugui beautifully reflects the theme of honoring our ancestors and celebrating Buddhist traditions. Its originality and thoughtful design make it truly special. We hope you will love it as much as we do!

We are also seeking volunteers to help us with Obon preparations, including the set-up days and during the night of the event.

If you are interested in helping, please reach out to us at: [contact@hamakuajodmission.org](mailto:contact@hamakuajodmission.org) or by leaving a voicemail message at (808) 775-0965.

## INSURANCE REPRESENTATION

After many years of working with Mutual Underwriters, we have transitioned our two remaining insurance accounts with them to Pyramid Insurance.

We are thankful for the service we received over the years from Mutual Underwriters, however a change was needed.

We look forward to this new chapter with Pyramid Insurance, where Rick Sakata will be serving as our insurance agent. He, along with his assistant, Brittany Iga, will be providing guidance and support for our ongoing needs.

With an office in Honokaa, Pyramid Insurance offers added convenience, and their attentive

staff gives us confidence that our needs will be handled promptly and effectively.



This change was made after careful consideration by HJM's Executive Team, with the goal of ensuring the best possible service and coverage moving forward.

### REMEMBERING MEMBERS OF THE PAST



Another devoted member of the past who consistently offered his time and support to HJM was Tsuneo Takata. Born in 1920 in Paauhau to Kazuto and Hatsume Takata, he spent his childhood there and demonstrated leadership from a young age.

As a junior in high school, he notably stepped in as a substitute clerk for the Board of Health during the regular clerk's absence. Tsuneo graduated in 1938 as part of Honokaa High School's first graduating class and was later among a select group of 26 individuals to complete the Dale Carnegie Course.

Tsuneo remained closely connected to Paauhau throughout most of his adult life before later purchasing a home in Honokaa. His professional career with the Paauhau Sugar Company spanned many years, during which he served as a boiler shift foreman and process factory supervisor prior to his retirement.

In addition to his career, he was deeply engaged in community service, serving as treasurer of the Paauhau PTA, president of the Paauhau Dancing Club, and contributing to numerous local committees.

Together with his wife, Haruyo, Tsuneo was a steady and active presence at the temple. He chaired multiple committees, assisting with publicity, decorations, and maintenance projects, and was always willing to lend a helping hand wherever needed.

Tsuneo Takata passed away at the age of 80 on August 8, 2000, in Honolulu

*Fun fact: Tsuneyo and Haruyo's son, Rex, was born on January 1, 1956, at Honokaa Hospital, becoming the first baby born on the Big Island that year.*

### DID YOU KNOW?

The earliest Jodo Shu temples built in Hawaii were all established on the Big Island, underscoring the island's central role in the spread of Pure Land Buddhism. Hamakua Jodo Mission, the first temple, was founded in 1896. In the years that followed, additional temples were established in Laupahoehoe, Olaa (Kurtistown), Kapaau (Kohala), Hakalau, Wainaku (Hilo), and Hawi, reflecting the rapid growth of the Jodo Shu community across the island.

Although a *temporary* temple associated with what is known today as the Jodo Mission of Hawaii was built in 1903 in Honolulu, it was not until 1907 that a permanent temple was established beyond the Big Island. This distinction means that, technically, the Big Island holds the earliest established Jodo Shu temples in the islands. Now you know!

## 2026 MEMBERSHIP DUES

If you missed the March 31, 2026 deadline to pay your 2026 membership dues, you can still reinstate your membership to an active status by remitting your 2026 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)

including those hosted or sponsored by organizations and individuals who have supported us in many ways - whether through donations, volunteering their time, or assisting with our events over the years.

Our town is a small community, and there is a strong spirit of aloha where we help one another. When others reach out to us for help, we try to reciprocate that kindness, just as they have supported us.

It is important to stay connected and engaged with the community. These relationships are essential, not only for promoting goodwill, but also for helping ensure the continued vitality and future of our temple.

We understand that not every email will be of interest to everyone, but we hope you see them as part of our effort to stay connected and support the community that supports us.

## SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESSES



Photo credit: Honokaa Hongwanji Mission

Over the years, we've had the privilege of featuring many local businesses that have supported us in countless ways. Time and again, they've shown generosity and a genuine willingness to help whenever we've reached out, and for that, we are deeply grateful.

This month, we are especially honored to highlight Da Temple Basement Store, a beloved thrift shop in Honokaa. This unique space is a joint effort between the Buddhist Women's Association and the Honokaa Hongwanji Mission, reflecting a strong spirit of community and shared purpose.

## YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED



We received a question this month from someone who is on our email mailing list:

*"I received an email about a movie playing at the local theater. Why am I receiving things that aren't related to Hamakua Jodo Mission?" - C.M.*

From time to time, we send out emails about events happening around our community,

Run by Berni Botelho and a dedicated team of volunteers, many of whom also give their time to the temple, the store is truly one of a kind!

Inside, you'll find an ever-changing assortment of items: furniture, household goods, clothing, collectibles, and plenty of hidden treasures, all at incredibly affordable prices.

There's even a special room devoted to used records, CDs, DVDs, and books, making it a place where you can easily lose track of time while browsing.

Their kindness has extended directly to our temple as well. Beyond their already low prices, they've generously offered us additional discounts on much-needed items like office furniture and supplies, making a difference in our day-to-day operations.



Photo credit: Honokaa Hongwanji Mission

What makes Da Temple Basement Store especially remarkable is that it's more than just a thrift shop - it's a place for giving back. Every purchase helps support the temple's programs and community initiatives, ensuring that their positive impact continues to grow.

The store is open on Fridays from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and is located at 45-516 Lehua Street in Honokaa, just below the slope of the Honokaa Hongwanji Mission's social hall.

If you're doing a bit of Spring cleaning and have gently used items to pass along, consider

donating them here. Contributions are accepted during store hours, and each donation helps sustain the work they do for the community.



### MAY 2026 NENKI MEMORIAL SERVICES

<u>DATE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>YEAR</u>
5/13	Tozo Takamine	50th
5/24	Masuji Iwasaki	37th
5/26	Kamado Toyama	43rd

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!*

### VOLUNTEERS WANTED

We are once again reaching out for volunteers to assist during our monthly Beautification Work Days, as well as on other days throughout the year.

These efforts are essential to preserving the beauty, safety, and spiritual atmosphere of our temple grounds and cemetery. It is not just a matter of maintenance, but an expression of respect and gratitude for those who came

before us and for those who continue to gather and worship here.



Photo credit: Sarah Anderson

Maintaining the grounds requires the support of able-bodied individuals who are willing to lend their time and energy to physical tasks such as clearing, cleaning, and general upkeep.

You do not need to be a member to participate - everyone is welcome. All that is needed is a positive attitude, a strong work ethic, and a willingness to contribute where needed. Whether you can join us regularly or just occasionally, **your help makes a difference.**



Photo credit: Linda Thompson

If you are interested or would like more information, please feel free to contact us via (808) 775-0965 or by emailing us at: [contact@hamakuajodmission.org](mailto:contact@hamakuajodmission.org)

We appreciate your support in helping us care for and preserve our temple for future generations. *Okagesama de!*

## CONTRIBUTIONS & SUBMISSIONS

Have something on your mind? A story that still makes you laugh, a memory you don't want to fade, a question you've been meaning to ask, or even just a small idea you think others would enjoy? We'd love to hear it!

Our newsletter becomes far more interesting when it reflects a mix of perspectives, experiences, and creativity from our readers.

You're welcome to submit just about anything whether it is an article, personal stories, photos, questions, suggestions, or honest feedback. It doesn't have to be polished or perfect; sometimes the most memorable pieces are the ones that feel real, genuine, and from the heart.

Please email your materials in Word, PDF, JPEG, or PNG format by the 15th of each month to: [contact@hamakuajodmission.org](mailto:contact@hamakuajodmission.org)

## CONTACT INFORMATION REQUEST



Keeping your contact information up to date helps us stay connected with you, especially if you have loved ones interred at our cemetery or urns in the hondo.

