



HAMAKUA JODO MISSION OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER APRIL 2025



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"Honoring Tradition, Embracing Community"

2025 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING



Our 2025 Annual Membership Meeting will take place on **Sunday, April 27, 2025, at 10:00am HST**. This hybrid event will be held in-person at our dining hall and also available via Zoom for members unable to attend in person.

All HJM members should have received their meeting notice, including the agenda, Zoom link, ballot, and proxy information, which was sent to the address we have on file for you via USPS.

If you have not received your notice, please contact us immediately at (808) 775-0965 or email contact@hamakuajodominion.org.

Please note the deadline to submit your proxy and ballot is April 25, 2025. We look forward to seeing you at the meeting!

HANAMATSURI

April 8th holds significant meaning for Buddhists worldwide, as it marks the birth of Siddhartha Gautama, who would later become known as Shakyamuni Buddha.

Born in Lumbini, Nepal, his birth is commemorated through *Hanamatsuri*, or the "flower festival," celebrated at Buddhist temples across the globe.

During this time, temples set up a flower-covered pavilion called a *hanamido*, which holds a statue of the baby Buddha standing in a shallow bowl of sweet tea, known as *amacha*. Worshippers participate in the ceremony by gently pouring the *amacha* over the statue's head using a ladle, symbolizing the gentle rain that fell on the day of Buddha's birth.



Photo credit: katorisi - Own work, CC BY 3.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3837926>

This act of devotion is accompanied by prayers and reflects the joyous occasion of Siddhartha's birth and the enlightenment that followed, inspiring Buddhists to reflect on the teachings of Buddha.

OTHER NOTEWORTHY HAPPENINGS

- Our 2025 *tenugui* (bon dance towels) order arrived ahead of schedule this year! The design features a historical element, making it extra special. Stay tuned for a pre-sale opportunity coming in July!
- Have you had the opportunity to see the Honoka'a Heritage Center's latest window exhibit, "*North Hawai'i Women: Strength & Legacy*"?

One of the women featured is Tome Oda, Rev. Kogen Ekuan's mother-in-law, who played a crucial role in helping sustain HJM during World War II. The exhibit will be on display for a few more weeks, so we encourage you to stop by the Heritage Center to see it.

- The Hamakua Times featured a "*Volunteers Wanted!*" advertisement in their April edition. We would like to extend our gratitude to HJM Executive Team Director Nicole Garcia for designing and coordinating the placement of the ad in our community newspaper!

VOLUNTEERS WANTED!

HAMAKUA JODO MISSION

We are looking for volunteers willing to lend a hand - whether you can offer your time regularly or just now and then, we welcome your support!

Ways you can help:

- Monthly clean-up (once a month - contact us for next date!)
- General maintenance
- Landscaping and gardening
- Skilled repair work
- Other tasks based on your interests and abilities

JOIN US IN PRESERVING AND CARING FOR A CHERISHED PIECE OF OUR COMMUNITY HISTORY

Interested? Contact us to get involved or to learn more: (808) 775-0965
contact@hamakuajodominion.org



- As a reminder, the Beautification Work Day for April has been cancelled due to the

Easter holiday and the upcoming Annual Membership meeting. It will resume in May.

- HJM friend and volunteer Julie Yamashita-Dysim, along with her son Andrew created a Suggested Donation trifold brochure in response to frequent inquiries from the younger generation about appropriate *ofuse* donation amounts for services such as funerals, *nenki*, and other ceremonies.

The brochure, which was based on the average *ofuse* donation amounts received over recent years, is available inside the temple and dining hall. Please feel free to pick one up along with our HJM brochure during your next visit.

A big mahalo to Julie and Andrew, who live in California, for their incredible eye for graphic design!

- The Hawaii Jodo Shu Rengo Fujinkai is still accepting applications for the Namiye Nakamura Scholarship. For an application and more details on the qualifications, interested parties can contact the Betsuin office at (808) 949-3995. The deadline to submit an application is June 15, 2025.

INSPECTIONS, INSPECTIONS & MORE INSPECTIONS

Over the past month, our property has undergone a series of important inspections aimed at maintaining safety, supporting insurance requirements, and preparing for our upcoming lease renewal.

Hilo Fire Extinguishers conducted their annual inspection and maintenance service, ensuring that our nine fire extinguishers located throughout the property structures are fully operational and compliant with safety standards.

Additionally, an insurance inspector visited the property on behalf of our new fire insurance carrier. During this inspection, photographic documentation was taken of both the interior

and exterior of the structures on the premises, including our utility sheds. This process supports accurate risk assessment and helps ensure our insurance coverage aligns with the current condition of the property.

We also welcomed representatives from Kamehameha Schools, who performed a property inspection together with Kyodan President Sandy Takahashi. This inspection is a key step in the licensing renewal process and demonstrates our commitment to maintaining a well-kept and secure property.

These inspections reflect our proactive approach to property stewardship and our ongoing efforts to ensure safety, compliance, and continuity for our historic temple.

