



HAMAKUA JODO MISSION OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2025



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"Honoring Tradition, Embracing Community"

AKEMASHITE OMEDETŌ GOZAIMASU HAPPY NEW YEAR!



As we step into this new year, we offer our heartfelt blessings and gratitude to all who are part of our HJM ohana. May this year be filled with peace, wisdom, and compassion for all.

In the spirit of the Buddha's teachings, let us walk the path of mindfulness, kindness, and clarity, deepening our practice and cultivating relationships with one another. With each new moment, we have the opportunity to grow, overcome obstacles, and to awaken to the boundless joy of the present.

We invite you to join us in this new year, with renewed dedication, honoring our ancestors, and wishing for the well-being of all living beings.

May this year bring you and your loved ones abundant blessings of health, happiness, and spiritual growth!

For those on the Big Island, the Honokaa Business Association will be ringing in 2025 with a Lunar New Year Celebration on Saturday, January 25, 2025 from 11am to 4pm.

Enjoy a variety of fun cultural activities and delicious food trucks along Mamane Street in Historic Honokaa Town!

2025 MEMBERSHIP DUES

We are accepting membership dues for 2025 now through March 31, 2025. Dues remain at \$60.

If you missed the deadline to pay your 2024 membership dues, you can still reinstate your membership to an active status by remitting your 2024 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@hamakuajodominmission.org

GYOKI-E

Gyoki-e is a memorial service held to honor St. Hōnen, the founder of Pure Land Buddhism, known as the Jodo Shu sect. He passed away in 1212 at the age of 80.



Hōnen Shonin

This service is typically held in January, and includes chanting the *nembutsu* (*Namu Amida Butsu*), offering prayers, and paying homage to Hōnen Shonin, acknowledging his profound contributions to the spread of Pure Land teachings.

OTHER NOTEWORTHY HAPPENINGS

- Our Annual Membership Meeting is scheduled for April 27, 2025. Detailed information will be sent to all HJM members as the date draws nearer.
- On the evening of January 4, 2025, we were informed of a water leak in the PVC pipe running along the driveway.

HJM member Pickens Kehrner promptly shut off the water at the meter to prevent further issues until repairs could begin the next day. He then repaired the damaged section of pipe as a donation to HJM. Thank you, Pickens, for your quick response and generous assistance!

- A number of bulky, inoperable items, including an old broken riding mower, a large sleeper sofa, tables, chairs, desks, and abandoned items which had been stored under the temple for decades, were recently removed and hauled away.

These items not only created an eyesore, but also posed a fire hazard per the fire marshal. While there is still much more to clear out, we are steadily making progress and are committed to ensuring the space is safe and free of unnecessary clutter.

- After several months with few feral pigs on the grounds, they have now returned in large numbers. We ask that you be cautious and watch your step to avoid encountering fecal matter on the property. Additionally, a flock of wild turkeys have also made its presence known, too!



Can you spot the wild turkeys?

- Hawaiian Telcom moved our fiber optic distribution box that was originally installed in the back room of the temple closer to the front of the property.

This was done in an attempt to see if it results in better connectivity for our internet/ wi-fi service which is used for our security cameras, and meetings held via Zoom.

- Mahalo to Nic Tanaka, Marvin Kato, and Nate Adams for helping us during our Beautification Work Day held in December!

With a smaller-than-usual group of regular volunteers due to the holidays, we were incredibly grateful to have them step up and assist Pickens with many outdoor tasks. Their help truly made a difference!

A special shoutout goes to Marvin, who generously volunteered several hours of his time to assist us while on vacation from Oahu. We also extend our thanks to all our amazing volunteers for their hard work and support!

- We are saddened to hear that Rev. Masanari Yamagishi, the minister of the Honokaa Hongwanji Mission, will be moving back to Japan.

We are appreciative for his invaluable support, including officiating the Katsu Goto Legacy Week Memorial Service for us in 2023. We send him our aloha and best wishes for the journey ahead.

- The HJM Executive Team is still patiently awaiting a response from the Hawaii Council of Jodo Missions (HCJM) to answer their concerns and questions about the HCJM budget and assessment dues invoiced to HJM.

