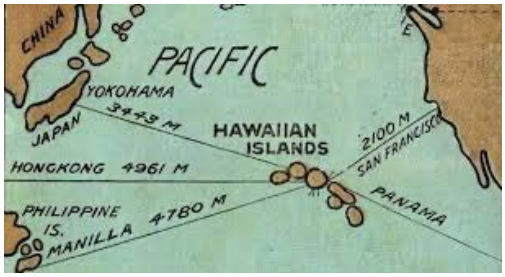
孫逸仙、孫文、孫中山

Sun Yat-sen (November 12, 1866–March 12, 1925)

His time in Hawai‘i

Prepared by the Dr. Sun Yat-sen Hawai‘i Foundation



The first Hawai‘i Chinese sojourners were crew who disembarked a British ship in 1789 and stayed to build their lives on the islands. The Chinese have been in Hawaii for approaching 250 years.

Nearly a century after the arrival of the first Chinese in Hawai‘i, in 1871,17-year old Sun Mei 孫梅 of Cuiheng Village 翠亨村 in Guangdong landed on the islands and began farming rice. Later he hired workers from China for the booming sugar cane and ranching industries and established a general store on the island of Maui.

In 1878 he paid for his brother, age 13, then called by his milk name Tai-chu, to sail to Honolulu, to be educated so as to help with the family businesses. This first formative visit of the future Dr. Sun Yat-sen lasted five years, until 1883.

Sun first enrolled as a boarding student at **‘Iolani School** in 1879. He spoke no English. Upon his graduation three years later, on July 27, 1882, he had gained fluency and was awarded a second-place prize in English grammar by Hawai’i's King David Kalakaua. At the time, ‘Iolani's campus was located at the corner of Bates and Nuuanu Streets, near Chinatown. The school moved six times to its current campus at 563 Kamoku Street in the Mo‘ili‘ili area. A statue honoring Sun at age 13 graces the entrance to the current elementary school, which also hosts a Sun Yat-sen Room.

Wishing to further advance his studies, Sun enrolled at Oahu College (now **Punahou School**, 1601 Punahou Street) upon graduation from ʻIolani. There were 32 other students in his coeducational class, and he was one of three Chinese students. Hawai'i's Prince Kuhio was his classmate. Sun was enrolled for the winter and spring semesters of 1883. Tuition was $1 per week, and the school's archives retain the record of Tai Chu paying $55 in tuition in total. His name was also listed in the directory of the class of 1882-1883. The **Old School Hall** at Punahou, built in 1852 of lava rock, is the only building on the Sun Yat-sen Trail that was extant during the time when Dr. Sun Yat-sen lived in Hawaiʻi. It is still being used as classroom. A plaque on an exterior wall commemorates Sun's time at Punahou.

There was a tamarind tree at Punahou School during Sun's time. It had been planted in 1842. He took a cutting from it home to Cuiheng Village and planted it in front of the Sun family home, now a national museum, where it flourished. The original tree at Punahou grew old and was cut down in 2019; a sapling that sprouted from its seeds has taken root in its place.

Note: President Obama's homeroom was in Pauahi Hall, near the site of the tamarind tree. He started at 5th grade and graduated 8 years later. Also, check out the Earth Clock in the middle of the Academy. Made by students, it shows time by projecting a person's shadow during different months.

Sun Mei was distressed to find that, beyond becoming fluent in English, his younger brother had absorbed many of the revolutionary ideas of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln and had become a fervent (though unbaptized) Christian. He decided therefore to send young Sun home to China, at age 18. Thus ended Sun Yat-sen's educational sojourn in Hawaiʻi.

In November the following year (1884), Sun Mei brought his brother back to Hawaiʻi to sign some necessary business documents (removing his name from them). Young Sun stayed for 6 months before returning to China.

His remaining 4 visits to Hawaiʻi began about a decade later, after he had become a young revolutionary. He came to promulgate China's cause and raise funds to overthrow the imperial regime. During his later visits there was a bounty on his head, issued by the Qing government—200

oz. of gold for Sun, 100 oz. for some of his Hawaiian co-insurrectionists—so his movements were strictly covert. The dates of his remaining visits were as follows:

October 1894–January 1895 (4 months)
January to June, 1896 (6 months)
September 1903 to March 1904 (7 months)
March to May, 1910 (2 months)

The following are some sites of relevance to Sun's activities in Hawai‘i.



