

## Introduction

“Chinese People in Hawaii and The Wo Hing Society,” is intended to provide historical information about the Chinese who came to Hawaii, especially those who came to Maui. Elements of the story include their arrival, the establishment of Chinatowns, their religious and cultural practices, the significance of Chinese organizations (Tong and Hui Kwan), and the comings and goings of Sun Yat-sen to Hawaii and Maui. All of these elements played a part in the history of the Wo Hing Temple and the Wo Hing Society. Other topics discussed are Chee Kong Tong, temple festivals and cultural events, and the Society’s old documents (1906 through 1990).

This document is the result of my volunteer work as cultural advisor for the Wo Hing Society. It also stems from my work as a docent at the Wo Hing temple/museum from 2000 to 2003, where I have had the objective of putting together all possible information about this historic building. It is to be used as a reference for the museum docents, and for those visitors interested in Hawaiian Chinese history and culture.

This piece of work is just the beginning. I hope it will stimulate an increased participation from people in all walks of life, particularly from the Chinese communities who may still have stories from this time. There is

still much information missing. I hope this document encourages people to come forward with their stories to fill in the missing parts. Please kindly contact me if you have information to share or if you plan to use any part of the document, to ensure that the purpose of renewing interest in Chinese culture and history is accomplished.

Sincere thanks to the Hawaii Chinese History Center for permission to use the information published by them. I also extend my appreciation and acknowledgement to those individuals who directly and indirectly contributed to the completing of this work.

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## 1. The Arrival of Chinese in Hawaii

Recent research opens the possibility that Chinese people came to Hawaii before Columbus sailed to America. As Menzies mentioned in his book, 1421: The Year China Discovered America (2002), "Although much evidence of the Chinese voyages of discovery has been lost or destroyed over the centuries, one very tangible kind is visible everywhere today: the plants and animals the Chinese fleets carried with them to new land . . .

China's greatest contribution to civilization may well have been the cultivation and propagation of the plants . . . no fewer than twenty-seven important cash crops are known to have been brought to the islands of Hawaii from India, Asia, Indonesia, the Americas and even Africa. . . The sweet potato, sugar cane, bamboo, coconut palm, arrowroot, yam, banana, turmeric, ginger, kava, breadfruit . . . were all growing in Hawaii when the first Europeans arrived: none of them is indigenous to the islands" (p. 394). Be that as it may, more research is necessary to obtain conclusive evidence that the Chinese did indeed arrive in Hawaii before 1778.

The most agreed-upon date of arrival of the first Chinese people to Hawaii is 1788. According to "Wah- Fau, A way of Life: the Emergence of Chinatown-- The Chinese in Hawaii 200 Years," the first Chinese people to arrive in Hawaii came in 1788 and 1789 on European and American trading ships which stopped here in the islands for fresh water and provisions. The Chinese on board were workmen: carpenters, artisans and sailors from South China. Some of the carpenters apparently remained in the Islands after the ships left. Soon after this, in 1792, commerce began between China and Hawaii--traders bargained with Hawaiian chiefs for sandalwood logs to ship to China. Obviously, the Chinese sailors had recognized Hawaii's sandalwood forests. This fragrant wood was highly prized in China for making incense sticks, fans and carved boxes. In China, Hawaii became known as "Tan Heung Shan," the Sandalwood Mountains (Department of Education State of Hawaii, June 1989).

The first Chinese immigrants were predominantly men, most of whom had come of their own accord, sailing on the ships engaged in the China-sandalwood trade (Chen, 1989). Although an edict of the Imperial Chinese government banned all emigration from China, by the year 1800 there were 71 Chinese among the 1,962 foreigners in the Hawaiian Kingdom (Chen, 1989).

The earliest Chinese in the Kingdom of Hawaii were dubbed “the sugar masters.” Sugar making was centuries-old in China but unknown in Hawaii. The first sugar mill in Hawaii was established on Lanai in 1802, by Wong Tze Chun, who arrived on a sandalwood trading ship with a crude stone mill, some boilers, and knowledge of the Chinese method of manufacturing sugar. He planted a small crop of sugar cane, built a mill, and ground what is

believed to be the first sugar manufactured in Hawaii. Wong ground only one crop of sugar. Apparently it did not pay as a business. It was difficult to get reliable laboring help from among the Hawaiians, or perhaps he ran out of capital before the business could sustain itself. Whatever the reason, the next year Wong returned to his homeland. In 1828, two Chinese businessmen organized the Hungtai Company, and established a sugar mill in Wailuku, Maui. The Chinese taught the Americans and the Europeans how to make sugar as their had been producing sugar in their home land for thousand of years.

After Great Britain defeated the Imperial Chinese government in the Opium Wars (1839-1842), the terms of surrender included:

- to cede Hong Kong to the British,
- to open several ports, including Canton (Kwangchow) to foreign powers, and
- to accept the importation of opium for Chinese silver which was then paid back to Chinese for Chinese products.

Canton province, in south China, was one of the first places where encounters with foreigners occurred, from business trading and politics to missionary activities. This region became a hotbed of disorder during the Ta'I Ping Rebellion (1850-1864), a movement that directly challenged the rule of the Imperial government of the Manchus (Ch'ing Dynasty). The political turmoil and subsequent widespread poverty encouraged the residents to seek their fortunes overseas. Hawaii was one of their destinations.

The Chinese who settled in Hawaii were intent on making their fortunes in this land of opportunity. Their goal was to make money to take back to China to improve their status and to relieve the near-poverty living conditions in their home villages in rural South China.

## **2. The Contract Laborers**

Beginning in the 1850's, Chinese, both men and women, were recruited to work on American-owned sugar and pineapple plantations. Men were

encouraged to bring their wives and families. Chinese immigrants continued to arrive to Hawaii until 1898, when it was annexed by the United States and became subject to U.S. immigration laws (Stepanchuk, 2002, p. 5).

There are varying counts of the number of Chinese in Hawaii during the 1800's.

