



HAMAKUA JODO MISSION OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER JUNE 2025



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

"Honoring Tradition, Embracing Community"

OBON SEASON HAS ARRIVED!



Photo credit: Nic Tanaka

Obon is a special time of year when we welcome the spirits of our departed loved ones back to visit us, honoring them through cherished traditions like *mukaebi*, a bonfire that is lit outside family homes and placing food offerings to the spirits.

We also observe *ohaka mairi*, the respectful cleaning of gravesites and have a Buddhist minister perform a *tanagyo* service in our homes. We then gather to celebrate the return of the spirits with *bon odori*, the traditional bon dance.

This year, Hamakua Jodo Mission will be holding our annual Obon festivities on Saturday, August 9, 2025. The festivities begin at 5pm with a cemetery service, followed by an indoor service at 6pm, and our bon dance starting at 7pm.

We are happy to announce that Rev. Junshin Miyazaki of the Hilo Meishoin will be officiating our services this year. Many of you may remember him, as he served as our minister from 2002-2009.

Our bon dance is the highlight of the year, and we're excited to invite everyone to join in this celebration! It's open to the public, so bring your friends and family to enjoy a lively evening filled with music, food, and fun.

Taishoji Taiko will be performing during the dance, setting the tone for an unforgettable night. There will also be delicious offerings from food truck vendors, exciting activities for all ages, a photo booth, educational displays, door prizes, and much more! And, of course, we've got a surprise planned - come see what's in store this year!



Photo Credit: Sarah Anderson

In addition to the festivities, we are offering an opportunity to honor your departed loved ones with a *toba* (wooden tablet) and a prayer during our indoor service.

If you'd like to have a *toba* prepared and your loved one recognized during the service, please complete the *toba* order form included in this newsletter. Each *toba* is available for a \$5 donation, and the deadline for orders is **Saturday, July 19, 2025.**

We also need dependable volunteers to assist with setup and cleanup. Our preparations will begin on August 3rd at 8 a.m., and we'll need help again in the afternoon and evening on August 9th, and post-cleanup the following morning.



Photo Credit: Sarah Anderson

Last year, we were very fortunate to have a large group of students from Stanford University & Foothill College's Indigenous Archaeology Hawaii Field School assist with cleaning the cemetery and preparing for the event. We cannot count on that kind of support every year, so we're relying on all of you to help us honor our ancestors on their special night. Your involvement truly makes a difference!

We look forward to celebrating with you all and honoring our loved ones in a meaningful and joyous way.

2025 OBON TENUGUI



Our 2025 Obon *tenugui* have arrived! The theme of this year's design is to recognize our temple's establishment in 1896 as the first sanctioned Buddhist temple built in Hawaii.

Some of our regular Beautification Work Day volunteers busily folded and packaged hundreds of *tenugui* last month. This modern and bold design is sure to be a favorite as we mark our 129th anniversary in a few months!

For those of you interested in obtaining *tenugui* prior to our bon dance, please send us an email at: contact@hamakujodominion.org for more information. Mahalo!

OTHER NOTEWORTHY HAPPENINGS

- Our next Beautification Work Day is scheduled for **Sunday, June 29, 2025** at 8am, rain or shine.

In an effort to maximize the amount of volunteers for our Obon general cleaning and preparation work day on August 3, 2025, we will not be having a Beautification work day for the month of July.

- We had the pleasure of meeting Alan & Debbie Kubota from Oahu this past month when they visited the temple. Alan is a photographer and mentioned how he photographed a wedding held at HJM a few years ago.
- We want to welcome George and Shirley (Kato) Ito as new members of our temple. Both of them are known to those of us who grew up in Paauhau, as the Kato family have been involved with our temple for generations.
- Many thanks goes out to researcher Wendy Tolleson for her diligent work in researching the history of our temple's land, carefully finding and examining old documents, and also dispelling anecdotes and folklore passed down through generations.

Wendy was able to locate a copy of the 1948 lease agreement between Paauhau Sugar Company and HJM, as well as a 1953 lease amendment granting HJM the right to pave a road to the temple, along with uncovering several other valuable historical details.

- On June 6, 2025, two of our youngest volunteers celebrated their birthdays - Liam, who turned 8, and Kountry, who turned 5. We are incredibly proud to see these young boys take an interest in supporting our temple.
- Thank you to Phaethon Keeney for donating many ginger plants and cuttings to us. They will make a great addition to our tropical flower garden!