Accurate details ensure we can reach you with important updates, notices, or questions when needed. By keeping your information current, you help us continue our commitment to honoring the departed.

Please let us know if your address, phone number or email address has changed by calling us at (808) 775-0965 or via email at: [contact@hamakuajodmission.org](mailto:contact@hamakuajodmission.org)



## VETIVER GRASS WANTED

We are seeking to purchase vetiver grass starts or slips in bulk at a discounted rate. This planting is part of an effort to address ongoing erosion along the cemetery's perimeter.

Throughout the years, soil loss has destabilized the grounds, causing headstones to tilt and, in some cases, topple, while also leading to cracks in the foundations of burial plots.



Cracked foundation

Establishing a dense vetiver barrier will help reinforce the soil, mitigate further erosion, and preserve the integrity and dignity of the cemetery.

Vetiver tends to be relatively costly. Each slip, resembling a single green onion with its small bulb at the base, costs \$3.50 on average, and stabilizing the entire cemetery perimeter along the gulch line will require hundreds of them.

If you know someone who is interested in selling vetiver to us at a discounted rate or willing to donate some slips to our temple, please have them reach out to us by calling (808) 775-0965 or sending an email via: [contact@hamakuajodominion.org](mailto:contact@hamakuajodominion.org)

## UPCOMING EVENTS & SERVICES SCHEDULE

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>TIME</u>
4/26/26	2026 Annual Membership Meeting	10:00am
5/24/26	Beautification Work Day	8:00am
8/08/26	Private Nenki Service	4:00pm
	<u>2026 Obon Festival</u>	
	Gravesite Service	5:00pm
	Indoor Service	6:00pm
	Bon Dance	7:00pm

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)

*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 only true wisdom is in knowing  
you know nothing." - Socrates***

*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)*

## 2026 DONATION LETTER CAMPAIGN DRIVE

By now, many of you who have an address on file with us may have received a recent letter from HJM humbly inviting you to consider making a donation to our temple. We recognize that there are numerous organizations currently reaching out for support. In a close-knit community such as ours, it is often the same generous individuals who are asked to give time and again. We do not take this lightly, and it is with humility that we ask you to consider extending your kokua to our temple.

It has been nearly two years since we last conducted a major donation campaign. During that time, we have continued to care for our temple as best we can, but there remain important repairs, ongoing maintenance needs, and day-to-day operational expenses that require attention. Your support will directly help us sustain and preserve our historic temple for current and future generations.

We also continue to work toward a long-term goal: the purchase of the land from Kamehameha Schools. This is a significant undertaking, one that will take years of thoughtful planning, steady fundraising, and the collective strength of our community. While the goal is substantial, every contribution, no matter the size, moves us closer to securing a permanent home for our temple.

We are deeply grateful for your support and for your thoughtful consideration at this time. Your generosity, in all its forms, truly makes a difference!

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Yes, I want to help **Hamakua Jodo Mission** with a donation.

Donation amount enclosed: \_\_\_\$20 \_\_\_\$50 \_\_\_\$100 Other \$\_\_\_\_\_

Please complete the section below for proper donation acknowledgment and kindly return this form along with your charitable donation to:

**Hamakua Jodo Mission**  
**P.O. Box 7**  
**Honokaa, HI 96727**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to have my donation remain anonymous.

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to be added to the Hamakua Jodo Mission mailing list to receive your monthly newsletter by **email**. My email address is listed above.

To save a stamp and envelope, you may donate online at [www.hamakuajodomission.org](http://www.hamakuajodomission.org) by clicking the "Donate" button, or by scanning the QR code below:



Mahalo for your support!

Hamakua Jodo Mission  
P.O. Box 7  
Honokaa, HI 96727



**Hamakua Jodo Mission**

*The First Sanctioned Buddhist Temple Built in  
Hawaii*

[www.hamakuajodomission.org](http://www.hamakuajodomission.org)

<http://Bit.ly/HamakuaJodoMission>