(a) In 1852, the first large group of Chinese immigrants, some 200 men, was recruited as five-year contract laborers to work in the sugar plantations of Kaua'i and Maui. During the year 1838 and 1858, they were more tolerant of the recruitment of Chinese contract laborers. As the plantation system grew and became more successful, the owner recognized the critical need for the help provided by the Chinese worker as there was no other source of labor available at that time.

From that time until the turn of the century between 1852 and 1909, approximately 46,000 Chinese were migrant laborers in Hawaii. They did not come to the Hawaiian Kingdom with the idea of settling down, but rather to return home to China with some money. Of those 46,000, nearly half of them returned--successfully or unsuccessfully--to China (Mark, 1975; Char, 1975; Chen, 1989).



(b) Between 1852 and 1876, 1800 Chinese contract laborers came to Hawaii; 12,000 came between 1877 and 1884, and more than 25,000 came between 1886 and 1896. According to Sailing for the Sun: The Chinese in Hawaii 1789-1989 (Lum, et al., 1988)

(c) Between 1879 and 1898, of the 49,000 Chinese who came, about 27,000 returned home. The ones who stayed became the roots of today's Hawaiian Chinese (Star Bulletin Today, Honolulu, February 18, 1977).

(d) Of the estimated 46,000 immigrants who came to the Islands from China before Hawaii was annexed by the United States in 1898, ninety-five percent were men, mostly young adults. In fact, although it is not commonly known, during the later 1800's more than half of the adult men in Hawaii were Chinese! (Glick, 1980) It was not until the decades of 1890-1910 that any considerable number of Chinese women came to the Islands and the Hawaiian-born Chinese population began to multiply.

Planters favored importing Chinese workers because they were willing to work for low wages and endure hardships. They were placed under contract (indentured) for five years at \$3.00 per month, in addition to receiving free passage, quarters, clothes and food. This allowed Hawaii sugar planters to successfully compete with sugar planters in other countries (Chen, 1989). Besides planting and harvesting, the Chinese were the laborers who built the tunnels in the mountains to divert the

streams for irrigation. This was sometimes dangerous work, as the engineers had them using dynamite for the process. The mountains of Maui are full of these very soundly crafted stone tunnels and irrigation canals.

As mentioned before, after completing their three- to five-year plantation contracts, a great number of Chinese returned home to China, while others remained in Hawaii seeking work elsewhere, or starting their own business enterprises. These early Chinese attempted to make their fortunes in agriculture, particularly in sugar production, but more often as businessmen and artisans. They worked as laborers, domestics, and entrepreneurs raising crops such as rice, sugar cane, coffee, pineapples, bananas, and taro; as artisans, fisherman, peddlers, merchants and shopkeepers (Chen, 1989). These business pioneers formed companies among themselves and also joined with other foreigners in developing commercial enterprises. They recruited other Chinese from China as partners or as employees (Chen, 1989).

According to Glick's Sojourners and Settlers: Chinese migrants in Hawaii, the Chinese migrants who came to Hawaii, in particular those who stayed and established families in the islands, laid the foundations for the incorporation of Hawaii-born Chinese into the economic, political, cultural, and social life of Hawaii's multiethnic community (1980). In 1938, about 3,500 of the Chinese men who had come to Hawaii before Annexation were still living here; many, as heads of families, were still actively engaged

in their businesses or other occupations, while others had retired, and a few were single, older, indigent men dependent on more prosperous Chinese or on public welfare. Most of the Chinese organizations they had established (“societies”) were still under their leadership (Glick, 1980).

### **3. Achievement of Professional Status**

Lawrence H. Fuchs stated in his article, Success, Pake Style, “To achieve a professional status would not only mean economic independence, but would bring honor to the family. In 1900, there were only 12 teachers of Chinese ancestry in Hawaii. Thirty years later, there were 191 . . . By 1940, there were 30 medical doctors and 26 dentists of Chinese ancestry in the Territory . . . Over the course of two generations, from 1890, when 87% of the Chinese worked as unskilled plantation laborers, servants, or small farmers, to 1940, when six out of every ten Chinese- Americans were in the preferred professional, proprietary, clerical, or skilled occupations” (1975, p. 37). Hawaiian-born Chinese made up nearly 90 percent of the islands’ Chinese population in 1950 and controlled almost all the Chinese businesses. Occupational data from the 1950 census demonstrated the favorable economic position migrants had made possible for their Hawaiian-born children and grandchildren, a position that 1970 census data confirmed (Glick, 1980).

## **4. Ethnic Origins of Hawaii's Chinese People**

The older generation of Hawaiian Chinese came from sixteen different districts of politically troubled Kwangtung province (Canton), in south China. On Maui, most of them came from Chungshan district, formerly Heungshan (until 1925 when the name was changed to honor Sun Yat-sen, known also as Sun Chung-shan, who was a native of this district).

Out of the 27,000 Chinese in the Islands, 7,000 are Hakka people. Another main group is Punti, who are divided into two major regional groups--Sam Yap (San-I or Three District) and See Yup (Sai Yap, Szu Yup, or Four Districts). The See Yup area in Kwangtung Province covered four districts: Toyshan, Sunwui, Hoyping and Yenping. It is estimated that there are 3,000 See Yup people in Hawaii, including the first generation and their descendents (Char, 1975).

## **5. Chinatown in Lahaina**

After 1828, Chinese entrepreneurs opened businesses in Lahaina, such as the Goo Lip Tailor store, and the Sing Fat Company store (groceries, dry goods and fancy goods) opened up across the street from the Wo Hing Society building. Chinatown continued to grow on Front Street, with the Wo Hing society building as the center of the community; for many years the Chinese were a major influence in the business in Lahaina Town. In

the early days, social functions, funerals, meetings—all these were usually held in society buildings.

The following were some of the Chinese stores in Lahaina with which the Wo Hing Society did business during the period 1915-1961:

- Len Wai Co., for groceries, dry goods, furniture, glassware and lumber;
- Kwang Wo Tong, for general merchandise;
- Wong's Ki Sing Lung Store, for general merchandise, sweets and homemade candies;
- Len Wai Store, for glassware, furniture, men's furnishings, and dry goods;
- Maui Dry Goods & Grocery Co., Ltd., (Lahaina branch), for dry goods, groceries, hardware and novelties;
- Yet Lung Store for fresh meats, groceries, dry goods, beer, wine and liquor.

