

Lum Sai Ho Tong 林西河堂

1315 River Street, Honolulu, HI 96817

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Mission: To provide mutual benefit and assure the welfare of its members

History: The society was established in 1889, when a group of immigrants organized an association for people with the last name Lum (or Lam, Lim, and Lin; *Lin* 林). The first clubhouse, located in an upstairs room in a building on Smith Street between Hotel and Pauahi, provided a central location for members to meet with other members and friends on weekends and special occasions; receive letters from home; find help to read letters from home and to write letters to China; and obtain help in times of financial need, illness, or other crisis.

In 1899, Lum Say Yip (*Lin Sheye* 林社業), a founding member, donated a parcel of land on River Street, near the corner of Kukui Street, to build the society its own clubhouse. The one-storey wooden building featured in the front a temple to Tin Hau (*Tianhou* 天后 Heavenly Queen), patron deity of the society, and behind it a meeting place for the members. It was called the Sai Ho Tong (*Xihe Tang* 西河堂 West River Hall), after the ancestral homelands which lay west of the Yellow River in China. Although construction was completed in 1899, the typhoid (??) epidemic of that year led to the fire-razing of Chinatown, in which all buildings in the quarantined area were burned to the ground. Fortunately, the Sai Ho Tong lay outside the quarantined area and was spared, and was officially opened in June of 1900.



The society was chartered in 1918 under the statutes of the Territory of Hawaii.

In 1919, president Lum Yum and the board of directors approved the renovation of the original building, including the addition of a second storey, and the construction of a second building in front of it. The second storey of the new building housed the Tin Hau temple and a conference hall; the ground floor, two rooms for rental. The second storey of the back (original) building consisted of a large room for living quarters; the ground floor comprised a bedroom, a room for the elderly, and a sick room.

By 1951, the wooden structures was showing signs of dilapidation, so members began to plan a three-storey structure to take its place. The design and specifications were provided as a contribution by member Lum Quon Chock. The ground floor would include two spacious rooms

for shops in the front and five rooms for living quarters in the back. On the second storey, the front would house the Tin Hau temple and the back a large kitchen and two toilets and wash-rooms. The third storey would include a conference room and storeroom. The roof of the building would be in traditional Chinese style.

While the estimated cost of building was \$45,000, the building fund of the society only held \$35,000. The board decided to proceed with construction anyway: three members of the society, Lum Quon Chock, Lum Wah Hin, and Eddie Lam had generously offered to defray any costs that could not be covered by the building fund. No written contract was ever signed for the construction of the new building, but the name of the title holder of the land was properly changed to Lum Sai Ho Tong, to avert any future problems.

On the 28th day of the 5th lunar month of 1952, between 5:00 and 7:00 am, the golden statue of Tin Hau was ceremoniously transferred to the Kuan Yin Temple for safe enshrinement during the time of construction. Then the grounds of the Hall were blessed by Taoist priest Lee Han. In August, demolition of the building began. Then it was discovered that the foundation had to be stabilized with rockfill and a concrete pad; to cut expenses, some of the work was done by the members themselves. The new building was completed on schedule in November, 1953.

On the 15th day of the 11th lunar month, at 4:00 am, rites were conducted in the new temple to prepare it to welcome back the Tin Hau. All members gathered first in the new building, and at 5:00 am they proceeded to the Kuan Yin Temple to escort the Tin Hau back to her new temple. The new building was dedicated on November 18, 1956.

In early 1961, the Honolulu Redevelopment Agency of the City and County of Honolulu offered to sell the adjacent parcels of land to Lum Sai Ho Tong. If the society did not purchase the land, and someone else did, the land the building was on would have to be relinquished to the new buyer. Faced with the necessity of assembling \$54,000 for the purchase, the society assembled a package of society funds, bank loans, and loans from private members, and succeeded in completing the purchase.

The society's Charter of Incorporation was amended in 1967, based on the changing circumstances of the organization and to bring it into compliance with the tax rules for a non-profit organization.

Membership:

Founded by plantation laborers, the Lum Sai Ho Tong has grown to a society with some 4,000 members, including professionals and business, government, and community leaders. The Lum Sai Ho Tong was arguably the first Chinese society in Hawaii to grant full membership rights to women. In 1931, the board of directors voted to offer membership status to female members of the Lum clan, for the same membership fee as the men, and enjoying the same rights and privileges, and sharing the same responsibilities.

Three legends:

Tin Hau Sung Mu (Ku Po) (Tianhou Shengmu [gupo] 天后聖母 (姑婆) Heavenly Queen Holy Mother (Great Grand-aunt)): The girl later deified as the patron goddess of the Lum clan was born during the Song dynasty (960–1126 AD), on the 23rd day of the third lunar month (year unknown). She was the sixth daughter of Lum Yuen, an official of Poo Tin county in Fukien (*Fujian*) province. Noted for her intelligence and selflessness as a child, and her willingness to help others as she grew to adulthood, she became famous when she dove into deep waters at sea to save her father from drowning, and attempted to recover the body of her elder brother. Tragically, she died in her early twenties. Thereafter, there were many reports by seafarers reported that she had appeared to them during heavy storms to guide them to safety. In successive dynasties, her legend grew, until in the Qing dynasty she was elevated to the status of *tianhou*, or Heavenly Queen, and came to be generally called “The Goddess of the Seas.”

