HAMAKUA JODO MISSION
OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER
NOVEMBER 2026



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"Honoring Tradition, Embracing Community"

A TIME TO GIVE THANKS



As Thanksgiving approaches, we are reminded to take a moment to reflect on the many blessings in our lives and express our gratitude to those who have helped make them possible.

Our temple community is fortunate to have so many people who give generously of their time, energy, and support. We are grateful for our dedicated volunteers who are always willing to lend a helping hand, rain or shine; those who spend countless hours working behind the scenes, often after long days at work or on their days off; and our loyal supporters, donors, and friends whose continued generosity and encouragement help sustain our temple.

Above all, let us remember and honor our ancestors, whose sacrifices, hard work, and perseverance paved the way for the lives we are fortunate to lead today. Their hopes and efforts helped create better opportunities and a brighter future for the generations that followed.

We also owe our gratitude to the temple members who came before us, whose dedication, commitment, and countless contributions laid the foundation upon which our temple stands today. Because of their efforts, we continue to have a place where generations can gather, worship, share fellowship, and take pride in our temple and its traditions.

As we celebrate this season of Thanksgiving, may we carry their spirit of generosity forward and never take for granted the many people, past and present, who have made our temple and community what they are today. For all of this, we are truly GRATEFUL.

CURVEBALLS AND ALL, WE MADE IT HAPPEN!



Aikido Demonstration

After successfully pulling off our Obon Festival despite the heavy rain in August, we thought we had weathered the worst of Mother

Nature's surprises for the year. Little did we know that the rainy weather had other plans for us! As we prepared for our second major event of the year, Japanese Cultural Heritage Day, held in collaboration with the Honokaa Heritage Center, we found ourselves facing another round of unexpected challenges.

Rain had become a daily occurrence in the days leading up to our November 1st event. At times, it came down so heavily that our temple grounds became saturated and muddy. Two days before the event, one of our volunteers arrived to continue preparations, only to find that their vehicle nearly became stuck while driving across the grass. It was clear that the conditions were becoming a serious concern.

After careful consideration and discussion between our temple and the Honokaa Heritage Center, the difficult but necessary decision was made to relocate the event to the Heritage Center's parking lot in Honokaa Town. The safety of our attendees, volunteers, and members had to come first. We also needed to consider the potential damage to our already saturated lawn and parking field, as well as the possibility of vehicles getting stuck and requiring towing.

Postponing the event was considered, but with multiple vendors, instructors, demonstrators, and workshop participants already committed, it would have been difficult to coordinate another date. We also had a special guest author traveling from Oahu who had already made arrangements for her book signing. With just two days to go, we knew we had to make the best of the situation and move forward.

Once the decision was made, we quickly spread the word through social media and word of mouth to let everyone know about the change in venue. A large sign was also painted and placed at the bottom of our temple driveway to help direct anyone who might have missed the announcement. It was a last-minute scramble, but everyone pitched in to make the transition as smooth as possible.

Moving to a smaller location meant rethinking the layout and making adjustments to accommodate the activities. Some of the children's activities and exhibits had to be scaled back or shuttered, but we were fortunate to have a small, but wonderful group of volunteers who came together early Sunday morning to pitch tents, arrange tables and chairs, and transform the parking lot into a welcoming location for the day's festivities. Thankfully, the skies cooperated, giving us mostly overcast conditions throughout much of the day.

We did encounter one more unexpected bump when a food vendor canceled on the morning of the event. Fortunately, Ohana Bakery and Cafe, located right next door to the Heritage Center, came to the rescue and helped fill the gap. Along with our friends at Takoyatea, they both served up delicious Asian-inspired food for everyone to enjoy.

Despite all the last-minute adjustments, our workshops and demonstrations went on as planned, offering attendees a wonderful opportunity to experience and learn about Japanese arts and traditions.



Orchid Workshop

Kyffin Dolliver kicked off the workshops with an orchid-growing presentation, where attendees had the opportunity to take home a complimentary keiki orchid seedling.

Following this, Nobuko Fujihara Humphries, an accomplished ikebana instructor who studied the traditional art of Japanese flower arranging in Japan, shared her knowledge through a beautiful ikebana demonstration.



Ikebana Demonstration

We were also delighted to welcome back Bob Male of the Waimea Bon-yu Kai Bonsai Club, who gave attendees an introduction to the art of bonsai and demonstrated the care and artistry involved in this traditional practice.

The cultural demonstrations continued with Lillian Paiva, chief instructor of the Honokaa Ki Aikido Dojo, and her students, who presented an aikido demonstration followed by an informative talk about this Japanese martial art.

The sounds of traditional Japanese culture soon filled the air as the Honokaa Hongwanji Bon Dance Club led a mini bon dance, joined by dancers from throughout the Big Island community.



Mini Bon Dance

Adding to the festive atmosphere, students from Honokaa Hongwanji's Taiko Club accompanied the bon dance music with their drums before treating the audience to a special solo performance of their own.