OVERGROWTH LAND CLEARING



Section of the area that was mulched during phase I

A few years ago, an overgrown section of land was added to our lease as part of an amendment resulting from a leasing error with our neighbor.

We initially attempted to clear the area using our tractor and donated attachment parts, but the task proved more challenging than anticipated. The attachments began to fail, and the uneven ground, combined with hidden objects within the overgrowth, made the job dangerous and difficult. It became clear that professional equipment and expertise were required.

This overgrowth clearing, which hasn't been addressed for years, is a mandatory task we had to perform per our lease terms, as it was recently brought to our attention. Given the multiple brush fires that have affected Honokaa Town in the last few weeks, it is even more critical that the growth be removed to reduce fire risk.

We subsequently hired RNB Landscape Services LLC to handle the job, and it turned out to be a far larger task than expected. The team uncovered significant obstacles, including large metal scraps, cement blocks, a hidden crater about 5 feet deep (which could have caused our tractor to flip), tree stumps, and other unforeseen challenges.

Fortunately, with their commercial-grade equipment, RNB Land Services LLC was able to successfully mulch the area. We are now awaiting their return for phase II of the project, which involves scraping the mulched area to create an even surface.

Once completed, we plan to use the space for additional Obon and event parking, as well as for gardening. Mahalo to Ray Castro and his crew for their exceptional work on this project!

AUWE!



Dining hall window vandalism

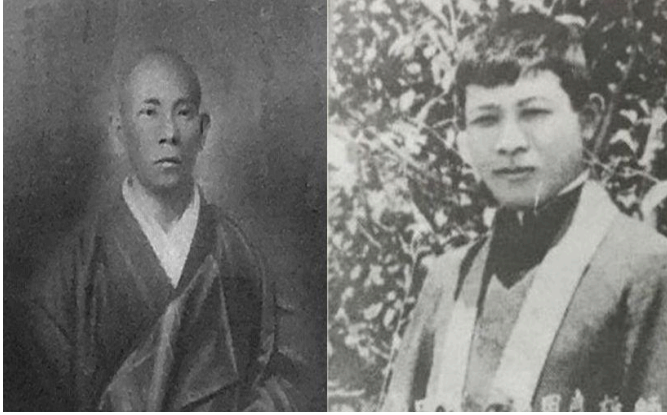
Late last month, our security cameras captured footage of a trespasser scoping the property for nearly half an hour. During this time, the individual managed to steal all the toiletries from our outdoor bathroom facilities.

Upon further inspection, we discovered a broken window in the dining hall. This incident, along with screen grabs and other details of the trespasser, has been reported to the police.

Since then, the Honokaa Police Department has increased their drive-by checks in the area, and we've repositioned some of our existing security cameras for better coverage.

To further enhance our security, we are looking into purchasing and installing additional cameras to cover unmonitored areas of the property.

DID YOU KNOW?



Rev. Gakuo Okabe (left) and Rev. Ryoyu Yoshida (right).

Did you know that June holds special significance in the history of HJM, marking important milestones for two ministers who played pivotal roles in the establishment of both our original temple (which is now our dining hall) and our current temple, known as the *konpondo*?

On June 4, 1896, Rev. Gakuo Okabe, our founding minister, who had introduced the teachings of Buddhism to the Hamakua Coast, resigned and returned to Japan. His leadership laid the foundation for the temple's early years and the spread of Buddhist practice in the area.

Then, on June 3, 1909, Rev. Ryoyu Yoshida arrived in Hawaii to become HJM's fourth minister. During his tenure, Rev. Yoshida oversaw the construction of our *konpondo*, which was completed in 1918. His direction ensured the temple's growth and cemented its place in the community.

In June 1920, Rev. Yoshida returned to Japan, and Rev. Mitsuei Hinata succeeded him as the fifth minister of HJM, continuing the legacy of our former ministers.

SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESSES



If there is one business that has referred more visitors to our temple and played an important role in researching and preserving our history, it is undoubtedly the Honokaa Heritage Center.

When the original heritage center, which was part of the University of Hawaii at Hilo's satellite campus of the North Hawaii Education and Research Center, closed permanently during the COVID-19 pandemic, a new 501(c)(3) organization was formed under a mutual agreement with the university.

That organization, the North Hawaii Heritage Foundation, launched the Honokaa Heritage Center in the summer of 2021, bringing a renewed focus to the cultural history of our town. Situated in the heart of Honokaa, the Center has become an important hub for both kamaaina and visitors, offering engaging exhibits and educational opportunities that highlight the unique heritage of our community.

