

**NEWS RELEASE**



**Office of the Mayor**  
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March

25, 2008

Release No. M-24-08

**HONOLULU-HIROSHIMA SISTER CITY CELEBRATIONS  
PLANNED**

Mayor Mufi Hannemann's administration has helped form a new group that will create an exciting series of events to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Honolulu's sister city relationship with Hiroshima next year.

The Fiftieth Anniversary Committee for the Sister City Relationship between the City and County of Honolulu and the City of Hiroshima will also develop plans to participate in festivals and parades in both cities.

"Hiroshima was Honolulu's first sister city, and we're very proud of our warm and strong relationship," Mayor Hannemann said. "It's very important that we celebrate this historic occasion appropriately and continue to share our aloha with the wonderful people of Hiroshima."

Hawaii's people have strong historic ties to Hiroshima as well. Between 1885 and 1894, approximately 30,000 people arrived here from Japan, primarily to work in the sugar industry. An estimated one-third of these émigrés came from Hiroshima.

Honolulu and Hiroshima have been sister cities since June 15, 1959. The relationship grew from the “People to People Program” established by President Eisenhower in the 1950s to promote peace and mutual understanding between citizens in various countries.

Hiroshima is an active participant in our Honolulu Festival, sending an official delegation here every year. Hiroshima also celebrates “Honolulu Day” during November. This day is sponsored by several prominent Hiroshima organizations including the Hiroshima Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Japan America Society of Hiroshima.

In 1985, the Prefecture of Hiroshima presented Honolulu with the Hiroshima Peace Bell. A bell-ringing ceremony is held each year at the Izumo Taishakyo Mission near Chinatown to mark the 1945 atomic bombing of Hiroshima. Included in the ceremony is a traditional Shinto offering of fruits, vegetables, sake and rice for purification and blessing.

In 2001, the Hiroshima Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Hiroshima Prefecture, and the City of Hiroshima presented to the Honolulu Japanese Chamber of Commerce a replica of the torii gate at Hiyajima, a World Heritage Site, as a symbol of our everlasting friendship. In 2002, the Honolulu Japanese Chamber of Commerce presented the torii gate to the City and County of Honolulu. This beautiful 26-foot-high structure now stands at the intersection of King and Beretania streets, in Moiliili.

Members of the Fiftieth Anniversary Committee for the Sister City Relationship between the City and County of Honolulu and the City of Hiroshima include:

Chairman:

- Wayne Miyao, president of Honolulu Hiroshima Kenjin Kai, chairman of Hiroshima Hawaii Sister State Committee; chairman of Ohana Pacific Bank; president of Los Angeles Grand Sumo Tournament 2008.

Members:

- Benjamin Fukumoto, past president of Honolulu Hiroshima Kenjin Kai; vice-chairman of Hiroshima Hawaii Sister State Committee;
- Wendy Abe, president of Honolulu Japanese Chamber of Commerce (The HJCC has maintained a sister chamber relationship with the Hiroshima Chamber since 1981);
- Kenneth Saiki, president-elect of Honolulu Hiroshima Kenjin Kai; vice president of Central Pacific Bank;
- Michael Leineweber, chairman of Sister Society Committee of Japan-America Society of USA; vice chairman of Durrant Media 5;
- Russell Okata, board member of Honolulu Hiroshima Kenjin Kai; retired executive director of HGEA;
- Gary Okino, board member of Honolulu Hiroshima Kenjin Kai; city councilman;
- Brian Taniguchi, board member of Honolulu Hiroshima Kenjin Kai; state senator
- Misa Uyehara, board member of Honolulu Hiroshima Kenjin Kai; bilingual native of Hiroshima prefecture; announcer at K-ZOO radio;
- Wayne Ishihara, treasurer of Honolulu Hiroshima Kenjin Kai; senior vice president of American Savings Bank;
- Jo Anne Trask, director of Hanayagi Dancing Academy Hawaii Foundation.
- Ryan I. Yamane, State Representative

The committee's honorary chair:

- Daniel K. Inouye, United States Senator.

-- 30 --

**Contacts:**

**Wayne Miyao 497-2364**

**Isaac Hokama 527-6090**

