



HAMAKUA JODO MISSION OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER JUNE 2026



P.O. Box 7 Honokaa, HI 96727 Ph. (808) 775-0965
contact@hamakuajodomission.org

“Honoring Tradition, Embracing Community”

HONORING TRADITION OBON 2026



Photo credit: Sarah Anderson

Obon season officially began on May 24, 2026, with the first Bon Dance of the year held at Reed's Bay in Hilo as part of Care Choices' Annual Celebration of Life and Lantern Floating Event.

As summer unfolds, Bon Dances will continue nearly every weekend across Hawai'i Island through the end of August, bringing together families, friends, and communities in remembrance of loved ones and appreciation for the traditions that connect us. While most events take place on weekends, September will feature two remaining dances, including one held on a Wednesday afternoon and another on September 19.

We are excited to announce that our Obon Festival will be held on **Saturday, August 8, 2026**, rain or shine. This year marks the first time our festival will feature a special theme: **“Okagesama de.”**

This profound Japanese expression translates roughly to *“I am because of you”* and conveys deep gratitude for those whose sacrifices, guidance, and support have made our lives possible. It is a fitting theme for Obon, a season dedicated to honoring our ancestors and remembering the many blessings we have received from those who came before us.

One of the unique features of our Obon Festival is its ambience. Unlike many Bon Dances that take place on asphalt parking lots, our dance is held on a grassy lawn, creating a special atmosphere under the evening sky and moonlight that many attendees look forward to each year.



Photo credit: Sarah Anderson

We are pleased to welcome back Rev. Junshin Miyazaki of Hilo Meishoin, who will officiate the gravesite service beginning at 5:00 p.m., followed by the indoor Obon service at 6:00 p.m.

This year's festival will also feature multiple food trucks, offering a variety of delicious dining options for attendees. In addition, guests can explore new educational exhibits highlighting Buddhist traditions and the

significance of Obon, as well as enjoy cultural activities designed for both the young and the young at heart.

Adding to the festivities, Taishoji Taiko will once again provide lively musical accompaniment for many of the Bon Dance routines.



Photo credit: Sarah Anderson

During intermission, door prizes will be awarded thanks to the generosity of local businesses and merchants who have supported our temple through donations of merchandise and gift cards.

As part of this year's celebration, we will also recognize our active *Keiro* members who are 80 years of age and older. Their devotion, support, and commitment to our temple serve as an inspiration to all of us.

The theme "*Okagesama de*" reminds us that the lives we enjoy today would not be possible without the perseverance and sacrifices of our parents, grandparents, and ancestors who came to Hawaii seeking a better future. Through their hard work and determination, they created opportunities and preserved traditions that continue to enrich our lives today.

Along with this newsletter is a *toba* order form for those who wish to remember a deceased loved one during our Obon service. *Toba* is a wooden memorial tablet that will be recognized during the indoor service and included in a special prayer.

If you would like to participate, please complete and return the order form no later than **Monday, July 20, 2026**. Each *toba* is available for a \$5 donation. Additional instructions can be found on the enclosed form.

OTHER NOTEWORTHY HAPPENINGS

- We want to welcome Hattie Gerrish, a new volunteer, who showed up to our recent Beautification Work Day. Hattie is not a stranger to our temple as she participates in our Bon Dance every year. Many thanks, Hattie!

Many of our volunteers who showed up that day helped with the folding and packaging of 300 *tenugui*.

- Our security cameras have recorded several incidents involving a homeless individual entering and loitering on the property after hours by bypassing the chain gate.

These incidents have been reported to the Honokaa Police Department, and officers have been made aware of the situation. As a result, patrols in the area will be increased.

- We were saddened to learn of the recent vandalism involving the Ojizo-sama statue located in front of the Jodo Mission of Hawaii (Betsuin) in Honolulu. Acts such as these are especially disheartening when they affect places and symbols that hold deep spiritual significance for so many people.

This unfortunate incident serves as an important reminder that we must remain vigilant. Security measures such as surveillance cameras, adequate lighting, and regular monitoring can play a valuable role in deterring vandalism, theft, and other unwanted activities, which has also occurred at HJM in the past.

- A heartfelt mahalo to Wayne Kawakami and Susan Horie who both put in a few hours outside of our normal Beautification Work Day to help out. Thank you also to Phaethon Keeney for donating many floral plants to us!
- Our next Beautification Work Day is scheduled for *Sunday, June 28, 2026* at 8am. Please **RSVP** if you will be volunteering that morning.

With the rain we have been experiencing and hurricane season upon us, it is important that we are able to contact our volunteers should we need to cancel our work day due to inclement weather.

CONGRATULATIONS, SAM!



Photo credit: Sarah Anderson

A huge congratulations goes out to Sam Lee, the talented volunteer behind our Instagram page, who recently graduated from George Washington University in Washington, D.C., with a degree in Archaeology!

We first met Sam in August 2024, when he visited as part of the Stanford University and Foothill College Hawaii Indigenous Archaeology Field School program. After

spending the day volunteering alongside his fellow students, Sam learned about our desire to expand the temple's online presence.

Wanting to help, he generously offered his technical expertise and became a long-distance volunteer, a gesture that would have a lasting impact on our organization.



Sam & his classmates taking a lunch break
Photo credit: Sarah Anderson

Over the past year and a half, Sam has dedicated countless hours to creating, managing, and growing our Instagram page. Through his creativity, enthusiasm, and social media savvy, he helped introduce our temple to a wider audience and share our activities, history, and traditions with people both near and far. Thanks to his efforts, our Instagram following has grown steadily, with engagement increasing significantly in recent months.

