

A RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL CALENDAR FOR HAWAII

Adapted to 1952*

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The following calendar indicates how the religious and cultural patterns introduced into Hawaii by the different religious traditions and ethnic groups blend together to produce a pattern of cultural life whose richness can be excelled in few parts of the United States.

The complete absence of aboriginal Hawaiian festivals is noticeable. The Hawaiians once had a number of important festival periods. For example, the fishing season was once opened with a festival. On the first day bait was fed to the fish, but there was no fishing. On the second day, everyone put down his net just once. The resulting catch was shared by everyone alike and distributed to all the people without charge. On the third day the professional fishermen began to fish. This festival was forgotten as different peoples who could not share it came into the Islands.

A most important ancient Hawaiian season was the annual four months starting in October or November known as the *makahiki*, in which the people desisted from war and engaged extensively in sports and in ceremonies in honor of the god Lono. The Hawaiians early turned almost completely to Christianity after the missionaries arrived early in the nineteenth century. Today their festivals are identical with the legal holidays of the nation, and the special days of the Christian faith.

The Hawaiian people also preserve two unique features of their early Christian heritage. The first is the Sunday School Hoike or review. Once each quarter this takes the place of the church service in historic Kawaiahao Church, the main Hawaiian Congregational church, often called the Westminster Abbey of Hawaii. On this Sunday everyone is expected to take some part by reciting a psalms, giving a prayer, or making a two-minute speech. It thus provides for self-expression, and demonstrates what has been learned. The Sunday School Hoike is also observed in other Hawaiian churches as well as annually at the Aha Paaina or conference of the Congregational Christian churches.

The second unique feature is an annual musical contest. A piece of the world's great choral music is translated into Hawaiian. The church choirs on each island practice, and the winner is chosen through island contests held in April. The territorial contest comes in June at the annual Aha Paaina. The judging is done exclusively on the basis of the contest piece, but while the judges are choosing the winner, each choir sings a number of its own choosing.

Mid-night services are also held on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve at Kawaiahao Church. In early times, the Hawaiians began their celebration of New Year's with a great meal beginning at midnight on New Year's

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Eve. Following the meal the Hawaiians went around from home to home for seven days eating a little at each place.

It is clear that religion has also played the major role in determining the festival observances of the several immigrant ethnic groups, and only one who is religiously alert can appreciate the significance and beauty of the folk celebrations. Furthermore only the one who is religiously sympathetic can fully appreciate the wide and cosmopolitan friendships he can form in Hawaii.

The festivals listed below are primarily the following: the legal holidays observed in Hawaii, which include the major American national holidays and some special Hawaiian ones; the major festivals of the Christian church year and certain special Christian festivals found in America or among certain Christian groups; the annual Buddhist round of festivals; certain folk festivals associated with the old Chinese folk calendar, some of which are also found among the Koreans and the Japanese; the major Jewish festivals, which now deserve recognition in Hawaii because of the recent establishment of a Jewish congregation with a full-time rabbi; and the major national holidays of Hawaii's important immigrant groups, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Filipino. The war and the continued assimilation of these immigrant groups has had the effect of weakening some of their celebrations, and in general the criterion of inclusion will be the fairly widespread local observance among representatives of the religious or ethnic group whose holiday is in question.

It is interesting to note that the Chinese and Jewish festivals follow a calendar based on the lunar month, in which the new moon marks the first day of the month. The Japanese abolished the Chinese lunar calendar in 1873 and transferred the holidays to the corresponding months and dates of the European calendar. The Jewish week ends on the seventh day, the Sabbath, which extends from Friday at sundown to Saturday at sundown. The Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans used no week. Here in Hawaii Japanese Buddhist temples, however, have regular services on Sunday. The Christian week starts on Sunday, in weekly commemoration of the Resurrection, which came on Sunday, the day after the Jewish Sabbath.

The various festivals and their 1952 dates follow with brief descriptions of meaning and emphasis. The Hawaii Visitors Bureau may be consulted for scheduled events.

CALENDAR*

1952

January 1

New Year's Day. Legal holiday in Hawaii. Celebrated in Hawaii with fireworks in the traditional Oriental manner of invoking blessings for the new year.

