

Hawaii Kotohira Jinsha Hawaii Dazaifu Tenmangu

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Sake Appreciation Festival

Sake, a by product of rice has long been a vital part of Japanese culture.

Rice is considered a gift from the *kami* and has been Japan's primary staple since time immemorial. *Sake* was thought to be a magical derivative of rice - an elixir that gave joy.

Two of Hawaii Kotohira Jinsha-Hawaii Dazaifu Tenmangu's *kami* are *Ohmono Nushino Mikoto* or *Daikoku* and *Inari*, both known as the *kami* of the five grains.

The first known account of sake being brewed by the *kami* can be found in the *Nihon Shoki*. It is said that sake was offered to the *kami* of

Omiwa Jinja shrine in *Nara* and also Emperor *Sujin* as part of an ancient ritual.

Sake has played an important role in Shinto ceremonies and all ceremonies will end with the partaking of sake with the *kami*, a practice known as *Naorai*.

The first sake to be shared at the Festival was *Kinkan Kuromatsu Josen*, a sake produced by Murashige Breweries of Iwakuni, the official sake brewers for Shirasaki Hachiman-gu shrine since 1959. **Dr. Shinken Naitoh** can be seen in the above photo pouring the special sake to participants.

Mahalo to Dance Master **Hanayagi Mitsujiuro** for performing *Sanbaso*, a dance dedicated to *Daikoku* in gratitude of the five grains.

A big mahalo also goes out to **Bob Harada** for performing the *Shishimai* Lion Dance to bless participants with positive energies, to **Akiko Sanai** for transporting the sake from Shirasaki Hachimangu shrine in Japan to Honolulu and to all the donors and volunteers in helping to make this event a success.

(Photos courtesy of Akiko Sanai)

MAHALO for your generous donations

Thomas & Linda Agawa
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Craig & Diane Nishida
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Gary & Linda Shinsato
Allan Takeshita
Yukari Towata



Congratulations to Chad and Kei Enoki - wishing you a wonderful journey as you build your new life together.

The Japanese wedding ceremony represents more than just the joining of a couple, it is also the witnessing of the creation of a new family.

The highlight of the ceremony is Keppai no Gi or San-san-kudo, a ritual where both bride and groom exchange nuptial cups three times, pledging marriage.

The meaning of San-san-kudo is to form a stronger connection through the exchanging of the cups of three different sizes. Big Mahalo goes out to Bryson Goda for dressing the new-lyweds.



JAPANESE SUPERSTITIONS

In ancient China, dolls were used to absorb and exorcise evil spirits. This practice was adopted by the Japanese and named *Jōshi no Sekku* or Snake Day ritual because it was performed on the day of the Snake.

The ritual was renamed *Momo no Sekku* or Peach Day and girls would sleep with the dolls - allowing impurities to be drawn out overnight. The next day the dolls would be tossed into a river or the ocean.

The elaborate dolls seen today became popular in the Edo period (1600-1867) and are no longer tossed into the river. The dolls are now elaborate works of art that are handed down from generation to generation. The maternal grandparents usually give a set of *Hina* dolls upon the birth of their first granddaughter.

It is said that you must store the dolls immediately after Girl's Day or the daughters of the household will be unable to find husbands.

Congratulations





Shirasaki Hachimangu of Yamaguchi-ken is one of the seven Jinja enshrined at Hawaii Kotohira Jinsha - Hawaii Dazaifu Tenmangu.

Emperpr Ojin, the fifteenth emperor of Japan, was the son of Emperor Chuai and Empress Jingu. According to the Nihon Shoki (Chronicles of Japan), he was carried in his mother's womb for the duration of her conquest of the three kingdoms of Korea.

Upon his mother's death, Emperor Ojin assumed the throne and was thought to be divine as eight banners are said to have fallen from the heavens at the time of his birth. Following his death Emperor Ojin was deified and a shrine built at the site of a his tomb. It was however, several hundred years before he was identified with Hachiman, the god of warriors and well being.