As Sam begins an exciting new chapter in his life, he will be relocating to New York to pursue a career in the nonprofit sector. While we are thrilled for this well-deserved opportunity, his new professional responsibilities will unfortunately leave him with less time to continue managing our Instagram account. Moving forward, the page will remain active under the care of Kyodan President Sandy Takahashi.

We are incredibly grateful to Sam for his dedication, generosity, and willingness to share his talents with our temple while balancing the demands of college, work, and other commitments. His contributions have helped strengthen our connection with the

community and have laid a strong foundation for our future online outreach.

Thank you, Sam, for all that you have done. We wish you every success and happiness as you begin this exciting new journey, and we know that wherever life takes you, you will continue to make a positive difference in the lives of others!

SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESS



Our friends at Pine Village Small Farm recently introduced their exciting new venture, Ohana Bakery and Cafe, with a successful pop-up debut during the Honokaa Western Week Parade & Block Party. Judging by the enthusiastic response from customers, this is just the beginning of something special for our community!

Their menu featured an irresistible selection of freshly made fruit and savory crepes, fruit sandwiches, teriyaki chicken sandwiches, and tonkatsu sandwiches, along with their famous curry pan (bread), which has developed a loyal following not only across the Big Island but beyond.

One of their biggest fans is CJ of CJ's Life, the 5-year-old social media sensation and KTA Super Stores ambassador, who boldly declares that their curry pan is even better than the ones he's tasted in Japan!

The excitement doesn't stop there. Ohana Bakery and Cafe is planning to open a permanent location on Mamane Street in Honokaa in the near future. With their delicious food, quality ingredients, and warm, friendly service, they are sure to become a favorite

gathering spot for both residents and visitors alike.



New location on Mamane Street coming soon!

Keep your eyes peeled and your appetites ready....something delicious is coming to town!

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@hamakuajodominion.org

REMEMBERING MEMBERS OF THE PAST



Roy Takeo Higaki was a well-known and dedicated member of our temple for many years, always willing to lend a helping hand whenever it was needed. Affectionately known as “Take” (pronounced Tah-keh) by the longtime members of HJM, he was a familiar and respected presence within both the temple and in the community.

Take was born on January 31, 1918, in Hawi, Hawaii, to immigrant parents Sukeichi and Tame Higaki. His family lived in Niulii and Hawi before eventually settling in Paauhau. Following in the footsteps of his parents, Take became a devoted member of our temple and remained actively involved throughout his life.

During World War II, Take served his country as a Private First Class in the United States Army. After his military service, he returned to Paauhau in 1947 and began working in the carpentry and painting department at the sugar plantation. He remained with the plantation until his retirement from the Davies Hamakua Sugar Company.

Take's commitment to service extended far beyond his workplace. At the temple, he served on numerous committees and was particularly known for his role as chairman of the traffic committee during Obon and other major events. He also represented our temple as a member and auditor of the United Hawaii Meisho Young Buddhist Association (YBA).

Together with his wife, Fumie, Take raised their three children, Karen, Lisa, and Keith while remaining deeply involved in community affairs. He served as unit chairman of the Paauhau International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) and, in 1962, was appointed a Special Deputy authorized to register qualified voters for the Third District, Precinct 6.

During election seasons, he could often be seen supporting Hamakua candidates by placing “Vote For” campaign signs in residents’ yards with their permission.

Take passed away on November 27, 1995, in California. In recognition of his military service, he was laid to rest at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl on Oahu. His lifelong dedication to family, community, country, and our temple remains an enduring example for all who knew him.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteering is a way to support our community and care for the places and traditions we value. By offering our time and energy, we help ensure that important events and services continue to thrive, often in ways that benefit many others.

It also brings people together, creating connections across generations and creating a stronger sense of belonging. In giving our time, we often gain new friendships, skills, and a deeper appreciation for the community around us.

At its heart, volunteering is a simple but powerful reminder that small acts of service can make a lasting difference.

To learn more about volunteering opportunities, please send us an email to: contact@hamakuajodominion.org or via phone at (808) 775-0965.

IN APPRECIATION



We want to thank those who graciously gifted us with monetary donations:

Eugene Okamoto, Sr. & the Okamoto Family, Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Toyama, Warren Osako, Janet Okimoto, Ted Alip, Momi Naughton, Marlene Nishimori, Denis Oketani, Richard Kanemoto, Mr. & Mrs. Steve Toma, Kazue Kimura, Mr. & Mrs. Gene Page, Lauren Kusumoto, Debra Cannoles, and Mr. & Mrs. Destry Matsui.

And mahalo to those who asked to remain anonymous.

Membership dues:

Earl Tanaka and Sandra Kimura

CONTRIBUTIONS & SUBMISSIONS



Have a favorite memory, story, or photo you'd like to share? We'd love to hear from you! If you have content to contribute, a question to ask, or an idea for a future issue, please submit it for consideration in an upcoming edition of our newsletter.

Please email your materials in Word, PDF, JPEG, or PNG format by the 15th of each month to:

contact@hamakuajodominion.org

UPCOMING EVENTS & SERVICES SCHEDULE

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>TIME</u>
6/28/26	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 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*

"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted." – Aesop

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

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!

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 by clicking the "Donate" button, or by scanning the QR code below:



Mahalo for your support!

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Hamakua Jodo Mission

*The First Sanctioned Buddhist Temple Built in
Hawaii*

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