A very important special holiday for the Japanese, inaugurating a period of three days in which many business houses are closed. Japanese stores and homes decorated with bamboo and pine branches at the entrance. Japanese family ritual includes housecleaning and the preparation of special foods. Mutual visiting. Formerly a Shinto shrine was also visited by the whole family.

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- January 6 Epiphany: Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. Celebrated mainly by liturgical Christianity. Also called the "Twelfth-day" after Christmas, and "Twelfth-night." On Sunday only by chance.
- January 26* Chinese New Year. Also Korean New Year. This most important Chinese festival begins the lunar year. It comes at the new moon in late January or early February. Also still in vogue in rural Japan. Much activity in Hawaii's Chinese temples for weeks before the New Year because worshippers are cleaning their spiritual slate of debts. Also much activity in the home. In recent years the Chinese community has organized an elaborate Narcissus Festival at this season, with parades, "lion dances," banquets, etc., which carry wide appeal for tourists. In this way this festival is gradually being adopted by all of Hawaii.
- January 30 Franklin D. Roosevelt's Birthday. Legal holiday in Hawaii.
- February 10* Race Relations Sunday. Many churches of America use this Sunday before Lincoln's birthday to foster world brotherhood.
- February 11* Purim, the Feast of Esther. A joyous day in which the Jews read the book of Esther, have festive meals, exchange gifts with one another, and give alms to the poor - in memory of their deliverance in Persia.
- February 12 Lincoln's Birthday. Legal holiday in Hawaii.
- February 14 St. Valentine's Day. Celebrated in Hawaii as on the Mainland.
- February 22 Washington's Birthday. Legal holiday in Hawaii.
- February 27* Ash Wednesday. The beginning of Lent, the annual forty-day period in the Christian church year leading to Good Friday and Easter, a period of special devotions and personal self-denial. The day before, Mardi Gras, is not particularly celebrated in Hawaii. All Catholic churches and many Protestant churches observe Ash Wednesday by special services.
- March 1 Korean Independence Day. This has been observed since 1919 more particularly by the older generation of Koreans as symbolizing Korea's "declaration of independence" from Japan.
- March 3 Hinamatsuri or Japanese girls' day, in which dolls are featured. Stores of Honolulu feature Oriental dolls in special window displays. Gaining increasing acceptance

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in the wider community, the festival features exhibits of dolls.

- March 21 O-higan Ceremony. A special Buddhist festival at the beginning of spring. During the three days before and the three days after this ceremony, Japanese Buddhists pay tribute to their ancestors. The dead have crossed the ocean of existence and have reached the other (hi) shore (gan), i.e., Nirvana.
- March 26 Prince Kuhio Day. Legal holiday in Hawaii, established by the legislature a few years ago in memory of the Hawaiian prince who was for many years Hawaii's delegate to Congress and who sponsored the legislation which established the Hawaiian Homes Commission.
- April 4 Tsing Ming. The day on which the Chinese clean the graves of their ancestors and engage in memorial services at the graves. This festival does not come on a given day of the Chinese lunar calendar, but rather about fifteen days after the beginning of spring, and so always comes on April 4 or 5. In Hawaii it is associated with a whole season of several weeks during which Chinese families clean graves and disinter the remains of their ancestors dead for five or more years, and prepare them for permanent burial.
- April 6 Palm Sunday. The festival in Lent, commemorating Jesus' entry into Jerusalem at the beginning of the week in which he was crucified. Palm Sunday thus ushers in Holy Week.
- April 8 Wesak Day or Hanamatsuri. The Buddhist celebration of Gautama's birthday. A large and very gay celebration is held by all Buddhist sects cooperatively in Kapiolani Park or Ala Moana Park, on the Sunday nearest to the day. On this day also images of the Infant Buddha (Tango-Shaka) are set up in the temples for worshippers to pour liquorice-tea (ama-cha) over with a ladle. This tea is then bought and taken home in some country areas to kill the worms that cause various diseases. Elsewhere it is a custom signifying purity.
- April 10* Pesach or Passover. This begins a Jewish festival that lasts for eight days. On the first two nights, after religious services, the Passover meal, Seder, is observed in the Jewish home.
- April 11* Good Friday, in commemoration of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.
- April 13* Easter Sunday, in commemoration of the Resurrection. This oldest and most important of Christian holy days