We were also pleased to welcome Brandi-Ann Uyemura, author of the children's book *I Am a Bon Dancer*. Throughout the day, she graciously signed copies of her book, chatted and took photos with readers.

For those who have not yet had a chance to read her book, it is a wonderful introduction to the meaning behind Obon and why generations of families continue the tradition of gathering each year to dance the *bon odori*.



Book Signing with Brandi-Ann Uyemura

Adding to the day's activities, our temple held a mini sale featuring an assortment of dishware discovered in storage areas and closets around the temple. Another local vendor offered vintage Japanese-themed treasures at bargain prices, giving visitors an opportunity to take home something unique.

Of course, no Japanese cultural event would be complete without the ever-popular *kingyo sukui* game and a creative *uchiwa* fan-design activity. Complimentary Japanese snacks were also distributed, providing one more little taste of Japanese culture for everyone to enjoy.

As the day drew to a close, Mother Nature decided she wasn't quite finished with us. The rain made its return just as the taiko group

began its performance. But by then, we had learned not to let a little rain steal the show!

Despite the challenging weather, the last-minute venue change, and all the adjustments along the way, Japanese Cultural Heritage Day turned out to be a wonderful success, with a fantastic turnout and a community that showed up ready to celebrate.

If there is one thing we have learned, it is that things don't always go according to plan. Sometimes, we are thrown curveballs that require us to rethink, regroup, and make the best of what we have been dealt. But when people come together, lend a helping hand, and share a common commitment to making something happen, even the most unexpected challenges can turn into rewarding experiences.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to the Honokaa Heritage Center, all of our volunteers, vendors, presenters, performers, supporters, and everyone who attended and helped make this day possible. It takes a community to bring an event like this to life, and we are grateful to everyone who rolled with the changes and helped make it happen. In the end, that's what made the day such a success!

OTHER NOTEWORTHY HAPPENINGS

- In observance of the Thanksgiving holiday weekend, we will be taking a break from our monthly Beautification Work Day this month. We will resume our monthly workday on Sunday, December 13, 2026, beginning at 8am.

- Our temple was closed to the public from October 30 through November 8 due to saturated, muddy ground conditions. The temporary closure allowed several consecutive days of sunshine for the grounds to dry out sufficiently, making it safe for vehicles to access the property. A notice of the closure was posted on our website.

  Please be advised that if rainy weather continues, additional temporary closures may be necessary to ensure the safety of visitors and those accessing the temple grounds.

- Sadako Kato, our oldest member and volunteer, celebrated her 96th birthday on November 4th. We wish her many more birthdays to come!

- Feral pigs have returned and managed to dig up some plants near the avocado tree.

- Mahalo to Kobie Kaholoaa-Aguilar and Susan Horie for continuing to help us with weedwhacking on days outside of our Beautification Work Days!

OJUYA



Each November, Buddhist temples observe *Ojuya*, a special service rooted in the Pure Land tradition of Jodo Shu and Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. The word *Ojuya*, meaning *"Ten Nights,"* originates from the historical practice of gathering at temples over a period of several evenings to chant the *Nembutsu*, *Namu Amida Butsu*, and deepen one's connection to the Buddha's teachings.

Although *Ojuya* was traditionally observed over ten nights, many temples in Hawaii now hold this important occasion as a single-day service. Regardless of its length, the heart of the observance remains the same: an opportunity to come together as a *Sangha*, listen to the *Dharma*, and express gratitude for the compassion of Amida Buddha.

VETIVER UPDATE

Last month we purchased and began planting vetiver grass along the perimeter of the cemetery as part of our ongoing efforts to address soil erosion and preserve the integrity of the cemetery grounds.



Planting of vetiver

An unexpected opportunity to expand this project arose during our recent Japanese Cultural Heritage Day, when we had the pleasure of meeting and speaking with Sharon Gerrish of Sunbonnet Farms.

During our conversation, we learned that Sharon had an exceptionally large vetiver plant growing on her farm that she was willing to donate, provided we could arrange to have it dug up, transported, and processed.

HJM member Pickens Kehrer graciously took on the task. He coordinated a visit with Sharon at the farm, carefully dug up the donated plant, and then put in considerable time and effort dividing it into multiple sections and trimming each one to an appropriate size for planting.

We are extremely grateful to Sharon for her generous donation and to Pickens for his hard work in making it possible.

Combined with the vetiver we had previously purchased, this generous contribution has provided us with an ample supply of plants to continue our efforts along the cemetery's perimeter.



Section of vetiver planted along cemetery perimeter

With the plants prepared and ready for the ground, Pickens and Kyodan President Sandy Takahashi have devoted multiple days to planting the vetiver along the cemetery's perimeter. Their efforts have brought the project along considerably, and we are very pleased with the progress that has been made.