All of the Chinese buildings on Front Street except the Wo Hing Temple burned down during the great Lahaina fire in 1919 and were rebuilt very soon after. There was no prove of how the fire started, but one explanation was that a thief had started it.

The Hop Wo store was a coffee salon and bakery which also sold groceries, cigars and varied merchandise; and provided Chinese food delicacies such as manapua, char siu, pastries and cookies. It prospered through the 1960s when \$20 in cash sales was considered a good day (Kupau, 2001). Hop Wo was the longest running family business on Front Street, and was the last Chinese store to close in 1972. In addition, there

were a number of builders, merchants and construction companies which helped in the development of Lahaina Chinatown.

Although Chinatown began as one-story shops and housing, as more Chinese were attracted to the area, new two-story wooden buildings were built to accommodate them. The common practice for these immigrants was to live above their businesses. Thus, these buildings combined the store premises on the ground floor and the living quarters on the second floor. In the early days, Chinatown was a way of life for the immigrants. It was a gathering place for people in a new and foreign land to meet with people who spoke the same language and shared the same cultural beliefs, traditions and dreams. It was a social, cultural and business center, and a place that provided social contacts and support in times of crisis.

Today, there is no Chinatown on Maui. Lahaina's Front Street was turned into a tourist town in the mid 1900's. However, a Chinatown still exists in Honolulu, even after the Chinese moved throughout the city. It has expanded beyond their traditional boundaries as a mix of Asian and Hawaiian culture, with restaurants, markets, gift shops, art stores, noodle factories, and lei shops.

## **6. Chinatown in Kula**

The development of a Chinatown in Kula is more evidence for the diversity of Chinese achievements on Maui. The Kula area is agricultural land, and truck farm businesses in the 1800's were becoming very successful. This attracted many Chinese to Kula: some came there directly from China. At one time, nearly a fourth of Maui's Chinese population lived in Kula. During the 1840's and 1890's the majority of Chinese in Kula were Hakka. One of the early Kula residents who were responsible for attracting Hakka to Kula was Jung Muk Heen. He brought young men from China, taught them English and Hawaiian, and how to conduct business. For thirty to forty years Kula supported a community which included English and Chinese schools, and Christian churches, a Hung Men Society, general stores, and dozens of farms and cattle ranches (Mark, 1975).

In the early years most Chinese acquired their land from ranchers or Hawaiian homesteaders. The crops they planted were corn, beans, onions, Chinese cabbage, round cabbage, sweet potatoes, wheat and other grains, also cotton. Women worked in the fields; when necessary, even with babies strapped on their backs. The worst problem with farming in Kula was the occasional severe draught.

In 1905 the Chinese residents built the Kula pipeline to improve water supply for both home and farm land. Several Chinese women were hired to carry heavy pipes up the hill to the construction site, a half-mile up the hill. It took four women to carry each pipe. Most of Kula's produce was sent to markets in Honolulu. They in turn supplied Kula's general stores with

Chinese dry goods and staples, such as rice, flour, sugar and canned milk (Mark, 1975).

Family and social life of the Chinese in Kula revolved around the Chinese clubhouse and the Christian churches.

The Chinese clubhouse was the home for the Kwock Hing, or Ket Hing society, an important organization for the Kula Chinese people. Organized in 1900, with 71 charter members, it was one of the Hoong Moon Triads, a Chinese Masonic Lodge which originated in 300 AD in the Han Dynasty. The Hoong Moon order originated in the Ching Dynasty, in the early 17th century. In later years the Hoong Moon became a secret society because of its members' involvement in revolutionary activities against the Manchu Dynasty. In addition to political purposes, the Ket Hing housed an altar for worship of their deity, Kwan Ti, God of Justice and Compassion (Mark, 1975).

On Sundays the people in the Kula region would go to the Club house to exchange news, to eat, drink, gamble, trade stories, and listen to the news of China. The scholars of the community, Dai Tin Loon, and two Christian ministers, spent Sunday afternoons reading aloud news of the world to the farmers. Following the reading of the news articles, Society members would start discussions and debates, which often lasted for hours. Great interest in the Chinese homeland among the first generation Chinese resulted in many refusing to buy land; as they intended to return to China with their children some day (Mark, 1975).



The Christian churches were the other center of attention. Two Christian churches in Kula had predominantly Chinese congregations. Rev. Shim began his ministry in 1900. Ten years later St. John's Church had been built and he was the pastor. He founded the Chinese World Study Center, which promoted weekly discussions of current events in China and the world. Interest in this activity influenced a number of men to give up the opium habit. Chong Ho Fo was the other Chinese minister in Kula. For sixteen years he served the spiritual needs of the Kula Congregational Church, or "Fook Yim Tong," and taught daily language classes for the youth. The Chinese respected the Christian ministers because of their educational background. As a medical missionary, Rev. Chong used his knowledge of Chinese herbal medicine among Kula's sick.

Diet and health were important to the farmers of Kula. Clean air, farm work and simple diet kept most of the Kula families in good health. When sickness did occur, the Chinese went to the herb shops. For minor illnesses families relied on their own knowledge of herbs, and used bitter melon, mulberry root, salted limes, and other home remedies (Mark, 1975, pp. 11-12, 24, 27-29).

Education was a priority for Kula farmers. They were not able to obtain an education because of economic struggles, and were determined that their children would do better. The majority of the children attended both Chinese language classes and English public schools. At the Chinese

classes they learned both the spoken and written language; and studied various aspects of the culture. At the church, they were converted to Christianity. Some educating was done at home. Parents would tell tales of Old China, and stories of Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism (Mark, 1975, pp. 9-11).

Today Kula no longer has a Chinatown, but there still is a Chinese community in existence including the Christian churches and the Kwock Hing Society.

