



HAMAKUA JODO MISSION OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2026



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"Honoring Tradition, Embracing Community"

HIGAN



Higan, also known as *Ohigan*, is a Buddhist observance held each spring and autumn around the equinoxes. The word *Higan* translates to "*the other shore*," a metaphor for the journey from a life shaped by suffering and attachment toward wisdom, peace, and enlightenment.

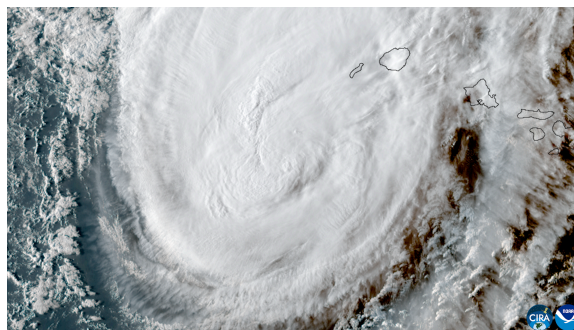
As day and night reach a natural balance, *Higan* offers an opportunity to reflect on our own lives and the path we are traveling. It is a time to remember and honor those who came before us, cultivate a sense of inner calm, and consider how we can bring greater balance and harmony into our daily lives.

The observance also reminds us of the ever-changing nature of life and the importance of appreciating each moment.

During September, Buddhist temples around the world mark the autumn observance of *Higan* with special services and gatherings. In Japan, the season is also closely associated

with the red spider lily, or *higanbana*, whose vivid autumn bloom has become a symbol of *Higan*. Appearing as the seasons begin to change, the flower serves as a reminder of life's impermanence, the importance of remembrance, and the continual journey from one season of life to the next.

EXTENDING OUR ALOHA TO KAUAI



GOES Imagery: CSU/CIRA & NOAA

We are grateful that Hurricane Lowell brought minimal impact to our area and that the temple was spared any damage. At the same time, our hearts are heavy for those across the islands who were not so fortunate, particularly the communities on Kauai that experienced significant damage and loss.

Many of our longstanding HJM members of the past and present, have family and loved ones on Kauai, making the devastation and loss experienced there especially close to our hearts.

May those who have suffered find strength and support in the days ahead, and may the spirit of compassion and aloha guide them as we come together to help one another through this difficult time.

JAPANESE CULTURAL HERITAGE DAY RETURNS ON NOVEMBER 1ST



Last year's bonsai demonstration
Photo credit: Sarah Anderson

On November 1, 2026, we are excited to once again collaborate with the Honokaa Heritage Center to present Japanese Cultural Heritage Day at the temple, from 10am to 2pm.

This year's celebration was selected in recognition of *Bunka no Hi* (Culture Day), a Japanese national holiday observed on November 3rd. Established in 1948, Culture Day commemorates the promulgation of Japan's postwar Constitution on November 3, 1946, and celebrates the values of peace, freedom, and cultural development.

Last year's event brought the community together for a fun and educational day featuring demonstrations, exhibits, temple tours, and hands-on activities celebrating the history and enduring influence of Japanese culture in Hawaii.

We are currently working to organize another memorable celebration for 2026 and will be sharing additional details as plans are finalized in the coming weeks.

One event we can already confirm is a mini Bon Dance, giving everyone another opportunity to gather in celebration of our ancestors.

If you were unable to attend our annual Bon Dance because of last month's heavy rain, this is your chance to come out and enjoy the

music and dancing, and honor our ancestors as part of this special celebration.

We look forward to sharing more details with you soon. Stay tuned!

IN MEMORIAM



Photo Credit: The Higaki Family Collection

ANN YAYOE HIGAKI **JUNE 10, 1932 - AUGUST 15, 2026**

The family of Ann Yayoe Higaki are sad to announce her passing. Ms. Higaki was born in Paauhau Hawaii on June 10, 1932 to Eizuchi Higaki and Yaeno Osako Higaki. She died on August 15, 2026 in Glenview, Illinois and is survived by her brother George Higaki (Jean) and many loved nephews and nieces.