Photos from the Cathedral website

St. Andrew's Cathedral. King Kamehameha IV and Queen Emma wanted their son Prince Albert baptized in a proper English-style cathedral. Begun 1867, work on the building was not completed till 1958. In the meantime, a small wooden pro-cathedral was erected nearby, and here Sun Yat-sen attended services every Sunday during his time at ‘Iolani School. This structure was demolished in 1909. Sun was eventually baptized in Hong Kong.

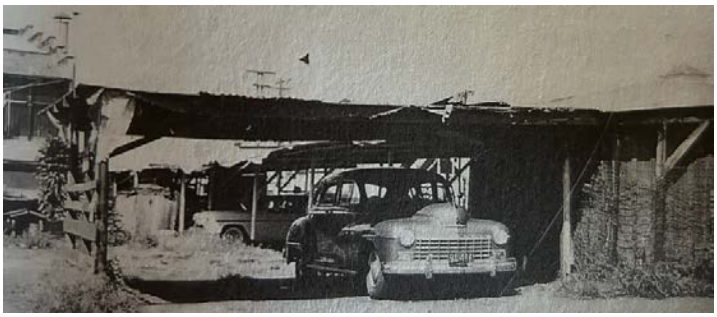


Photo from *Sun Yat-sen in Hawai‘i*

The home of Dr. Sun Yat-sen's supporter Ho Fon on Emma Lane was the site of the inaugural meeting of the **Xing Zhong Hui** (興中會 *Revive China Society*), the secret society founded by Sun to drive out the Manchu rulers of China and establish a new government. The house was demolished during Honolulu's urban renewal projects of the 1960s. The Xing Zhong hui was later joined by other revolutionary groups to form the international Tongmenghui (同盟會 *United League*), precursor to the Guomindang (國民黨 KMT) that later led the Republic of China.

The remaining sites of the Trail are in Chinatown. **Honolulu's Chinatown** grew up around its harbor (now the site of the Aloha Tower), where British merchant ships docked and the first Chinese disembarked in 1789. Booming sandalwood exports to China between 1792 and 1843 earned Honolulu the Chinese name of "檀香山 *Sandalwood Mountain*" and denuded the island's sandalwood forests. The first group of Chinese laborers from Guangdong arrived in 1852 to work in the sugarcane fields, and by 1900 ethnic Chinese had reached 56% of Hawai‘i's population (now the Chinese constitute about 5% of the population, although about a third of residents claim some Chinese ancestry).

The earliest buildings in Chinatown were made of wood, but by the time of Sun's arrival, the first brick building, now the Lai Fong Building at 1118 Nuʻuanu Street, had been erected.

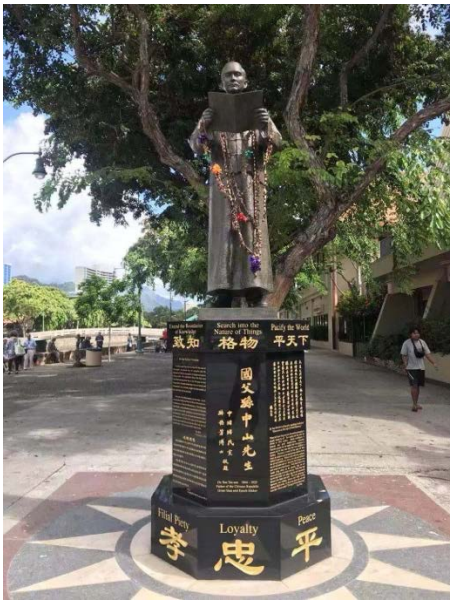
(photos from *Honolulu Chinatown* by Gary Coover)

Sun departed Honolulu in 1883 after his first trip. Shortly afterwards, Chinatown suffered catastrophic fires—one that burned 20 acres in 1886, and a second more devastating one in 1900, purposely set to suppress an outbreak of bubonic plague, that burned out of control and destroyed almost 40 acres. Fortunately, residents had been evacuated; there were no deaths reported. Buildings constructed afterwards were of brick or coral blocks.