IN MEMORIAM



On the morning of March 31, 2025, we sadly lost a member of our temple, Arlene (Watanabe) Pullen.

Arlene grew up in Paauhau and attended HJM since she was a child. Her parents, Shinichiro and Tsuyuno Watanabe, were devoted, long-time members of the temple.

After graduating from Honokaa High School, Arlene continued her education at Honolulu Business College before moving to Sacramento, California, where she dedicated many years of service to the State of California Department of Real Estate until her retirement.

In late 2024, Arlene reached out to reconnect with HJM and officially became a member. We

are deeply saddened by her passing and extend our heartfelt condolences to her family. *Namu Amida Butsu.*

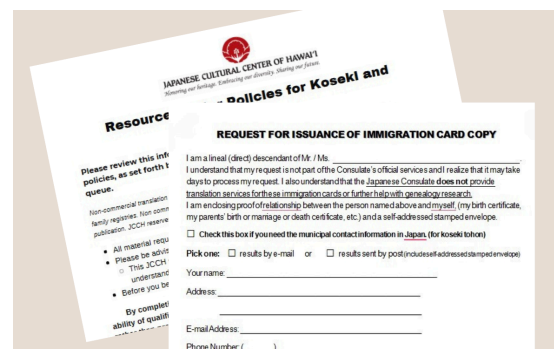
DID YOU KNOW?

In recent years, tracing family trees and uncovering ancestral roots has become increasingly popular, with genetic testing services like AncestryDNA and 23andMe offering detailed insights into one's genealogy.

These tools have made genealogy accessible to many, providing individuals with a deeper understanding of their familial origins through DNA analysis.

For Japanese individuals, however, an alternative to genetic testing exists in the form of the *koseki tohon*, a vital genealogical record that does not rely on DNA.

The *koseki* system was officially established during the Meiji Restoration in the 1870s and continues to serve as an official family registry in Japan. This certificate records essential information about a family, including the names of its members, their relationships, and key life events such as births, marriages, and deaths. Integral to Japanese civil law, the *koseki* system is used for various legal purposes, such as inheritance, marriage registration, and verifying family lineage.



The *koseki* provides an important historical record that traces the genealogical ties within a family, offering invaluable insights into one's ancestry. For those seeking to explore their *koseki* records, the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii, based in Honolulu, is one of several

sources that provides assistance in obtaining and translating these documents.

At HJM, we recently started a meaningful project to trace the descendants of individuals whose relatives are interred in our temple's cemetery. Through this research, we were able to uncover several family trees and gather contact information for a small group of descendants.

Our efforts aimed not only to re-establish connections with these families, but also to invite them to support HJM's mission to maintain the temple and cemetery, as well as our goal of purchasing the land from Kamehameha Schools.

Interestingly, one individual expressed some confusion upon being contacted, appearing unaware of their family's connection to HJM - a poignant reminder of how distant some have become from their ancestral roots in Hawai'i.

In this particular case, the recipient's great-grandparents and other ancestors' final resting place is in our cemetery, unbeknownst to them. It highlights the challenge many face in staying connected to their familial history, particularly as time and distance create gaps in preserving family ties and records.

For families with ties to HJM and similar institutions, it is vital to keep the memory of their ancestors alive, ensuring that they, along with their stories and sacrifices, are not forgotten. *Okage sama de.*

SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESSES



Whenever we're in need of gardening supplies or organic products, Farm Supply Cooperative Inc. in Hilo is our go-to destination.

Established in April 2000 as an alternative resource for farmers and home gardeners, this member-driven cooperative now offers one of the most extensive selections of organic goods on the island at competitive prices.

Memberships are available to the public for just \$30 per year or \$50 for two years, providing access to exclusive pricing that beats traditional retail rates. With no sales tax and a member punch card that gives \$5 off every \$100 spent, shoppers enjoy even greater savings with every visit.

Located at 60 Holomua Street in Hilo, Farm Supply Cooperative Inc. is open Monday through Friday from 8am to 5pm. Their knowledgeable, friendly staff are always ready to help making each visit easy and worth it!

ONE OF OUR DIRECTORS IS A FEATURED AUTHOR IN ALTA MAGAZINE!



We are proud to share that Nicole Garcia, one of our Directors on the Executive Team, recently co-authored an impactful article titled *Undesirables: The Lavender Scare* alongside award-winning author David Wolman for *Alta* magazine, a well-regarded West Coast publication.

The piece highlights the story of Helen Grace James, who, more than sixty years after being wrongfully discharged from the military due to her sexual orientation, began a courageous fight for an honorable discharge for herself and over 30,000 other veterans.

Helen's story serves as a powerful reminder of the ongoing struggle for justice and equality. The fact that her efforts have the potential to impact so many veterans after all these years

speaks volumes about the enduring importance of these issues.