She is predeceased by her brother Sakae Higaki (Rose), sisters Hisae Takahashi (Takio "Taki"), Matsue Matsumoto (Ralph), Karen Setsue Maki (Henry), Tomie Matsumoto (Richard "Masa"), Eiko Sexton (Eugene "Gene"), and Jeanne Tsuyuko Jahn (Clarence "Lucky").

Her lifetime career was spent at Blue Shield of California in San Francisco where she started in the secretarial pool and retired as executive secretary to the Director of Medicine.

Ann loved to travel, making several trips to Japan and taking many cruises to various destinations. She was an active member of the Diamond Senior Center (now Castro Senior Center) where she took yoga, Spanish, worked the rummage sales, and was a member of the walking club. She had many, many wonderful friends.

Her father Eizuchi carved the dragons above the altar area inside the Hamakua Jodo Mission temple, of which she was very proud.

There will be a private ceremony at sea under the Golden Gate Bridge.



Koa wood transom inside the temple

Editor's note: It was with great sadness that we learned of the recent passing of Ms. Higaki. Although she lived on the mainland, she remained deeply connected to our temple and continued to support us generously through her donations.

Ms. Higaki took great pride in her family's deep and longstanding connection to our temple, a connection that began generations ago with her father, Eizuchi. That legacy of involvement has continued through the years, and we are grateful that the Higaki family remains an active part of our temple 'ohana today. We will always remember Ms. Higaki for her kindness, generosity, and love for Hamakua Jodo Mission. Namu Amida Butsu.

OTHER NOTEWORTHY HAPPENINGS

- Photos and videos from our 2026 Obon Festival are now available for viewing on our website:

www.hamakujodomission.org

- Did you pick up the latest edition of the Hamakua Times community newspaper?

We were pleasantly surprised to see that a collage of photos taken by photographer Sarah Anderson were featured on page 23

of their monthly publication. Many thanks to the Hamakua Times staff!

- The two yellow driveway posts have been sanded and repainted.
- Mahalo to Susan Horie and Kobie Kaholoaa-Aguilar for giving their time outside of our monthly Beautification Work Days to help us with some extra weedwhacking. We really appreciate the extra kokua and helping keep our grounds looking great!
- Our next Beautification Work Day is scheduled for Sunday, October 25, 2026.

Since we're still in hurricane season, there's a possibility that weather conditions could require us to reschedule. If you're planning to volunteer, please RSVP so we know who to contact in case of a schedule change. Mahalo!

- Thanks to the positive feedback we received, all of the exhibit panels featured during our Obon Festival will remain on display in the dining hall on a permanent basis.

When the dining hall is needed for meetings, presentations, or refreshments following services, we will temporarily remove the exhibits to accommodate the occasion and return them to display afterward.

- The ongoing rainy weather and recent tropical storms have taken a toll on our cemetery, and erosion continues to worsen.

If you grow vetiver, or know of someone who does, we would greatly appreciate your help. We are looking for individuals who may be willing to donate slips or offer them to HJM at a discounted rate for a bulk purchase.

If you can help or know someone who may be able to assist us, please give us a call

at (808) 775-0965 or by sending an email to: contact@hamakuajodominion.org

A LITTLE KISMET

Some of our readers may remember the mystery we shared in our April newsletter about a collection of old sewing patterns discovered underneath our temple during one of our decluttering work days. The patterns, dating back to 1950, were still in remarkably good shape, and a few had the handwritten name Tsutae Okazaki on them.



Photo of the rolled up patterns

We weren't familiar with her name, but assumed she may have been a member decades ago since the patterns were stored under the temple. Was she a seamstress? Were the patterns drawn for her? And how did they end up underneath the temple?

We put the question out to our readers, asking if anyone knew Tsutae or might be related to her. Then, earlier this month, we received an email from Trey Takahashi, who happened to stumble across our newsletter while searching his grandmother's name online. He wondered if the patterns might have belonged to her, as she would've been 19 years old in 1950.

With the help of some of his family members, Trey confirmed that his grandmother, Tsutae, was indeed a talented seamstress, and the family had lived in Paauhau Mauka. But the real clincher came when Trey shared the first names of Tsutae's siblings with us. We checked the patterns, and there they were!

Several of their names were handwritten right on them.