## **7. Chinese Religions and Practices: Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism**

Traditional Chinese religious faiths and practices are a blend of three different religious philosophies and beliefs: Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism (this last is not really a religion but a system of values). Each of these traditions had its place and function (Char, 1975, p. 183).

### **(a) Taoism**

Taoism is a way of life practiced far back in ancient times, of living in harmony with nature. The word Tao literally means “The Path,” that is, the cosmic “Way” that governs the operations of the universe. Taoism is about how to live in harmony with all the laws of the universe. The principle of

living in harmony with the universe was called “Wu-Wei,” meaning, “non-striving.” Staying in harmony with this universal flow brings wisdom, contentment and peace. Taoists revere the forces of nature, ancestors, ancient heroes, and patron deities. This religion, handed down from generation to generation chiefly through ceremonial practices and traditions, differs greatly from the philosophies and moral systems propounded by the sages (Mark, 1975, p183; 1998 p.64-65).

## **(b)Confucianism**

Confucius, born in 551 BC, was one of the greatest philosophers and teachers of the Chou Period. Living in violent times, he made it his mission to plead for peace and humanitarianism. A system of human values and ethics rather than a religion, Confucianism offered the promise of a peaceful world through the extension of family love. “Do not do to others what you would not want others to do to you,” was his famous principle, to be applied to all five of human relationships in the world—one’s relationships with one’s: parents, siblings, spouse, friends and government (Warshaw, et al., 1964 and 1973, pp. 23-25).

## **(c)Buddhism**

Buddhism, founded by Sakyamuni (Prince Siddhartha of India), was introduced into China during the reign of Ming Ti, (58-76 AD) (Tom, 1989,

p29, 31). Buddhist thought emphasizes spiritual enlightenment--the end of suffering. The form which is practiced in China, Mahayana Buddhism, offers a rich tapestry of rules that specify virtuous actions and moral behavior that allow for and promote the development of a kind heart and compassion with wisdom. Its most popular deity, the Goddess of Mercy, Kwan Yin, personifies the essence of compassion and loving-kindness (Too, 2001, pp. 11-12, 24).

## **8. Chinese Tongs and Hui-Kuans in America and Hawaii**

Hui-kuan means “society,” while “tong” has many meanings. It can mean a large residence or public hall. Used with other words, it can take different meanings such as: “miu tong” (temple or shrine); “gau tong,(church); “chee tong,” (ancestral hall), and “hawk tong,” (school). For purposes of this history, it means “association.”

Prior to the establishment on Maui of the Wo Hing society (hui–kuan), in 1909, and the Ket Hing society, in 1900, there had been many tongs and hui–kuans established throughout America and Hawaii. Their Tongs and Hui–kuans had a strong influence on the social, cultural and political life of the Chinese immigrants.

By the 1890’s, about ninety-five percent of the Chinese in the Americas belonged to hui-kuans, of which there are several types:

- a regional-geographical hui-kuan
- a family-clan hui-kuan
- a hui-kuan based on occupation, religion, or political or community purpose

In major centers of Chinese population, the various regional associations would organize themselves into a federation. For example, San Francisco's Chung-hua tsung hui-kuan (Chinese Benevolent Consolidated Association, called the Chinese Six Companies) is the most famous, and has probably been the most powerful. It dates from the 1850's.

All of these groups, with either restrictive or open membership requirements, represented variations on organizations to be found in China (Lum, 1999, p14-15). Trade guilds and associations were organized to address the needs of laborers, carpenters, butchers, cooks and waiters. Other organizations included literary and educational societies, and China-oriented political parties such as the Kuomintang established in 1894 by Dr. Sun Yat-Sen (Office of Instructional Services/General Education Branch, 1989, p4).

## **9. Chinese Societies in Hawaii**

At one time, there were more than 60 Chinese Societies all over Hawaii, most of them in Honolulu. The forming of early Chinese organizations in Hawaii was often based on the people's families' geographic origin and

surnames. The names of these organizations varied greatly, as did their purposes, which included; social, cultural, religious, political, business, and the advancement of better living conditions for Chinese immigrants. In the early days, one of their important services was helping to ship the bones of the deceased back to China for proper burial. They also helped their members find jobs, extended them credit when money was available, and maintained hostels in various American communities where transient members could stay for a small fee (Lum, 1999, p15).

In Hawaii, the first Chinese Tongs were formed with the sole objective of assisting their members in time of need, such as mutual aid, to care for ancestral graves. Most of these fraternal organizations in the old days were available to carry out burial and cemetery care. The Chinese immigrant joined the fraternal club to ensure that he would be given a proper burial ceremony and that his bones would be returned to his home village. Every five years, societies were responsible for sending the bones of the dead members to China for burial. When they chose a permanent burial site at one of the local Chinese cemeteries owned or managed by the fraternal society, they could depend on the annual Pai-San (Ching- Ming) ceremony in April conducted by their brotherhood. Such cemeteries were often next to the society clubhouse. If it were at some other location, a separate cemetery association might operate it, such as Man Fook Tong, a cemetery association that served the Chinese in Lahaina, according to the list of identified Chinese cemeteries.

Using tax keys and title historical searches, and the exact locations, of twenty- seven Chinese cemeteries in Hawaii are known; eight of them on Maui. In Lahaina, there are three remaining (now state-owned) Chinese cemeteries:

- Puehue Cemetery, tax key 4-6-13-11 on Aholo Road off Honoapiilani Highway;
- Pu' upiha Cemetery, tax key 4-5-04-12, where the members of Wo Hing Society in Lahaina perform the annual Pai - San ceremony every April;
- the Old State Cemetery on the public beach area near Kaanapali golf course. Seven Chinese graves remain there, off Kainau Road. Tax key 4-5-21-07 (Char,1975, p174-175).