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- comes on the first Sunday after the first full moon in spring. Churches of all denominations are crowded on this day.
- April 29 Birthday of the reigning emperor of Japan. Before World War II this was a gala occasion for Hawaii's Japanese. While it has been greatly de-emphasized, it still carries some sentimental value for people of the immigrant generation.
- May 1 May Day. Celebrated in Hawaii as Lei Day, with emphasis on school and community pageants around the Lei Queen. Exhibits of leis. Everyone wears a lei. Many of these features on University of Hawaii campus. Also food booths of the different cultural groups.
- May 5 Tango-no-Sekku or Japanese boys' day, also called Nobori-no-Sekku, or banner festival. At this time the famous Japanese kites in the shape of carp lend a colorful touch to Japanese homes in Hawaii, particularly those celebrating the birth of a first son during the preceding year. Increasingly the custom of flying carp is being taken over by other than Japanese families.
- May 10 Flores de Mayo. Observed in the Philippines during the whole month of May, where the Catholic Church generally gives it a religious character. It was observed officially in Hawaii in 1948, but it has generally been observed only by families and individuals.
- May 11* Mother's Day. Sunday, observed as on the Mainland.
- May 22* Ascension Day. This Thursday, forty days after Easter, commemorates Jesus' final departure from his disciples.
- May 27* Chinese Dragon Boat Day, on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month. A very important day in rural China, this festival is gradually losing its importance in Hawaii. The festival commemorates lost souls who died by drowning. Little rice cakes are thrown into the water. Dragon-boat regattas to the beat of the Chinese drum make the occasion very festive in Chinese villages. In 1952, the fifth month is repeated, in order to keep the lunar and astronomical years together. The second dragon-boat festival on June 25 will hardly be noticed.
- May 30 Memorial Day. Legal holiday in Hawaii.
- May 30* For the Jews this is Shavuoth or Pentecost, the end of a fifty-day period which started at the Passover, and is called the Omer. Shavuoth is also called the Feast of Weeks and particularly the Feast of Revelation. This holiday commemorates the beginning of the Torah (the

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Ten Commandments) given to Moses on Mount Sinai. The Jews deck their synagogue with flowers at this time to indicate God's constant revelation of himself in nature as at Mount Sinai.

- June 1* The Christian Pentecost or Witsunday, fifty days after Easter, commemorating the occasion when the Holy Ghost appeared to the disciples of Jesus in tongues of fire, making it possible for them to begin their effective ministry. In a sense it is the birthday of the Christian church. At this time some of the Portuguese Catholics have special carnivals and processions, the biggest one culminating in a three-day Feast of the Holy Ghost, a week after Pentecost, June 6, 7 and 8 in the grounds of a chapel on Puowaina Drive. In the morning of Trinity Sunday there is a special mass with procession at the Church of the Blessed Sacrament in Pauoa. Of the several festival periods in the Catholic calendar, this is the one with the greatest amount of Portuguese Old World character.
- June 11 Kamehameha Day. Legal holiday in Hawaii. This honors the Kamehameha dynasty and especially its founder, Kamehameha I, who united the Hawaiian Islands politically. Kamehameha Day and Kuhio Day are the only Hawaiian holidays. No true folk festivals survive. Parade, canoe races, hulas.
- July 4 Independence Day. Legal holiday in Hawaii, celebrated as elsewhere in the United States.
- The Philippines acquired their independence on July 4, 1946, and thus this day now has the same significance for Filipinos as for Americans.
- July 13-16 O-Bon Festival, sometimes also called Urabon-e. An important Buddhist period in honor of the dead. The spirits of the recently dead are said to return to their families. Japanese Buddhist temples all over Hawaii in turn put on the famous and very picturesque Bon dances, in which mainly teen-agers and young adults participate by dancing in a large circle around a central platform where an orchestra and singers provide Japanese folk-dance tunes. These dances occur at night over a period of weeks and the temple grounds assume a carnival-like atmosphere. Now other than Japanese young people may be seen participating. They simply don kimonos and imitate the steps and handclappings of the other participants. Japanese homes also celebrate the return of their loved ones, recently dead. After a period of three days some families give them a send-off back to the realm of the spirits by letting little boats with lanterns sail out to sea. In China this festival is known as the