What started as an unexpected discovery during a cleanup day somehow led us, decades later, straight to Tsutae's grandson. We certainly never imagined that our little newsletter would make that connection.

Trey plans to stop by our temple on his next trip to the Big Island to see the patterns in person. We can't wait to meet him, learn more about Tsutae, and reunite these long-lost treasures with her grandson.

We're still not sure how the patterns ended up underneath our temple, but perhaps they were simply waiting for the right person to come looking.....we like to call that kismet!

WORTH A READ



Civil Beat, an award winning online news site, recently published an insightful article online examining the decline in membership and the aging congregations within Hawaii's Hongwanji Buddhist community.

The article explores the growing concern that these trends could lead to the closure of more temples across the islands, as well as the efforts being made to diversify and find new ways to engage younger generations.

This is a must-read for anyone who cares about the future of Buddhism in Hawaii. While the article focuses on the Hongwanji, many of the challenges and questions it raises resonate across all Buddhist sects in Hawaii, including Jodo Shu. How do we preserve the traditions and values that have been passed down to us while creating a welcoming place for future generations?

We encourage you to take a few minutes to read the article and reflect on these important

issues facing our Buddhist communities. You can find the full article on the Civil Beat website by clicking the link below:

<https://www.civilbeat.org/2026/08/this-form-of-japanese-buddhism-in-hawaii-could-disappear/>

We would love to hear our readers' thoughts, ideas, and feedback on this article and the topic of keeping our temple connected to future generations.

Over the past several years, we have made a conscious effort to create new ways for our youth and the broader community to connect with HJM. We have introduced educational exhibits, expanded our presence through social media and our website, and incorporated activities into our events that we hope will spark interest, curiosity, and a sense of connection, particularly among our younger generation.

At the same time, we recognize that building a strong future for HJM is a conversation that involves all of us. Feel free to reach out to us by calling (808) 775-0965 or by sending an email to: contact@hamakuajodominion.org

DID YOU KNOW?



As our Obon season soon comes to a close, did you know that Japan has a beautiful tradition marking the end of the season?

Gozan no Okuribi, also known as the “fires of farewell,” is a traditional *Okuri-bon* ceremony held in Kyoto at the conclusion of Obon.

On this special evening, enormous bonfires are lit on the mountains surrounding the city.

The flames are traditionally understood to help guide the spirits of ancestors back to the spirit world after their visit with loved ones during Obon. From across Kyoto, the glowing characters and shapes can be seen illuminating the mountainsides, creating a breathtaking sight.

While the fires are visually spectacular, their deeper meaning is one of farewell, remembrance, and gratitude. It is a poignant reminder of the connection between those who have passed on and those who continue to carry their memories in their hearts. Now you know!

SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESSES

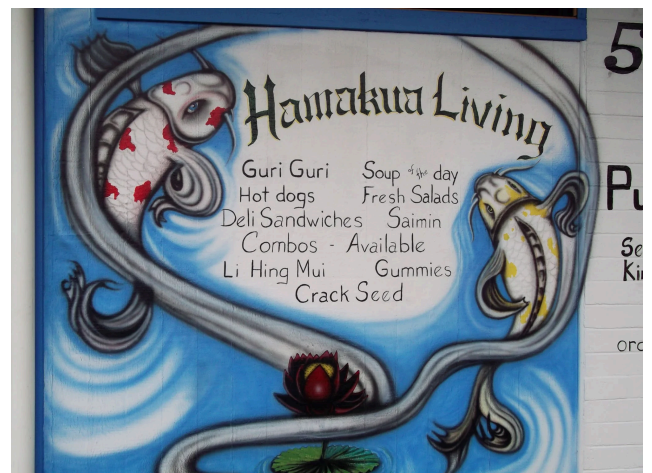


Photo credit: Hamakua Living

Hamakua Living, A General Store has been a beloved staple in Honokaa for years, serving up affordable prices, generous portions, and delicious, home-style food.

Located on Mamane Street, the family-owned business was opened in 2010 by Edwin and Sandy Rapozo, who both grew up in Honokaa before returning to the Big Island from Oahu.

Inspired by the small mom-and-pop stores they remember from growing up, Edwin and Sandy have created a place that feels like a true part of the community.

