

Kutt Hing Society (Wah Kong Temple)

吉慶公所—華光廟

418 Elena Street, Honolulu, HI 96817; Bus. Ph. 531-6720; open 12-2 pm, daily

Mission: The Society's original mission was to promote Chinese music and theatrical arts. However, after WWII, the focus shifted to management, preservation and operation of the Wah Kong Temple.

History: The Kutt Hing Kung Shaw was founded in 1922 by two groups of performers of Cantonese Opera. They rented a building on Hall Street and named their association the Bat Wo Kung Shaw (Eight Harmonies Society *Bahe gongsuo* 八和公所). The Society performed at charitable events and also provided a place for the members to meet, exchange cultural-arts knowledge and teach Chinese Opera. Eventually, the Society changed its name to Kutt Hing Kung Shaw (Celebration Society *Jiqing gongsuo*), and relocated to 370 North Kukui Street. In 1946, the Society was registered as a non-profit organization.

The Society has always maintained a temple above their premises in honor of Wah Kong (*Huanguang Dadi* 華光大帝), the patron saint of Cantonese opera and music. With the end of World War II and the rise of communism in China, Chinese opera troupes stopped coming to Hawaii to perform. The focus then shifted to the preservation, management and operation of the Wah Kong Temple. In 1966, the Society and the temple relocated to the present site at 418 Elena Street—a two-story building with administrative offices on the lower floor, and the Wah Kong Temple upstairs.



Activities: At the temple, religious ceremonies are held throughout the year, celebrating occasions such as the Mid Autumn Festival, Chinese New Year and Qing Ming. The Society is also making great efforts to pass on some of the more traditional aspects of Chinese culture to its younger members. For example, the older members are teaching the younger members how to prepare the traditional Chinese delicacies such as, 'Jai' (*jai*齋, a vegetarian dish), 'Jin Dui' (*jiandui* 煎堆, deep-fried mochi with a sweet filling), and 'Dow Lau' (*doulo* 豆撈, a confection made of pounded mochi rice) for the New Year festivities; 'Lin Sai Bang' (*luanssuibing* 鷺荳餅) for the fourth lunar month's service to change one's luck; 'Joong' (*zhongzi* 粽子, mochi rice with filling, steamed in lotus leaves) for the Dragon Boat festival during the fifth Lunar month; and 'Tong Yuen' (*tangyuan* 湯圓, boiled, filled, mochi dumplings) for the Winter Solstice observance.

A nine-day Daoist festival to pray for world peace is held on the occasion of the Pole Star Festival (*Jiuhuangli Dousheng hui* 九皇禮斗勝會) to demonstrate the commemorative rites during the ninth lunar month. During the Qing Ming and the Hungry Ghost Festival (*Zhongyuanjie* 中元節), services are performed at the graves and temple for the deceased members. Daoist services for the temple's saints are held throughout the year. For these holy days, the younger members have been taught to play the traditional Chinese instruments.

Membership:

How many members are there?
What are the conditions of membership (criteria, dues, responsibilities, etc)? What are the benefits of membership?

Association presidents

1984–85 William W. Tam
1996–97 Wesley F.H. Chun
1998–01 Dayton K.W. Ching
2002–pres. Duane J.L. Pang