From the sixty Chinese clubs and clubhouses that once populated the islands, a current survey tells us the number of Chinese societies has increased to 100 (2002 Directory of Chinese Organizations compiled by the United Chinese Society of Hawaii in Honolulu). An inventory of Chinese fraternal societies in Hawaii, the number of existing original clubhouses has dropped to twenty remaining. Most of them are in disrepair and no longer in use. On Oahu there are four, on Kauai, five, and on Hawaii Island, five. The remaining six are on Maui, at Ke'anae (One), Wailuku (two), Kipahulu (one), Kula (one) and Lahaina (one). Today, the only two society buildings to survive on Maui are Kwock Hing at Kula and Wo Hing in Lahaina (Char,1975, p168-171).

About half of our current organizations are surname associations and regional organizations. The rest are associations established for trading, occupations, a labor union, employment agencies, educational societies, civic associations and other clubs. The purposes are to better social relationships and to promote civic improvements among the Hawaiian Chinese. Most of the modern societies serve the valuable function of preserving and transmitting cultural traditions across generations. Nowadays, both men and women participate in ceremonial, cultural events and attend meetings; in the early days, only men participated, while women and children worked in the kitchen.

## **10. History of Sun Yat-sen “Father of the Chinese Revolution”**

Sun Yat-sen was born on November 12, 1866, in Choy Hang village, Chung Shan District, Kwantung Province, in south China. During his lifetime he made six trips to Hawaii; his cumulative time here amounted to seven years. Hawaii was a natural choice of travel destinations for Sun-Yat sen, because his older brother, Sun-Mei, had come here with an uncle, to make a new life. This brother traveled back and forth between Hawaii and China, recruiting contract labor for the sugar plantations. He was also a farmer, growing first vegetables, then rice and coffee. He was the only coffee grower in Ewa. In 1879, he brought his younger brother to Hawaii and enrolled him in Iolani School, a high school in Honolulu. When Sun



Yat-sen graduated from Iolani School in 1882, at the age of 16, Sun-Mei, who had moved to Kahului in 1881, put him through medical school in Canton and Hong Kong. He graduated at the top of his class in the College of Medicine in Hong Kong. In 1893 and 1894, he practiced medicine in Macao and Canton.

When he became involved in revolutionary activities in China he came to the Hawaiian Islands to gain support for the revolution. To allow him to travel freely as a U.S. citizen and without being harassed by the Manchus, especially after the U.S. Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which barred Chinese from entering the country, his brother Sun Mei managed to secure for him a birth certificate issued by the Territory of Hawaii stating that he was born at Waimalu, Ewa, Oahu, on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of November, 1870, and that he was a physician, practicing at present at Kula, Maui. Sun Mei had first opened a store in Kahului; then he leased land from the government and developed a 3,000-acre cattle ranch in Keokea, near Kula (Mark 1975, p. 31; Lum, 1999, p. 5). For safety, Sun Yat-sen moved his wife and family to Maui, where they lived with his brother and his family. As a result Sun always made a visit to Kula when he was in the Islands. The Sun family lived at the Kula ranch until 1907 (Mark, 1975, p. 31; Lum, 1999, p.13, 39).

In November 1884, Sun Yat-sen came to Maui. At that time he used the name Tai Cheong. In 1897, in Tokyo, he picked up a Japanese name, Nakayama, from a nameplate on a house he passed. In Chinese,

Nakayama is read as Chung Shan. This is how his name Sun Chung-shan came about. His official name is Sun Wen. When he signed documents in Chinese, he used the name Sun Wen. When he signed letters and documents in English he used the name Sun Yat-sen (Lum, 1999, pp. 1, 5, 39).

During his visits to Kula, Dr. Sun was sometimes consulted for medical advice; on one trip he administered smallpox vaccinations. His charge was one dollar for girls and two dollars for boys. To this day, Mrs. Pak Hoy Wong of Wailuku, Maui, is proud to show the scar on her left arm, the result of the vaccination done by Dr. Sun (Mark, 1975, p. 31).

His early school days were an important influence on Sun Yat-sen. He once said that his ideas came from three main sources: Chinese traditional culture, Western ideas, and his own thoughts; but Western ideas prevailed. In his handwritten autobiography of 1896, he described his first voyage to Hawaii, "I saw the wonderful steamship and the vast ocean ... and deep in my heart, I wished to learn from the West and seek for the infinite truth." In 1919, Sun told Albert Pierce Taylor, a newspaperman, "This is my Hawaii; here I was brought up and educated; and it was here that I came to know what modern, civilized governments are like and what they mean" (Lum, 1999, pp. 3, 5).

At that time China was in turmoil, defeated and humiliated; foreign powers encroached on the ancient empire, whose Manchu government was

corrupt. China was in danger of being carved up by foreign powers. Progressive-minded citizens began to awaken, and a revolutionary movement tied to modernize China, with Sun Yat-sen at the forefront. Sun thought this was the time to act, and he decided to go abroad to raise funds from the overseas Chinese and organize armed uprisings against the Manchu regime.

The first place he went was Honolulu, in 1894, where he organized a small group of friends and founded the Hsing Chung Hui (Revive China Society). This, Sun's first revolutionary organization, was an important milestone in the history of modern China: it was the first step toward overthrowing the Manchu dynasty and building a strong and democratic China. From 1894 to 1895, 120-130 Chinese in Hawaii joined the Hsing Chung Hui. Most of them were small merchants, workers, and intellectuals. At that time, more than 100,000 members all over the United States participated in supporting the 1911 Chinese Revolution and Dr. Sun Yat-sen (Lum, 1999, p6, 7, 957).

After Hsing Chung Hui was established in Honolulu, members Lee Chong and Soong Kee-yun secretly went to Kula, Maui, to enlist Sun Mei. He gladly joined and took on the chairmanship of the Kahului branch. He persuaded Dang Yum-nam to join, who became the chairman of the Paia branch (Lum, 1999, p8-9). Sun Mei supported the revolution and gave it all he had. In 1906, he had practically exhausted all of his cash. In 1908, Sun Mei sold his ranch to Tong Gan, who was known as "Akana Lillii" (Akana, the Small One) to the Hawaiians. Before moving to Kula, Tong

Gan had started a sugar mill in Makawao and raised sugar cane in Haiku. Tong Gan was the maternal grandfather of Mrs. Lillian Tavares Santos. He returned to China, leaving behind his wife who signed the papers to sell the Kula ranch to Antone Tavares in 1908 (Mark, 1975, p. 32).