We hope that, over time, the vetiver's extensive root system will help preserve the cemetery grounds and protect the resting places of those entrusted to our care.

DID YOU KNOW?

Rev. Mitsuei Hinata arrived in Hawaii on September 8, 1918, accompanied by his wife, Masako. Upon his arrival, he was appointed principal of the Ookala Japanese Language School, where he devoted himself to educating the children of Japanese immigrants living along the Hamakua Coast.

In June 1920, Rev. Hinata succeeded Rev. Ryoyu Yoshida, becoming the fifth minister of *Hamakua Bukkyo Kaido*, which would later be renamed Hamakua Jodo Mission. Sadly, this month also brought great sorrow to the Hinata family with the passing of their one-month-old son, Yasunari.

The family welcomed another son, Hideaki, in November 1921. However, tragedy struck once again when Masako passed away less

than two months after his birth, leaving Rev. Hinata to care for their young son.

Rev. Hinata eventually remarried. In 1924, he returned to Japan with Hideaki and his new wife, Mitsuno, bringing his years of service at our temple to a close.

Although Rev. Hinata and his family eventually returned to Japan, a lasting connection to our temple remains. Masako and their infant son, Yasunari, were laid to rest together in a single plot within our cemetery. Their final resting place serves as a reminder of the Hinata family's connection to our temple and of the joys, hardships, and sacrifices experienced by the early Japanese immigrant community.

REMEMBERING MEMBERS OF THE PAST



This month, we pay tribute to Yoshinobu “Nobu” Takamine, a dedicated and dependable member of our temple whose strong work ethic and commitment to service reflected the values of Hawaii’s plantation era.

Born on May 27, 1930, in Hakalau to Tozo and Usa Takamine, Nobu was one of fourteen children. The family eventually settled in Honokaa in the 1930s, where he grew up and graduated from Honokaa High School. Following graduation, he served in the United States Army and was a veteran of the Korean War.

In 1953, Nobu married Shigeko Chio, and together they built a life in Honokaa, raising their four children. Both worked hard to provide for their family, with Nobu employed by the Honokaa Sugar Company which later merged with Hamakua Sugar Company, Inc., and Shigeko worked as an assistant manager at Ben Franklin in Waimea. Even with their busy work schedules, Nobu and Shigeko made raising their four children a priority while remaining actively involved in their community.

Nobu was actively involved in temple activities, serving on and chairing numerous committees, and diligently serving as our Kyodan Treasurer. He continued in this role until he and Shigeko moved to Hilo to live with family.

Although he had moved to the other side of the island, the friendships he had made over the years remained important to him. He always warmly welcomed visits from his temple friends.

Nobu’s commitment to the community was also evident through his involvement in Hui Uruma, an Okinawan cultural club, and the Honokaa Pension Club. Whether through his temple service, community activities, or simply being a trusted friend, Nobu demonstrated a quiet dedication to the people and organizations that meant so much to him.

Nobu passed away on November 28, 2017, at the age of 87. He is interred at the East Hawaii Veterans Cemetery No. 2 in Hilo.

As we remember Nobu, we are grateful for the many years he devoted to our temple and for the kindness, humility, and friendship he shared with so many of us. We are thankful and honored to have had him as part of our temple family.

DECEMBER 2026 NENKI MEMORIAL SERVICES

DATE	NAME	YEAR
12/03	Toru Gyotoku	23rd

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 thank those who graciously gifted us with monetary donations:

Ann Tallman, Jasmine Bailado, Honokaa Hongwanji Bon Dancers, Lillian Paiva, Dr. & Mrs. Justin Ekuan, Deborah Chang, Mr. & Mrs. David Kohara, and Mr. & Mrs. Herbert Naito.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Our search for volunteers continues as we work to preserve and care for our temple. Whether helping with cleaning, maintenance, event setup and teardown, or manning booths at our events, every helping hand makes a difference.

We need more help, especially from those who have ancestral ties to our temple, or live nearby. Our temple has been sustained through the hard work and dedication of generations before us. Now it is our turn to do our part to preserve it for the future.

If you have a connection to our temple, **we encourage you to turn that connection into action**. Please consider volunteering your time for a worthwhile cause. For volunteering opportunities, please contact us via email at: *contact@hamakuajodomission.org* or at (808) 775-0965.

CONTRIBUTIONS & SUBMISSIONS

Have a story, fond memory, or photograph you'd like to share with our readers? We welcome your contributions and would love to feature them in an upcoming newsletter!

There is no length requirement and photos can be sent in JPEG or PNG format. Word documents are also welcome. Please send your contributions by the 15th of the month to the following email address for consideration in an upcoming issue of our newsletter: *contact@hamakuajodomission.org*

UPCOMING EVENTS & SERVICES SCHEDULE

DATE	EVENT	TIME
12/13/26	Beautification Work Day	8:00 am

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

"Gratitude is when memory is stored in the heart and not in the mind."
- Lionel Hampton

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

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