Most current Chinatown buildings were constructed post-1900.

Of these, the Wo Fat (和發 *Harmonious Prosperity)* Building is the most iconic.

Erected in 1882 as a restaurant, the building was destroyed and rebuilt after the 1886 fire, then destroyed again in 1900. It was subsequently rebuilt multiple times, finally opening in 1938 as a restaurant that could seat 1,000 people. It welcomed patrons including royalty and celebrities such as Frank Sinatra and Jackie Kennedy and inspired the character Wo Fat in the TV series *Hawaii 5-0*. The Wo Fat Restaurant closed in 2005. The building is currently being renovated as a boutique hotel.



On the edge of the Chinese Cultural Plaza in Chinatown, this statue of Sun Yat-sen was donated by the Kaohsiung City Government in 1984, to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the establishment of the Revive China Society (Xingzhonghui). It stands on the flag of the Guomindang (KMT), and Sun holds the declaration of the Society. The top edge of the pedestal is engraved with Confucian admonitions to “study natural phenomena, pursue knowledge, maintain good faith, rectify the self, cultivate good moral character, put the family in order, govern the country, and bring peace to the world.” On the sides of the pedestal are engraved “The Father of the Nation, Mr. Sun Yat-sen”; “The world is for all”; an English introduction of the Revive China Society; a rubbing and English translation of Sun’s handwritten copy of the “Conveyance of Rites” from the *Book of Rites*; a description of the “Three Principles of the People”; and an inscription about the statue. Around the base of the statue are inscribed the eight characters “loyalty, filial piety, benevolence, love, faith, righteousness, harmony, peace.”

When Sun Yatsen visited Honolulu in 1910, he urged that a Chinese language school be established for the growing Chinese population. The **Chungshan 中山 School** was named for him and supported his revolutionary principles, while the rival **Munlun 明伦 School** favored a constitutional monarchy for China. Both were established in February 1911, as two of the oldest Chinese schools in the U.S. Chungshan School closed in 2001 but Munlun continues at this site, although none of the original buildings survive.

Maunakea Marketplace is the site of the erstwhile American Theater, where Sun gave his first public speech on December 14, I903, to hundreds of people gathered to hear him advocate for the overthrow of the Manchu imperial regime, and to raise funds for the Chinese revolution.

The **Ket On Society** 國安會館 was linked to the **Chee Kong Society** 致公堂—both Chinese secret societies established in the late 1800s, to bring down the Qing (Manchu) Dynasty and restore Chinese rule. They were also known as Hongmen or Chinese Freemason Associations. Sun Yat-sen joined both during his time in Honolulu. The Ket On Society is on Maunakea Street, and the Chee Kong Society has a hall within the Chinese Cultural Center.

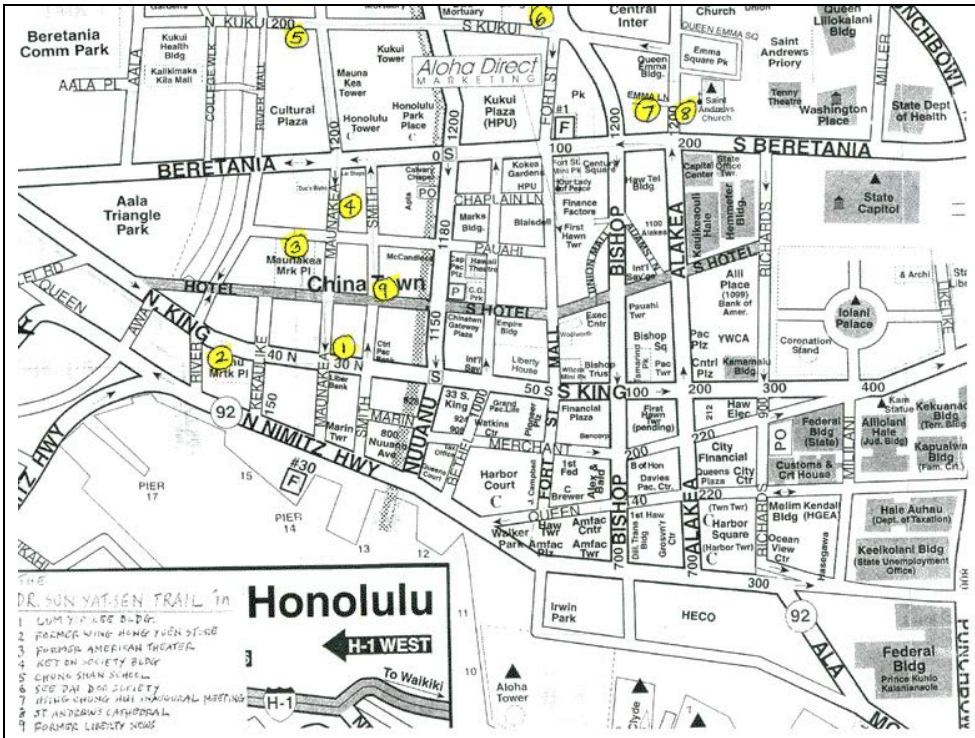
Within the Chee Kong Society hall is a woven tapestry hinting at locations of other Chee Kong (Hung Men) Societies around the world.