Hamakua Living serves daily to-go plate lunches and lunch bowls, along with local favorites like prune mui, li-hing mui seeds and snacks, dried fruit, kalua tubs, Braddah Pops, and more. Everything is made with the kind of comforting, local flavor that keeps customers coming back.

Hamakua Living also offers catering for families, parties, and larger gatherings, with large kaukau pans and lau lau orders that make feeding a crowd easy.

Whether you're grabbing a quick plate lunch or stocking up for a gathering, it's a great spot to enjoy delicious local food without breaking the bank. So ono!

Hamakua Living is open Monday through Saturday from 10am to 2 pm. Hours may vary, so it's always a good idea to call ahead at (808) 775-1033 to confirm they're open that day.

OCTOBER 2026 NENKI MEMORIAL SERVICES

<u>DATE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>YEAR</u>
10/26	Shigeko Takamine	13th
10/28	Midori Enanoria	27th
10/30	Herbert Abe	13th

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!

REMEMBERING MEMBERS OF THE PAST



If there was someone the temple could always depend on to lend a helping hand, Mitsuko Uyeda's name would certainly come to mind.

Born in Paauiilo in 1919, Mitsuko was one of two daughters and four sons of Mr. & Mrs. Jingoro Kimura. As a young wife, she and her husband, Susumu Uyeda, raised four children while balancing work, family, and a deep commitment to their community.

Mitsuko was a devoted member of HJM's Fujinkai and Goeika clubs. She was a steady and familiar presence at many meetings, conventions, gatherings, and temple services.

Although we do not have many photographs in our photo collection, the ones we do have often include Mitsuko. In each one, we are reminded of her quiet devotion and the important role she played in supporting the temple and its activities. She was also a member of the Paauiilo Hongwanji Mission, extending her service and connection to the Buddhist community in her hometown.

After retiring from Hamakua Sugar Company, Mitsuko continued to stay active and involved. She became a member of the Paauiilo Senior Citizens, the Paauiilo Pension Club, and the Kaapahu Community Club. She also treasured her time with her grandchildren and

great-grandchildren, enjoying the joys of family life.



HJM Goeika Club, 2006. Mitsuko is on the far right.
Photo credit: Fujitani Family Collection

Mitsuko passed away on May 23, 2007, at the age of 87.

Her friendly and unassuming nature, her strong work ethic, and, above all, her willingness to quietly step in and help others will always be remembered. Through the many temple activities she supported and the lives she touched, Mitsuko left behind a legacy of service and kindness that remains a big part of our temple's history.

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

We received an email from someone who inquired about the temple tours we offer and wanted to know more about them.

"I read that you offer tours. How long is it and what can my family expect?" - M.V.

HJM offers complimentary tours of our temple and cemetery by appointment. Tours typically last 30 to 45 minutes and begin inside the temple, where visitors learn about its history and architecture. We then move outdoors to the cemetery for a brief history and a look at historic and notable gravesites.

The tour continues in our dining hall, which is the original temple. Visitors can learn more

about the temple and its traditions through exhibit panels and vintage photographs featuring past and present members.

We frequently welcome visitors, student groups, local clubs, and organizations interested in learning more about HJM.

Tours are generally offered Sunday through Tuesday by appointment. If those days do not fit your schedule, we may be able to arrange another date with advance notice.

At the end of each tour, complimentary postcards with our website information are provided so visitors can continue learning more about HJM.

To schedule a tour, please give us a call at (808) 775-0965 or by sending an email to: contact@hamakuajodominion.org

IN APPRECIATION



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

Dr. & Mrs. Justin Ekuan, Patricia Yano & Family, Janet Okimoto, Warren Osako, and Janet Saito.

And mahalo to those who asked to remain anonymous.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



Photo credit: Samantha Kalilikane

With the weeks of rain bringing an abundance of grass and weeds, and following the recent Obon Festival, it has become more apparent than ever how much our temple depends on the kokua of our community to care for and maintain our grounds.

We are incredibly grateful for the many community members who have stepped forward to help with our Beautification Work Days, especially those who have no formal affiliation with the temple. Some of our volunteers travel more than an hour to spend their time helping us care for HJM. Their generosity and willingness to lend a hand is deeply appreciated and does not go unnoticed.