Among their notable contributions is a permanent wall exhibit dedicated to HJM, which has become a key resource for educating the public about our temple's history.

In addition to referring numerous student groups and visitors to our temple, they have been instrumental in guiding us through the process of documenting and preserving artifacts, important documents, and creating educational displays. Their support has been invaluable in helping us recognize the importance of preserving our historic temple for future generations.

The Honokaa Heritage Center is open Tuesday through Saturday, from 9am to 5pm. For more information, you can visit their website at www.honokaaheritagecenter.org

FLASHBACK PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Front row: Sueichi Kawashima, Nadao Honda, Masa Nishimori, Yoshiko Dacanay & her daughter. Back row: Mr. & Mrs. Gorden Ekuan.

This month's flashback photo was taken in the spring of 2020, when members of the Ekuan family paid a special visit to our temple.

Rev. Kogan Ekuan's children, Gorden, who lives in Washington, and Yoshiko, who resides in Hilo, came by with their families and spent the afternoon reminiscing with our elder members Sueichi Kawashima, Masa Nishimori, and longtime friend Nadao Honda.

It was a heartwarming visit, filled with cherished memories of growing up at HJM, and we're so grateful they were able to spend that time with us. We look forward to their next visit!



IN APPRECIATION

We want to acknowledge those who generously gifted us with monetary donations:

Mr. & Mrs. Brian Horiuchi, Cade Denmark, Lembi James, Sharlene Hardy, Gayle Swanick, Mr. & Mrs. George Ito, Janis Shirai, Mr. & Mrs. Culbert Salera, and Mr. & Mrs. Herbert Naito.

Membership dues received:

Mr. & Mrs. George Ito and Sandra Miranda.

UPCOMING EVENTS & SERVICES SCHEDULE

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>TIME</u>
6/25/25	Beautification Work Day	8:00am
7/27/25	HJM Executive Team Meeting**	10:00am
8/03/25	Obon General Cleaning & Set Up Day	8:00am
8/09/25	Obon Gravesite Service	5:00pm
	Obon Indoor Service	6:00pm
	Bon Dance	7:00pm
8/10/25	Post-Obon Clean-Up & Tear Down Day	8:00am
11/01/25	TBA	TBA

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

***Executive Team meetings are for the Officers and Directors of Hamakua Jodo Mission.*

This calendar is being provided to avoid visitors from stopping by during private functions/services, and to prevent double bookings.

JUNE & JULY 2025 NENKI MEMORIAL SERVICES

<u>DATE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>YEAR</u>
6/04	Fumie Higaki	7th
6/17	Sumiko Nishimori	13th
6/23	Torakichi Nishimura	47th
6/26	Hatsume Takada	37th
7/11	Mark Nakashima	1st
7/13	Mitsue Nakagawa	7th
7/28	Ted Ura	7th
7/30	Takichi Okunami	43rd
7/31	Haru Hirata	43rd

Please contact the HJM Executive Team at hamakuajodoexecteam@gmail.com or call (808) 775-0965 if you would like to schedule a memorial service.

If you come across any errors, please inform us so we can update our records accordingly. Mahalo!

VOLUNTEERS WANTED



A volunteer is someone who offers their time, energy, and heart to support a cause they believe in, without expecting anything in return.

They are the quiet heroes who share their time, skills and make valuable contributions that impact others. Volunteers are the backbone of every organization, and their selfless dedication makes all the difference. Simply put, they turn good intentions into lasting change.

You don't have to be a member to volunteer at HJM - all you need is a positive attitude and a good work ethic.

Are you that person willing to help us? If so, please reach out to us by emailing: contact@hamakuajodominion.org or calling (808) 775-0965.

CONTACT INFORMATION REQUEST



If you've changed your mailing address, email, or phone number, please let us know by calling us at (808) 775-0965 or sending us an email to: contact@hamakuajodominion.org so we can keep our records current and ensure you stay informed. Your kokua is greatly appreciated!

CONTRIBUTIONS & SUBMISSIONS

Our official newsletter will be celebrating our 3rd anniversary next month! We have been blessed with our readers submitting photos, questions, suggestions, and articles to us over the years.

We want our readers to continue sending them in as we love to hear from you. Letters to the Editor are also welcomed, too!

Please submit your materials in Word, PDF, JPEG, or PNG formats by the 15th of each month. Send your contributions to: contact@hamakuajodominion.org

Mahalo for reading & your continued support!