Today one can visit Sun Mei's Kula ranch site by driving along the Kula highway to Keokea. The Chinese Fong Store and the Ching Store are on the roadside. At the ranch site alongside the highway is the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Park. The park was built and inaugurated in 1989 by the Maui Hua Ren 200 Committee of the Governor's Commission. The land for the park was donated by the Baldwin family, the same family who owns the Haleakala Ranch Company. In the garden facing and overlooking Sun Mei's Kula ranch site, you will find a new statue of Dr. Sun Yat-sen. A new granite pedestal unveiled on November, 14, 2011 can also be found there. The statue and pedestal were donated by the Sun Yat-sen Foundation for Peace and Education, Dr. Lily Sui-fong Sun and her son Charles Wong. A new Sun Mei statue was donated by Victor Sun, and unveiled June 3, 2013.

Sun Yat-sen died of liver cancer in Peking on March 12, 1925. His dying words were, "Peace, Struggle and Save China." Sun died not only as a great pioneer, a great revolutionist, and a great patriot but also as a man of high moral virtue. He never seized personal power; he never grabbed personal wealth; and he never indulged in nepotism or favoritism. Sun Mei had given almost all of his wealth to support the revolution. Shortly after

Sun had become the first president of The Chinese Republic, in 1911, a group of his followers signed a petition asking Sun to nominate Sun Mei as governor of Kwangtung Province. Sun did not approve the nomination. He made excuses, saying that his brother was a good businessman but not a politician, so he did not think he as fit for that position. Sun Yat-sen was a great man indeed (Lum, 1999, pp.38, 39).

## **8. History of the Chee Kong Tong**

The Wo Hing Society and the Ket Hing Society used to be chapters of the Chee KongTong, whose literal translation is “Toward the Public Good.” Known as Chinese Freemasons, Chee Kong Tong was established as a Hawaii chapter of the Hung Men Fraternity societies, (locally pronounced Hoong Moon). Started as a secret society during the Ching Dynasty (Manchu) dating back to the 16- 17<sup>th</sup> century. Its purpose was to overthrow the Ching Dynasty (Manchu) and to restore the Ming Dynasty. At one time, there were more than twenty Hung Men chapters in Hawaii. Some societies were called secret societies because of the secrecy that surrounded them. Such societies, for example, used hand signs and passwords in which members pledged total secrecy or faced death. In Hawaii, Hoong Moon (Triad) fraternal societies have what is called the 36 Oaths, a code of conduct epitomized by the concepts and ideals of morality, patriotism, fraternity and chivalry. “Elaborate rituals and ceremonies were practiced.” (Tom, 1989, p4; Lum, 1999, p. 57).

In 1903, during his fourth trip to Hawaii, Sun joined the Ket On Society in Honolulu, a Hung Men branch with a large Hakka membership, hoping to gain the following of many members. Some say that he gained only a minimum of support because the immediate needs of the local immigrant population were more important (Mark, 1975, p. 31). In July 1911, when Sun was in San Francisco, the Chee Kung Tong merged with the Tung Meng Hui in order to better support Sun's revolution. The American Chinese Revolutionary Army Fundraising Bureau (also called the Hoong Moon Fundraising Bureau) was established in San Francisco as a headquarters of Chee Kung Tong (Lum, 1999, p. 57). Besides engaging in political activities, Chee Kung Tong and its affiliated lodges and mutual aid societies maintained hostels in various communities where members could find a place to sleep and food to eat (Lum, 1999, pp. 22, 30).

Almost every Chee Kung Tong had an altar room with altars devoted to deities from the homeland. Kwan Dai (Kuan Ti), a military hero who became a patron saint, and a symbol of loyalty to the Hoong Moon societies. Kwan Dai is also considered the patron of merchants and is prayed to, to ensure success in business. Many stores in Chinatown have a small altar and statue of Kwan Dai displayed in a prominent place in their shops.

## **9. History of the Wo Hing Society**

In the early 1900's, a group of Chinese in Lahaina formed the Wo Hing Hui-Kuan (society). Wo means peace and harmony and Hing means prosperity. A benevolent, social, cultural and religious practicing organization, it was formed to provide members with a sense of community and support from birth to death and helped them maintain social and political ties with their ancestral homelands. In the early days, the 100 members of the Wo Hing Society were from fifty clans and spoke different dialects.

In 1912, using funds raised at an earlier time and donations from members, the society hall was built on Front Street. The building, dedicated in July 1912, is a two-story Victorian style building with wrap-around balconies on the first and second floors, adorned with Chinese grills and plaques. It is the only building on Front Street that retains a Chinese cultural and ethnic flavor; its contiguous architectural and historic character recalls a unique time and place.

The second floor of the building is an altar room, or temple, whose central altar is dedicated to Kwan Dai (Kuan Ti) the God of wealth, martial arts and loyalty. Kwan Dai, a military hero in the Three Kingdom period (200-280 A.D.) has long been the patron saint and symbol of loyalty for Hoong Moon societies, representing fraternity and a sworn brotherhood. According to one of legendary Chinese folklore, Kwan Dai with Liu Pei and Chang Fei started the first fraternity in the "Peach Garden" (Mark, 1975, p. 160). The "Five Founding Fathers" of Hoong Moon are also honored with an altar. Near the doors, a small shrine and altar honor the Gods of the land and

Doorways, the Heavenly God and Kwan Yin, the mother goddess of loving-kindness and compassion.

Lahaina's Wo Hing Society Hall served as clubhouse for its members, being used as a meeting place and for social functions, such as weddings and funerals, until the 1940's; it was also a residence for the last group of retired Chinese men from the sugar cane fields. By the 1940's, Lahaina's Chinese population was declining as Chinese left their agricultural jobs for business and job opportunities in Honolulu and the mainland. Wo Hing Society membership dwindled as the founders moved away or died and their children became assimilated into the community at large.