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- Feast of the Hungry Ghosts festival and is celebrated beginning the fifteenth day of the seventh moon, about a month and a half after, July 15, the fifteenth day of the seventh month according to our calendar.
- July 13*** Fastday of Ab 9. A Jewish day of mourning to commemorate the burning of the Sanctuary in Jerusalem by Titus in 70 A.D. The Book of Lamentations is chanted.
- August 15** Korean Day of Liberation. Followers of President Syngman Rhee, who formerly lived in Hawaii, celebrate the founding of the Korean Republican government on this day.
- August 24*** Seventh Night of the Seventh Moon. A highly romantic Chinese festival which some Japanese celebrate on our July 7 and call Tanabata. The occasion commemorates two stars of the heavens, the Weaver-Maid and the Cowherd, one on each side of the Milky Way. On this night only are these lovers allowed to meet, providing it does not rain. The festival appeals particularly to maidens, who prepare special food, make offerings to the Weaver-Maid, and bring in water of special purity. Sometimes a girl may be fortunate enough to dream of the man she will later marry.
- September 20*** Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, which lasts two days and is followed by ten days of repentance. It is preceded by a week of self-criticism and prayer.
- September 22** O-higan Ceremony. A Japanese Buddhist fall festival, corresponding to the one at the beginning of spring.
- September 29*** Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement. This is the greatest of the Jewish holidays. Devout Jews will not leave the synagogue during the entire twenty-four hours. A strictly kept fast day.
- October 2*** The Chinese Moon Festival, coming on the fifteenth day of the eighth lunar month and thus associated with the harvest. A special occasion in the home and the temples, the holiday is noted for its round moon cakes filled with rich mince-meats. Such cakes can be purchased from Chinese food shops in Chinatown.
- October 4*** Sukkoth, Jewish Feast of Tabernacles. Commemorates the forty-year sojourn in tents in the wilderness during which they were cared for by divine providence. Four plants are brought to the synagogue: the palm leaf, the citrus fruit, myrtle, willow twigs. The families build booths for the meals of the holidays.
- October 5*** World-Wide Communion Sunday, a special occasion accepted by almost all Protestant churches.

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- October 10 Chinese Republic Day, the most important national holiday in China until the overthrow of the Republican regime by the Communists. Because it comes in the tenth month of our calendar it is often referred to as Double Ten Day. Still an important occasion for Hawaii's Chinese of the older generation.
- October 13* This starts Aloha Week, featuring Hawaiian pageantry and a lantern parade. Everyone wears an aloha shirt.
- October 26* Reformation Sunday. This Sunday nearest to October 31, the day commemorating Luther's Reformation, is used by many Protestant churches to celebrate the Protestant Reformation.
- October 31 Hallowe'en. Celebrated by children in Hawaii as elsewhere. This now secularised celebration is associated with All Saints' Day, November 1, an important day in the Catholic Church.
- November 11 Armistice Day. Legal holiday in Hawaii.
- November 27* Thanksgiving Day. Legal holiday in Hawaii. Observed by all groups in Hawaii in the traditional American manner.
- November 30* First Sunday in Advent. Beginning of the traditional Christian year and of the Christmas season.
- November 30 Filipino National Heroes Day. This is a legal holiday in the Philippines. In Hawaii it is observed in some places by speeches and banquets.
- December 8 Bodhi Day. The day of Buddha's enlightenment. Also called Jodo-e. Celebrates the day of Gautama's enlightenment under the Bo or Peepul tree.
- December 13* Chanukah. The Jewish Feast of Lights. A day commemorating the liberation of the Jews under the Maccabees. Candles are lighted and gifts are exchanged.
- December 14* Universal Bible Sunday. Emphasized by some Protestant denominations.
- December 22 Chinese Winter Solstice Day, marking the shortest day of the year. Temple worship.
- December 24 Christmas Eve.
- December 25 Christmas Day. Legal holiday in Hawaii. Gift-giving and Christmas trees found in many non-Christian homes.

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