CLEARING OF OVERGROWTH



In 2022, Kamehameha Schools included an overgrown section of land in our amended lease as a result of a leasing error with our neighbor.

Thanks to the used tractor parts that were donated by the Nadao Honda Family and Clint,

a community member from Kalopa, the towering guinea grass is now in the beginning stages of being cleared, creating valuable, usable space and additional parking for Obon.

IN LOVING MEMORY



Photo credit: Sarah Anderson

We would be remiss not to acknowledge that this month marks the third anniversary of the sudden passing of former Kyodan President Masa Nishimori. He spent his final hours on January 24, 2022 lovingly tending to the grounds of HJM - doing what he cherished most.

Masa was a truly remarkable person to HJM and to all who knew him, and his absence is deeply felt by many. Rest in Love, Masa.

TRESPASSERS

During the holidays, our security cameras recorded a suspicious black pick-up truck, occupied by several young men, as they were observed scoping the front yard and the area behind the dining hall.

This incident, along with images of the pick-up truck, has been reported to the Honokaa Police Department.

Our cameras have also captured clips of unknown individuals peering into the old shed located behind the cottage's outhouse. We ask everyone to be proactive - if you notice any suspicious activity on the premises, please

contact the non-emergency line to the Hawaii Police Department at (808) 935-3311.

DID YOU KNOW?



Cherry blossoms in Hawaii typically begin to bloom in December, creating a beautiful sight to behold.

Over the years, we've been fortunate to see a few blossoms grace two of our cherry blossom trees. Interestingly, these trees were not originally intended to be planted here.

On November 7, 1985, during a tree-planting ceremony honoring Katsu Goto, a shower tree was planted near the driveway on the makai side of the front yard by Dr. Fumiko Kaya, Katsu Goto's niece, and former Hawaii State Senator Malama Solomon.



Dr. Fumiko Kaya and former State Senator Malama Solomon during the tree planting ceremony, 1985.

As the tree grew, elders expressed concerns about its roots potentially becoming too large like the poinciana shower tree already on the

property, which could cause erosion, especially so close to the driveway.

To address these concerns, the shower tree was removed and replaced with two cherry blossom trees, which now stand in its place, adding their own unique beauty to the grounds.

SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESSES



Editor's Note: Over the past year, we have highlighted local businesses that partner with our temple. This month, we're taking a slightly different approach by featuring a small business that, although no longer in operation, holds strong familial ties to HJM.

We hope you enjoy this article and appreciate the unique connection it represents!

The Okunami Family's deep and enduring connection to our temple began with patriarch Umakichi Okunami, who immigrated from Hiroshima-ken, Japan, in 1899 with his wife Mume, and their son Rikichi. Over time, their family grew, welcoming more children, and they became active members of HJM.

What many may not know is that their son, Rikichi, became the owner of a successful business originally known as R. Okunami & Sons, which later became Okunami Enterprises, Inc. The company specialized in producing a variety of traditional Japanese tsukemono, including takuan, pickled vegetables, and sanbai-zuke.

In 1947, Rikichi was granted exclusive rights to his Kogen-Zuke Takuwan label by the Territory of Hawaii, solidifying the company's place in

the local food industry. Based in Ahualoa, Okunami Enterprises earned a reputation for crafting some of the finest tsukemono in Hawaii under the esteemed “Kogen” brand.

Rikichi passed away in 1962 and was laid to rest at the Alae Cemetery in Hilo, while his parents, Umakichi and Mume, are buried at HJM's cemetery. The Okunami Family's connection to our temple continues today through their extended family, who continue to visit and support us.



YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

We received an inquiry regarding a rumor that has been circulating for the past year. We hope this response will clarify any lingering questions about the status of HJM's religious services.

"I heard that HJM no longer offers religious services. Is this true?" - J.G.

Absolutely not! While HJM is still awaiting the assignment of a new resident minister, we remain an active religious organization and continue to offer services to our members upon request.

After the resignation of our former minister in October 2023, we were instructed by the Bishop and Leonard Chow, President of the Hawaii Council of Jodo Missions, on how ministerial duties would be managed during the interim.

We were informed that a Hawaii Jodo Shu minister would be available to officiate requested services with at least 30-days' notice.