For years afterwards, the Society's buildings were weathered by time and eaten by termites; they were ready to collapse by 1983, when the Lahaina Restoration Foundation contracted with the Wo Hing Society to have the buildings restored. They would be operated as a museum, with the building still available for members to use for various cultural activities. The opening ceremony for the renovated building took place on December 17, 1984; the renovation project had successfully re-established the facility's original appearance. Unfortunately, despite the renovation, the Wo Hing Society became less involved. The restored building presented a new challenge to the dwindling membership. As a result of limited activities, new officers and active members were badly needed.



Joe Lai, an Elder member and loyal volunteer of The Wo Hing Society, revealed that many years ago, he had prayed that something would happen to bring renewed life to the building; particularly related to reviving the traditional Chinese culture and customs. It appears that a major step forward has been taken to achieve this goal. In 2001, new officers and members joined the society, and from this time onward, a new spirit came into being. As a result, the buildings have hosted several meetings, events, and celebrations such as Harvest Moon festival. These activities are another step in bringing more life back to the temple and society buildings, as an “extended family and community” effort. True, life is filled with family responsibilities, but planning and hard-working volunteers make all things possible.

## **10. Wo Hing Society’s Old Documents**

The Lahaina Restoration Foundation and the Wo Hing Society are currently engaged in a vital historical project: the preservation and translation of two hundred old Wo Hing Society documents, some as old 1906, which recount the history of the Society and the Chinese people on Maui. Written in the old form of Chinese calligraphy that is not easily understood by Chinese today, they are in fragile condition, and damaged by insects. Since very few other written primary sources about the history of the Chinese on Maui have survived, this project is especially important.

One hundred eighty of the documents are about Chinese cultural and religious events, especially Pai-San or Ching Ming (the ancestors' day). Those from 1906 and 1908 reveal that there were more than two hundred members involved from different towns and different islands of Hawaii. Research on their names has revealed that they came from 70 clans or surnames (There were more than two hundred Chinese surnames in Hawaii, according to an article written by Irma Tam Soong). Two documents are particularly interesting: a pamphlet of speeches by Sun Yat-sen and a booklet of the Kok Ming Tong, or Revolutionary Party. The discovery of the old documents has produced a number of positive results. Information from their translation has renewed interest among the members of the Wo Hing Society to participate in the various festivals of the Chinese lunar year celebrated at the Wo Hing Society buildings. The society is committed to reaching out to the community, to young and old, in an effort to pass on the knowledge of Chinese culture and history in Maui.

Other interesting artifacts in the Wo Hing Society buildings are the Chinese calligraphy carvings on wooden long plaques that are attached to the building both inside and outside the doorways. Several of them contain messages in the form of poems, left by the earlier members, for us, their descendants, to better understand the problems they were facing at that time in history. The following is one of them:

“When our ancestors came to this new land, like leaves unfolding in the sun, they expected to flutter down to their roots for death, to be back in their motherland to die. By staying, they gave us two cultures, one from

their hearts and one from this land. Please don't laugh, dear children of our future, at our difficulties in trying to live them both. Trying to keep the old traditions alive in a new place is like trying to keep a gourd alive by painting a picture of it. Now that we have established our family here, it is better, and we accept things as they are."

## **11. Festivals and Cultural Events Promoted by Wo Hing Society**

Here on Maui, there are enough people of Chinese ancestry who celebrate the old festivals so that everyone on the island is familiar with Chinese New Year festivities, especially the colorful lion dance down the main streets. The following are explanations of the traditions associated with the main Chinese holidays.

### **(a) The Chinese New Year**

Based on the annual lunar calendar, the Chinese New Year usually occurs between January 21 and February 20. Traditionally, it signifies the ending of the farming year and the beginning of the new season--it is a celebration of springtime. This is important as China is largely an agricultural country and people's lives are closely tied to the cycle of planting and of harvesting.

People start their New Year's celebration two weeks before New Year's Day and continue for two weeks afterwards. To prepare for the holiday they decorate their houses with "Nin Wah"--New Year's hopes and wishes written on little red papers along with the symbol for good luck, health, and happiness. They clean house, pay off debts and forgive grudges, so that nothing is left behind or incomplete, and the New Year can have a fresh start. Each family cleans off their altar and makes offerings to their ancestors, with oranges, pomelos, tangerines, and potted flowers. Everybody gets a haircut and shops for new clothes. For the individual, it is a time to reflect on the events of the past year and plan for the future.

On New Year's Eve, people lay out sweets and honey on an altar for the kitchen God (Joo Guan), so that they will get a good review when he goes to heaven and reports their behavior. New Year's Eve dinner is the most important event; the entire extended family is expected to come. If anybody cannot make it, a place at the table will be set in their honor. The meals served on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day are vegetarian, but after New Year's Day all kinds of meats and exotic foods are introduced to the table. Fish, poultry, pork, and noodles are served to respect family unity.

For the next two weeks everyone tries to visit all of their friends and relatives. Each household prepares a hospitality tray of sweetmeats, called a "Chuen-Hop" or "tray of togetherness" to offer visitors. The hostess will place a different New Year's treat in each of the tray's eight compartments.

For example, it is thought that if one eats candied melon it promotes growth and good health. Sticky candied coconut represents togetherness. Watermelon seeds symbolize “having plenty”. Visitors bring “gyam” (tangerines), which word spelled differently means wealth. The most common greetings heard are “Gong Xi Fai Cai” (May wealth and prosperity be yours), “Xin Nien Quai Le” (Happy New Year). Married couples hand out “Lai See” or “Hong Bao” to children, a red envelope containing money. This not only gives the children a good start for the year, but also helps them to learn about saving money and managing it wisely. Each community organizes a Lion Dance, accompanied by drums, gongs and firecrackers to scare away evil spirits, bring prosperity to all the shops and happiness to the people.

The Lahaina Town Action Committee has hosted a Lion Dance on Front Street, Lahaina for years. Now the Wo Hing Society has begun hosting more activities; the Wo Hing temple/museum is the center of the celebration.