*- The Hamakua Jodo Mission
Newsletter Committee*

*"Be yourself; everyone else is
already taken." - Oscar Wilde*

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

Summer 2025 Hawai'i Island BON DANCE & Tooro Nagashi Schedule

Some temples have stopped having their bon dance. Maybe they need help, can you help them next year? Let's try to continue this tradition; or it may disappear sooner than we expect.

All dances are on Sat. night, unless noted differently. Notice some have switched to daytime. --- This year, the July 5 dance in Kohala is a community dance at Kamehameha Park. --- The September 13 dance in Pahala is jointly sponsored with Naalehu. --- Puna Hongwanji had to choose a date different from their traditional date due to a scheduling conflict. ---Pahoa's dance returns this year. --- Time is uncertain for Aug. 24's N. Hawaii Hospice Tooro Nagashi. --- Fune Nagashi is similar to Tooro Nagashi (floating lantern).

Search on YouTube for bon dance lessons; and see bon dances from around the islands and world.

Any event below is subject to last minute changes, so check with that temple. Some temples have websites.

DATE	notes	LOCATION	PHONE
--	no dance	Lili'uokalani Gardens	808-936-6186
May 25	Sun., dance 3 pm	Bon Dance & Tooro Nagashi @ Celebration of Life @ Reed's Bay in Hilo	808-969-1733
June 14	dance 4 pm	Honomu Henjoji (Odaishisan)	808-963-6308
June 15	Sun., dance 4 pm	Obon Festival @ Old Kona Airport Pavilion	808-323-2993
June 21		Papaikou Hongwanji Mission	808-964-1640
--	no dance	Honomu Hongwanji Mission	808-963-6032
June 28		Puna Hongwanji Mission	808-966-9981
July 5	community dance	Kohala Hongwanji Mission @ Kamehameha Park	808-885-4481
--	no dance	Kohala Jodo Mission (see fune nagashi on 8/24 w/ Hawi Jodo @ Mahukona)	808-987-8495
July 12	dance 3 pm	Kona Daifukuji Soto Mission	808-322-3524
July 12		Hilo Meishoin	808-935-6996
July 12		Paauilo Hongwanji Mission	808-885-4481
July 19		Keei Buddhist Church	808-896-4988
July 19		Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin	808-961-6677
July 19		Honokaa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple	808-798-2075
July 26		Kona Hongwanji Mission	808-323-2993
July 26		Hilo Hooganji Mission (Odaishisan)	808-935-8331
July 27	Sun., 7 pm	Tooro Nagashi @ Wailoa Harbor in Hilo (<u>not a dance</u>)	808-935-8331
Aug 2		Taishoji Soto Mission in Hilo	808-935-8407
Aug 3	Sun., 5 pm	Tooro Nagashi @ Wailoa Harbor in Hilo (<u>not a dance</u>)	808-935-8407
Aug 2		Kurtistown Jodo Mission	808-936-7828
--	no dance	Paauilo Kongoji Mission	808-963-6308
Aug 8	Fri., dance 6 pm	Life Care Center in Hilo	808-959-9151
Aug 9		Hilo Higashi Hongwanji Mission	808-935-8968
Aug 9		Hamakua Jodo Mission	808-775-0965
Aug 9		Kona Koyasan Daishiji	808-324-1741
Aug 16		Kamuela Hongwanji Mission	808-885-4481
Aug 16		Hakalau Jodo Mission	808-936-7828
Aug 23		Hilo Daijingu , 10 Anela St.	808-959-8611
Aug 23	dance 2 pm	Honohina-Papaaloa Hongwanji (at Honohina)	808-963-6451
Aug 23		Hawi Jodo Mission	808-987-8495
Aug 24	Sun., 1 pm	Fune Nagashi @ Mahukona Harbor	808-987-8495
Aug 24	Sun., 5 pm ?	Tooro Nagashi by N.Hawaii Hospice @Fairmont Orchid Hotel (<u>not a dance</u>)	808-885-7547
Aug 30	dance 3 pm	Pahoa Kaikan	808-966-9981
Sep 13	joint dance	Pahala Hongwanji & Naalehu Hongwanji (at <u>Pahala</u>)	808-966-9981
--	no dance	Naalehu Hongwanji (see Pahala Hongwanji on 9/13)	808-966-9981

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



Hamakua Jodo Mission

*The First Sanctioned Buddhist Temple Built in
Hawaii*

www.hamakujodomission.org

<http://Bit.ly/HamakuaJodoMission>