To read this insightful article, please visit Alta's website:

<https://www.altaonline.com/dispatches/a63010955/lavender-scare-helen-grace-james/>

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

This month, HJM received a question asking about how to handle household altars known as *butsudan*, and old *omamori* (amulet).

"We are in the process of cleaning out our old family home and want to know what do we do with old omamori and a butsudan no longer in use?" - T.F.

The proper way to handle old *omamori*, *butsudan*, or Buddhist peripherals is to contact the minister of your temple to arrange to drop it off to him/her. Upon receiving the item(s), the minister will pray over them. These items will be disposed of by the minister. In the case of the *butsudan*, sometimes they are re-homed, depending on its condition.



Butsudan

For HJM, we ask that you contact us to make an appointment to receive your item(s) and we will arrange to have a Jodo Shu minister from a sister temple handle them, during the interim while we await assignment of a permanent minister.

We request you do not leave your item(s) on the veranda or inside the temple without reaching out first to us so we can have it kept in a secure area while we make arrangements to have it blessed and handled by the minister.



MAY 2025 NENKI MEMORIAL SERVICES

<u>DATE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>YEAR</u>
5/11	Yutaka Seo	25th

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!

FLASHBACK PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Photo from the Fujitani Family Collection

This month's flashback photo was taken in our dining hall in 1985, during a visit from Dr. Fumiko Kaya of Hiroshima, Japan.

Dr. Kaya, the niece of Katsu Goto, was in Hawaii as the guest of honor for a special service held at our temple to commemorate her uncle's short life and tragic lynching in the late 1889, an act fueled by jealousy and racial tensions.

Several HJM members are seen with Dr. Kaya in this photograph, which includes Yutaka "Doc" Doi and his wife Margie, Tomiko Fujitani, Sanshiro Yano and his wife Fusami, Nobu Takamine, and former minister Rev. Hakushi Tamura.

If you recognize any other individuals in the photo, please reach out to us at: contact@hamakuajodomission.org



IN APPRECIATION

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

Charles Umamoto, Michael & Charlene Sohriakoff, Shari Capilla, Hillary Chang, Mr. & Mrs. Leslie Tachibana, and Walter Takimoto.

Membership dues received:

Hillary Chang, David Wallerstein, Sadako Kato, Cindy Coronel, Shari Capilla, Kristina Adams, Kassie Tarpley, Pickens Kehrer, John Arsenault, Jan Kamiya, Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Toyama, Mr. & Mrs. Earl Takahashi, Dr. Patsy & Mr. Alan Iwasaki, and Marvin Kato.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

At HJM, we are constantly striving to maintain a serene and welcoming environment for all who visit, while also honoring the deep-rooted traditions that have been passed down through generations.

We recognize the importance of coming together to preserve our temple and uphold the values and memories of our ancestors. One of the ways in which you can make a meaningful contribution is by volunteering your time and energy to help with a variety of maintenance work at the temple.

No prior experience is necessary, and membership is not required to be a volunteer! We welcome all skill levels and will gladly work with you to find tasks that match your ability and availability.

UPCOMING EVENTS & SERVICES SCHEDULE

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>TIME</u>
4/25/25	Executive Team Meeting*	7:00pm
4/27/25	2025 Annual Membership Meeting	10:00am

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

For the booking of future events, services, and facilities, please feel free to reach out to the Executive Team at the contact info listed above.

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

**Executive Team meetings are for the Directors & Officers of HJM only.*

If you are interested in volunteering at HJM, please reach out to us at (808) 775-0965 or by emailing: contact@hamakuajodominion.org

CONTACT INFORMATION REQUEST

Thank you to everyone who provided their updated contact information!

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 assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated!

CONTRIBUTIONS & SUBMISSIONS



We'd love to feature your stories, photos, and ideas in our newsletter!

Whether it's a story, a memorable snapshot, or a thoughtful suggestion, your contributions help make our newsletter more personal and connected. If you have something to share, we'd be happy to hear from you. Letters to the Editor are also welcomed!

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

If you don't have access to the internet, feel free to send them via USPS to us, too!

2025 OBON CELEBRATION

Mark your calendars - our Obon Celebration is back on **Saturday, August 9, 2025!**

Join us for an evening welcoming back the spirits of our departed loved ones starting with a gravesite service at 5:00pm, followed by an indoor service at 6:0pm, and then our bon dance at 7:00pm.

This year, we're adding even more fun for all ages while continuing to honor the traditions of Obon. Expect games, activities, food trucks, exhibits, community spirit, and yes, **door prizes**, too! What surprise will we have in store this year?

We're also looking for friendly, dependable, and hardworking volunteers to help with setup and booth activities. If you'd like to be part of the team, we'd love to hear from you!

Please feel free to send us an email to: contact@hamakuajodominion.org or call us at (808) 775-0965.

Mahalo for reading & your continued support!

*- The Hamakua Jodo Mission
Newsletter Committee*

"What lies behind you and what lies in front of you, pales in comparison to what lies inside of you." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

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

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Hamakua Jodo Mission

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