Pi Kan (Bi Gan 比干): The Lum clan claims as its earliest ancestor a trusted advisor, the minister Pi Kan, of the evil last king of the Shang dynasty (1766–1122 BC). Tired of Pi Kan’s constant admonitions, King Tzou ordered him and his entire family executed, but Pi Kan’s pregnant wife managed to escape and give birth to her son by a spring in the woods. Eventually the evil king was overthrown by the righteous King Wu, who rehabilitated Pi Kan and bestowed a title on his young son, whom he named *Lin Jian* (林澗 Forest Spring??). *Lin Jian* eventually the ancestor of others of the *Lin* (Lum) clan. The land where his father had lived and died, Sai Ho (*Xi He* 西河 West River), was given to him and his family. It is located to the west of the Yellow River, in Shanxi province in northwest China.

Lum family organizations are called the Lum Sai Ho Tong now exist all over the world. On the sixth day of the fifth month of the lunar member, clan members still gather in their various organizations to celebrate the birthday of Pi Kan, the original ancestor.

An early Lum in Hawai‘i: Prior to the arrival of the first group of Chinese contract laborers in 1852, a young man by the name of Lum Ching from Nam Kai Villange, Kung Sheong Doo District, Chungshan County, Kwangtung Province, came to Hawai‘i to practice geomancy using an astronomical compass and a mirror. There is a record of his death and burial in Hawai‘i. Later, a tombstone bearing his name was discovered in the Manoa Lin Yee Chung cemetery. Since then, society members have honored “Lum Ching Kung” (The honorable Lum Ching) as the earliest progenitor of the Lums in Hawai‘i.

Activities The earliest gathering site of the association provided members with a place to meet friends, receive and send letters home (with the help of literate members), and receive assistance in case of need. The clubhouse served then (and continues to serve) the religious needs of the members as well: ancestral worship, here the worship of Tin Hau, Goddess of Seas, is facilitated in the temple. Annually, on the 23rd day of the third month of the lunar calendar, the memorial celebration of the birth of Tin Hau is held at the temple, featuring offerings of incense, candles, symbolic paper money, and food, contributed by a great many members and their friends. On

occasion, the rites surrounding the worship of Tin Hau are elaborate: on the occasion of her arrival in the new building in 1953, for example, the Taoist celebration lasted 3 days and 3 nights. For the centennial celebration in 1989 of the founding of the Lum Sai Ho Tong, a Taoist “Rite of Cosmic Renewal” was conducted over two days, at the Tin Hau temple.

The birthday of the ancestor Pi Kan is also commemorated annually. In addition, the society holds a spring banquet, a Ching Ming observance at the Lum tombs in Manoa cemetery, a summer picnic, a Christmas party, and a New Year’s reception and installation of new officers.

Association presidents

Founders: Lum Duck Sun, Lum Duck Yew,
Lum Lup Lock, Lum Gee Hoon, Lum Gee Wah

1899 -	Lam Sa Yip, First President		
1900 - 1916	Lum Lup Sai		
1917 - 1918	Lum Gum Fat		
1919	Lum Yum		
1920 - 1921	Lum Sai		
1922	Lum Hop	1961	Richard M. C. Lum
1923	Lum Mun Sook	1962	Lum Young Kan
1924 - 1925	Lum King	1963 - 1964	Lum Kam Ping
1926	Lum Dip	1965	Clarence W. H. Lam
1929 - 1934	Lum Ung Kwai	1966 - 1967	Charles T. C. Lum
1935 - 1936	Lum Chung Chee	1968	Harold C. K. Lum
1937 - 1938	Lum Dee Chung	1969	William H. K. Lum
1939	Lum Chung Chee	1970	Lum Kam On
1940 - 1941	Lum Hong Chee	1971 - 1972	Lum Wing Kit
1942 - 1943	Lum Cheong	1973	James L. H. Lum
1944 - 1945	Arthur Wo Lum	1974 - 1975	Kenneth K. Y. Lum
1946	Lum Chung Chee	1976 - 1977	Lum Kwai Wah
1947	Lum Kee Choong	1978 - 1979	Richard W. C. Lum
1948 - 1949	Lum Yee Nung	1980 - 1981	Kenneth K. Y. Lum
1950 - 1951	Eddie Lam	1982 - 1983	Lam Shing Tak
1952	Philip W. C. Lum	1984 - 1985	Kenneth K. Y. Lum
1953 - 1954	Lum Wah Hin	1986 - 1987	Harold C. K. Lum
1955	Dr. Alfred C. S. Lum	1988 - 1989	William H. K. Lum
1956	Eddie Lam	1996	Henry P.H. Lim
1957	Lum Wah Hin	1997-98	Lita H. Lum
1958	Lum Hung Lun	1999-00	Betsy Y. Lum
1959	Alfred K. C. Lum	2001 - 2002	Keith W.F. Lim
1960	Arthur Wo Lum	2003	Victor W.D. Lim

Sources: United Chinese Society Centennial Celebration publication; correspondence with the Society