Following this association he became the patron kami of martial artists, warriors and archers. The Hata clan considered him their guardian kami and Hachiman also became the tutelary kami of the Minamoto clan of Kamakura.

Hachiman was once claimed by Buddhism and given the name Hachiman Daibosatsu, when an oracle said that he would protect the construction of the great Buddha at Todaiji temple in Nara. In 859, after intense prayer at Usa Hachimangu shrine in Oita prefecture, the Buddhist monk Gyokyo recommended to the imperial court that a shrine dedicated to Hachiman be built in the southwestern area of Kyoto to protect the Capital. Since, Hachiman worship has spread rapidly and there are now over 25,000 shrines dedicated to Hachiman.

Shirasaki Hachimangu was established in the Imazu Biwanokubi area of Iwakuni, Yamaguchi prefecture in 1250 by Lord Saemonnojo Yoshikane Kiyotada for the peace, prosperity and perpetuation of his clan and domain.

The Kiyotada clan changed its name to Hironaka and in 1348, land was donated by the Lord Kanetane Donai Hironaka to relocate Shirasaki Hachimangu to Mt. Shirasaki in Iwakuni, Yamaguchi-ken.

In 1496, the shrine was burnt to the ground during the military conflicts of the Warring States period. In 1498, the Hall of Treasures was rebuilt followed by the Mai-den Hall of Dances in 1503.

Since, the Lord of the Hironaka clan of Iwakuni served as the Guji or chief priest of Shirasaki Hachimangu. In 1555, Yoshifusa Imai, grandson of Lord Takatane Hironaka became Guji due to Lord Hironaka's death. The Imai clan has since served as the Guji at Shirasaki Hachimangu.

Rev. Misao Isobe who served at Shirasaki Hachimangu became the third Guji of Hawaii Kotohira Jinsha in 1928. His brother, Rev. Naohisa Isobe also immigrated to Hawaii to serve as Guji of the Kakaako Kotohira shrine.

In 1930, a Gobunrei was received from Shirasaki Hachimangu of Imazu Village, Iwakuni City, Yamaguchi-ken and placed for worship at Hawaii Kotohira Jinsha.

A support group of the Hawaii Shirasaki Hachimangu shrine, the Shirasaki Hachimangu Hosan-kai was established by Miyozo Komeya with a membership of over 600 Issei families from Yamaguchi-prefecture.

The Isseis attached great significance to their ancestral home and created Prefectural, City and Village associations to provide camaraderie and assistance to immigrants who shared the same customs and dialects.

Shrine Maintenance and Beautification

The pond in the shrine yard was removed on Saturday, February 28. The pond was built in 1997 by Rev Takizawa to commemorate his *Hon-Yaku Yakudoshi* year.

In Japanese *Foosui* (Feng Shui), water elements are thought to attract elements of reflection, vibrancy and growth because it is a living, moving force.

The pond was a *hyotan* gourd shape which is a powerful symbol of longevity, health and deflector of negative energies.

After a brief ceremony of gratitude, **Bob Harada** and Rev Takizawa resorted to hard, manual labor to maneuver around water lines to remove the concrete pond.



Mahalo **Bob Harada** for steam cleaning the carpets in both shrines

Mahalo **Allan Takeshita** for cultivating rice plants and Morijio as offerings, on the occasion of the recent Sake Appreciation Festival.

Private Blessings

Four young athletes were blessed in a private ceremony to keep them safe from injury and harm, to give them perseverance, and to instill in them a respect for each other.



Honolulu Festival

The shrine participated in the Honolulu Festival with a booth at the Convention Center on March 7 and 8.

The Honolulu Festival is a cultural event that promotes understanding, economic cooperation and harmony between the people of Hawaii and the Pacific Rim region.

Mahalo to **Bob Harada**, **Marilyn Naitoh** and **Bryson Goda** for manning the shrine booth.