We are happy to report that we now have access to a Hawaii Jodo Shu minister available to officiate services upon request **without** the need for a 30-day advance notice.

For *nenki* memorial services, funerals, inurnment, blessings, or any other religious ceremonies, you can easily schedule them with the HJM Executive Team by contacting them at (808) 775-0965 or by emailing them at hamakuajodoexecteam@gmail.com

The HJM Executive Team has inquired several times about reinstating monthly services (“hoyo”), the last of which took place in 2019.

They proposed a practical solution during the interim to the Bishop: rather than incurring travel expenses for a minister to officiate in-person monthly services with minimal attendance, they suggested offering our members access to hybrid online services hosted by other Jodo Shu temples, with access links provided to us.

While we have not yet received any links, we remain hopeful that the Bishop and the HCJM will see the practicality of it while we await the assignment of a new minister. The Executive Team will continue to pursue this option in the meantime.

FEBRUARY 2025 NENKI MEMORIAL SERVICES

<u>DATE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>YEAR</u>
2/07	Tsuruye Hirayama	17th
2/07	Ralph Matsumoto	43rd
2/14	Shoichi Fukaura	1st
2/26	Michiko Uyeda	3rd
2/28	Fumiko Yanagisawa	17th

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

We regret to inform our readers that a typographical error occurred in the translation of the 2025 Nenki Memorial Services list published last month. The name Toyoko

Okamoto was incorrectly listed as Toyoko Okamura. We apologize for any confusion this may have caused.

UPCOMING EVENTS & SERVICES SCHEDULE

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>TIME</u>
1/26/25	Beautification Work Day	8:00am - 10:30am
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.

Takamine, who served as Treasurer, and Sueichi Kawashima, who served as a Director, standing next to a painting of the temple.

Information about the painting, its origin, the artist, and its current location remain unknown to current members of HJM. If you have any information, we would be grateful to hear from you. Your insights could help shed light on this beautiful artwork!

IN SEARCH OF VOLUNTEERS



Photo credit: Sarah Anderson

In the past, we were fortunate to have a dedicated group of retired, on-island members who devoted their time and energy to the upkeep of the property. These men and women, in their elder years, often worried about the future of HJM, wondering what would become of the work they had lovingly invested in for many years.

They feared that without younger generations stepping in, there would be no one to carry on the traditions and upkeep of HJM - efforts that they, and their ancestors before them, had worked tirelessly to establish and preserve.

Sadly, many of these wonderful elders have since passed, and those who remain are physically unable to volunteer as they once did.

Today, while we are grateful to have some younger members and community volunteers, many of them juggle full-time jobs, which limits their ability to volunteer as much as they would like.

FLASHBACK PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Photo from the Fujitani Family Collection

This month's photo, taken on October 30, 1994 during the Centennial Celebration of Jodo Shu in Hawaii, features two former Board of Directors members, Yoshinobu "Nobu"

The reality is we need more help. The demands of maintaining this beloved temple are growing, and we are calling on you, our members, friends, and community, to lend a helping hand.

Whether you can contribute your time regularly or offer support in other ways, such as caring for the gravesite of your ancestors, or making a financial contribution to assist with ongoing maintenance, every effort is invaluable.



HJM has long been a source of pride for all of us, and it is now our turn to ensure its continued legacy. We ask for your support and your involvement, whether big or small, as we work together to honor the past and secure the future of our historic temple.

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

IN APPRECIATION



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

Mr. & Mrs. Jeffrey Kato, Dr. & Mrs. Justin Ekuon, Mr. & Mrs. Edward Honda, and Jan & Peter Wizinowich.

Membership dues received:

Shigeyo Ricci, Mr. & Mrs. Edward Honda, Mr. & Mrs. George Higaki, and Susumu Fujii.



CONTRIBUTIONS & SUBMISSIONS

Our newsletter thrives on your contributions and we're always eager to showcase insightful articles, old photos, ideas, and feedback you may have. Your input means a lot to us!

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!
Happy New Year!*



*- The Hamakua Jodo Mission
Newsletter Committee*

"Start with what is right rather than what is acceptable." – Franz Kafka

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

*The First Sanctioned Buddhist Temple Built in
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