## **(b) Chinese Moon Celebration: A Mid-Autumn Festival (Chung Chiu Jie)**

According to the five-thousand-year-old Chinese lunar calendar, which is approximately five weeks behind the Western calendar, the Moon festival is on the fifteenth of the eighth month (between late September and early

October). It always occurs close to the autumn equinox when yin and yang are understood to be in perfect balance. Traditionally, the Moon Festival is considered a harvest festival, because so many fruits, vegetables and grains are available. Since the harvest moon is the largest moon of the year, this is the most propitious time for the festival.

The morning part of the celebration consists of people making offerings of incense to their ancestors. During the day, the community celebrates the season of abundance, and prepares foods for the evening festivities: yams, lotus roots and seeds, star-shaped fruit, and lung gok or black water claptrap, a type of water chestnut resembling black buffalo horns. Peanuts are offered for abundant life and prosperity; pomelos, melons, oranges, apples, pomegranates and grapes for sweetness, purity and roundness of life.

All these offerings are given as thanks to the Moon goddess for the bountiful harvest, and to promote fertile fields and bigger crops. Each family brings a table outdoors and places it facing the moon, as an altar, where they then place all the offerings. They decorate it, and the yard, with many colorful lamps. Women leave feminine-type gifts on the altar—combs, face powders, handkerchiefs. For women, the time is for celebrating having a good lover, and the single women go out on dates. Under the full moon, people go down the streets and admire their neighbors' decorations, and share treats, especially Moon cakes.

Moon cakes (yueh ping) are the most distinctive food of the Moon festival--sweet, round cakes in the shape of the moon, filled with sesame seeds, melons and lotus seeds or bean paste. A golden yolk from a salted duck egg is placed at the center of each cake. Thirteen moon cakes are piled in a pyramid to symbolize the twelve moons of the year, plus the one intercalary moon. Other special foods include edible snails from the taro patches or rice paddies. Some believe that at the time of creation, taro was the first food discovered, and that it was revealed in the moonlight. The Moon Festival is an occasion for family reunion, a time for relaxation, and celebration--one of the happiest Chinese festivals of the year.

In Lahaina, the Wo Hing Society has celebrated the Moon Festival as one of the important festivals of the Chinese culture.

### **(c) Pai-San or Ching Ming**

“Ching Ming,” the Chinese Memorial Day, literally means “clear and bright”. It is also called Pai San or Hang San--a day for remembering and paying respect to one’s ancestors. According to Chinese tradition and the lunar calendar, Pai San is a month-long period from April 5 to May 4 (except in leap years, when it starts on April 4). The celebration can be traced back to the Han Dynasty (206 BC to 220 AD)—a 2000-year legacy.

Here in Hawaii, people choose a day in April to honor their ancestors. They go to the cemetery, clean the plots of weeds and leaves, and repaint

the inscriptions on the gravestones. Lighting long incense (Cheong sau heung) and red candles (san jook), they place them on the graves; the rising smoke and flames act as an invitation and a messenger to awaken the ancestors' souls and create a passage of communication. Three sticks of long incense, a symbol of longevity, are burned, one for Tien (heaven), one for Di (earth), and one for Yun (mankind). The three incense sticks also represent happiness, prosperity and longevity; heaven, earth and water.

Red paper banners, invitations to the spirits to join the ceremony, are placed centrally on each headstone, and anchored down with a stone or a clod of earth. An altar is arranged in front of the grand-ancestors' graves (Tai Kung Shan) for offerings. Items placed on it are: five cups each of tea and liquor, five bowls of rice with five pair of chopsticks (for small ceremonies, three of everything is sufficient), and five dishes of food--fish, chicken, shrimp, vegetables, and roast pork. A whole roast pig was considered the richest food offering. People also include a few simple dishes such as peanuts, cookies, buns, fruits and boiled duck eggs (symbolic of the Yin and Yang principles of universal life). Near the grand-ancestors' graves there is a smaller grave named San Ga, or the keeper of the area. As part of the ceremony, a small altar is set up here with lighted incense, candles, and a plate containing a piece of boiled pork and two unsalted duck eggs.



When everything is set, at the beginning of the ritual, everybody, in order by rank and seniority, kow-tows (bows) three times (happiness, prosperity and longevity). Then a priest conducts the ceremony, chanting and performing the traditional ritual: Gold-colored and silver-colored paper money--folded to represent bullion, is burned to honor the ancestors and assure that they will be adequately supplied with food and money for the ensuing year. The priest receives and names each offering from the hands of the highest ranking person, while all in attendance bow their heads and make personal, silent prayers to their ancestors. The burning of a packet of firecrackers concludes the ceremony, at which point, everyone again kowtows three times. Afterwards they have a feast, because the food is considered to have been blessed by the gods.

The Wo Hing Society has held a Pai San ceremony every year since 1900 at the Puupiha Chinese cemetery near Mala Wharf. This year, 2003, the memorial ceremony started early on the morning of April 6, with the officers and members cleaning the graveyard and the area. They made offerings of incense, candles, rice wine, tea, fruits, chicken, roast pig, rice, cookies, and flowers at the graves. Finally, they burned gold and silver paper money. Afterwards, they removed all the offering items to the temple for another offering. The successful 2003 Pai San ceremony was a good example of what can be done with a team or community effort.

Something that made this year's (2003) Pai San ceremony special was the presence of a Taoist priest who explained the meanings behind each of the

elements of the ritual. The offering of two candles represents the sun and the moon according to the Taoist teaching of balance and harmony. Lighting the incense is to welcome the ancestors' spirit to join the ceremony. The priest explained that, in terms of ritual and ceremony, there are different meanings associated with how the Chinese do things. He complimented the Society for the very high quality and completeness of offerings for the ceremony. Describing the temple building as well restored, he explained to the members the historical perspective of the temple, society hall and the significance of different altars in the temple. Understanding the past is one way of honoring history, traditions and values, which we may now apply to the present, and a better future.

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