And, of course, we cannot forget a couple of menehunes who magically appear behind the scenes, putting in hours of maintenance and cleaning on their days off or after pau hana time.

Without the dedication of these individuals and the volunteers who quietly contribute their time and energy, it would be very difficult to keep everything in order.

HJM encompasses more than five acres of land, along with multiple buildings and structures that require ongoing care. In years past, we were fortunate to have retired members who had the time and physical ability to help maintain the property. Today, our membership and circumstances have changed, and we no longer have the same level of volunteer support available to us.



Our oldest volunteer, 95-year-old Sadako Kato
Photo credit: Linda Thompson

We are doing our best to keep up with the many needs of the temple, but sometimes projects must be completed little by little. This is why we are asking for your help.

If you are physically able, we encourage you to join us for our Beautification Work Days. Even a few hours of your time can make a big difference. If you are unable to participate on a

scheduled work day, we have many projects that can be done at your convenience.

Whether you have an hour, an afternoon, or a little time here and there during the week or month, there is always something that can use your attention.



Our youngest volunteer, 6-year-old Kountry Garcia

We also encourage those who have family members interred in our cemetery or whose loved ones' urns are kept in the *hondo* to take an active role in caring for their final resting place.

Pulling weeds around a family plot, cleaning a headstone, or simply dusting and tidying the area surrounding a loved one's urn are small acts of care that carry great meaning.

Please consider giving whatever time and *kokua* you can. Every helping hand matters, and together, we can continue to preserve HJM - not only as a physical place, but as a living legacy of our community, our families, and our ancestors.

For volunteering opportunities, please contact us at (808) 775-0965 or via email at: contact@hamakuajodominion.org

CONTRIBUTIONS & SUBMISSIONS



If you would like to submit any stories, memories or photos for an upcoming edition of our newsletter, please feel free to email them to: contact@hamakuajodominion.org

Submissions can be as short or long as you want, and are welcomed in either Word, JPEG or PNG file formats. The newsletter committee always welcomes ideas, suggestions, and commentary, too.

Please send your contributions by the 15th of each month via email for consideration in an upcoming edition of our newsletter. Thank you!

CONTACT INFORMATION UPDATE



We've recently had several emails returned as undeliverable, as well as letters sent through the USPS that have come back to us with no forwarding address.

If you have recently changed your email, mailing address, or phone number, please let us know your new contact information so we can keep our records up to date. This is especially important for our members and for families who have loved ones whose final resting place is here at HJM.

Keeping your information current helps us stay connected and ensures that you continue to receive important news, announcements, notices, and correspondence.

Please reach out to us at (808) 775-0965 or:
contact@hamakuajodomission.org

A MESSAGE FROM OUR KYODAN PRESIDENT

There are moments when a few simple words can touch your heart in a way you never expect. A few weeks ago, we received one of those moments in the mail.

I wanted to share a note we received from someone who attended our recent Obon Festival. Those of you who read last month's newsletter know some of the challenges we faced this year in coming together to celebrate and honor our ancestors.

So when I opened this note, I have to admit, it brought tears to my eyes. It meant so much to me personally, and I know these words will touch the hearts of the small group of volunteers who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make Obon possible. The note read:

"Dear Hamakua Jodo Mission,

Thank you so much for working so hard. Your bon dance was extra special! It was a privilege and a sacred honor to dance at your temple."

For privacy reasons, I've chosen not to share the sender's name, but I do want to say **thank you** to the person who took the time to write the note.

In those few words, I felt that this person understood that Obon is more than an event. It is something we show up for, year after year, honoring our ancestors, because it matters.

In Gassho,
Sandy Takahashi

UPCOMING EVENTS & SERVICES SCHEDULE

DATE	EVENT	TIME
10/25/26	Beautification Work Day	8:00am
11/01/26	Japanese Cultural Heritage Day	10:00am - 2:00pm

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*

*"Happiness is not a goal... it's a by-product of
a life well-lived." — Eleanor Roosevelt*

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

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!

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



Hamakua Jodo Mission

*The First Sanctioned Buddhist Temple Built in
Hawaii*

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