This is the site of the original ***Liberty News*** offices at 40 N. Hotel Street, the newspaper which became the official organ of the Xing Zhong hui. During his last visit in 1910, Sun came to these offices often to work and was interviewed here by a reporter of the *Honolulu Advertiser*. The building in the photo is not the original.

During his visit from March to May, 1910, Sun lived on the second floor of a store called the **Wing Hong Yuen Company**, located at 177 King Street. The store was owned by Ching Chow, a member of the Tongmenghui Hawaii Chapter and a close friend of Sun. The original building no longer exists. This is what currently stands at the site.

In 1910, the Kwang Cheong Lung store, owned by Yang Kwong-tat, chairman of the Tongmenghui Hawaii Chapter, was located in the **Lum Yip Kee Building** at 88 King Street. Dr. Sun and other revolutionaries used to meet secretly in the basement of the store. The building was later rebuilt and the basement demolished.

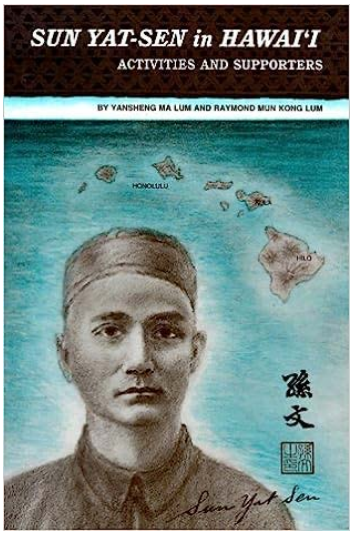
Honolulu's Dr. Sun Yat-sen Memorial Park is at the corner of Hotel and Bethel Streets, next to the Hawai‘i Theatre. It is maintained by the City, and features a bronze statue by master sculptor Chu Tat Shing of Hong Kong, of the young Sun when he first arrived in Hawai‘i as a 13-year old. The statue was commissioned and donated to the City by the Dr. Sun Yat-sen Hawai‘i Foundation. There are plans to further develop the park with bronze plaques narrating Sun's life as well as decorative flower beds.



1. Lum Yip Kee Bldg
2. Former Wing Hong Yuen store
3. Former American Theater
4. Ket On Society Building
5. Former Chung Shan School
6. See Dai Doo Society
7. Hsing Chung Hui inaugural meeting site
8. St. Andrew's Cathedral
9. Former Liberty News

The Sun family in Kula, Maui. Sun Mei and Sun Yatsen are standing in the middle; their mother is seated between them. Their wives and children surround them.
('Iolani School archives)

This was the Sun ranch in Kula, Maui. ('Iolani School archives)



Primary source of information in this handout:
Sun Yatsen in Hawai'i: Activities and Supporters. Yansheng Ma Lum & Raymond Lum. Honolulu: U of Hawaii Press, 1999.

An electronic edition of this book, in either Chinese or English, may be freely downloaded from https://sunyatsenhawaii.org/download/