



Hawaii Kotohira Jinsha Hawaii Dazaifu Tenmangu

Volume 4, Issue 8

Hatsumiya Mairi 初宮参り

Conception, pregnancy, labor, delivery, and the postpartum period are fraught with uncertainty, fear, danger, deep relief, joy, a sense of wonder, and increased physical and emotional vulnerability.

The unborn baby is a mystery - even with sophisticated technology one cannot be sure of a healthy baby until after the birth. Childbirth is a period of transition, both socially and personally .

Bringing a new baby home is one of the most exciting universal human experiences. For most parents, it is a time of celebration -- when families and communities come together to honor and welcome the new child.

Rituals and ceremonies that mark a child's birth and survival are common worldwide. In the U.S., baptism and male circumcision are two of the more familiar baby traditions, but there are many others that are less visible.

These rituals not only celebrate and acknowledge the child, but also serve as an important way for families to solidify their connection to community, heritage and culture.

Rituals are evidence that one is authentic and belongs. They are about knowing where you come from. For parents, birth rituals and ceremonies provide an immediate sense of connection as well as inclusion of the child into the clan, tribe or community.

Although babies aren't yet fully aware, these rituals are impor-

tant for them as well. Along with being the first introduction to who they are, they also serve as guideposts as they grow and develop their own sense of identity. Even if they drift away from or reject their heritage, their early experiences give them a place to return to if they so choose.

Parents re-tell the stories of the rituals to the child as they get older, giving them a path back to connection. With these rituals, the parents give the child a road map home.

In the Japanese culture, *Hatsumiya Mairi* or *Omiya mairi* is a special ritual that allows the new par-

ents to convey appreciation to the *kami* for the birth of their child and to express their wishes for the child to become good natured, kind hearted, true of spirit, respectful of all around and lead to their inner strengths to find their own path in life.

Male infants usually visit a shrine on the 31st day after birth and girls on the 33rd day after birth.

However, since an infant's immune system is delicate, it is best to consult with your physician as to when your baby is able to venture outside of the home.



Steven & Nobue Yoshida with their son, Nathan

MAHALO for your generous donations

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Robert Yoshio Shimoda, President Emeritus of the shrine passed away on October 19 at the age of 91.

A graduate of Iolani School, Mr. Shimoda always spoke of his “hanabata” days with his childhood buddies Stephen Kotake and Maurice Karamatsu. The three musketeers were inseparable until the death of Stephen in 2001 and Maurice in 1992.

Even in his 90s, Mr. Shimoda traveled to Japan every year, visiting his daughter and 3 grandchildren while getting in some gateball with his buddies throughout the country.

Mr. Shimoda is survived by his wife, Miyono, son Gary, daughter, Laverne Miyamoto and three grandchildren.

Mr. Shimoda, *otsukare sama deshita* - I'm sure you're having a sake with Stephen and Maurice - the *sanbagarasu* are together once again. We will truly miss you.

We express our heartfelt condolences to the families of
Robert Shimoda
Tarokichi Hiramatsu
Esther Kimura
Sandy Kodama

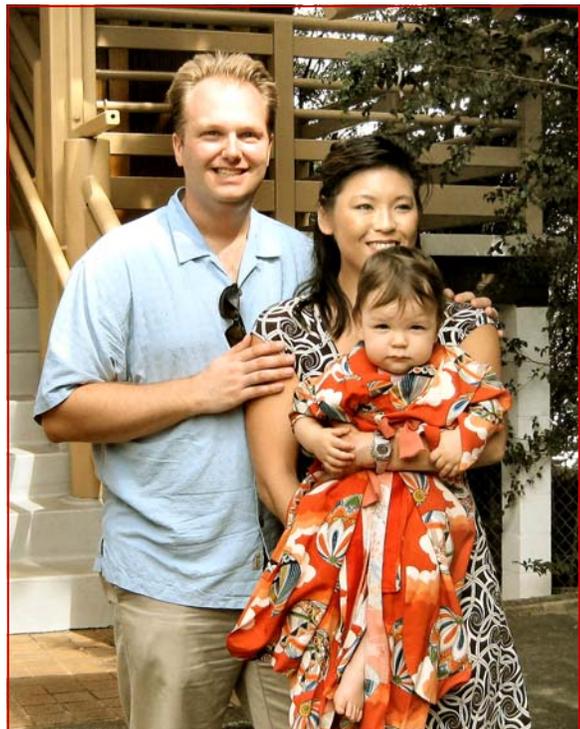
MAHALO Give Five October Volunteers

Bryson Goda Ryuji Hoshino Kathy Kwock
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Shrine Calendar

November
 1-30 Shichigosan 七五三

December
 7 Tsukinami-sai Monthly Service 月次祭
 TBA Mochi Pounding 餅つき
 TBA Susubarai Clean-Up 煤払い



Richard and Dawn Lutz, formally of Hawaii and now residing in Portland, Oregon visited the shrine for the Hatsu Tanjo or one-year old blessing of their daughter, Juliet Dorothy Emi.

Traditional Japanese Children's Rites

Oshichiya / Meimei

The newborn's name will be formally announced on the seventh day from his or her birth.

A scroll or piece of paper inscribed with the baby's name in traditional calligraphy is hung on the *kamidana* to formally welcome the child.



Hatsumiya Mairi

Hatsumiya Mairi or first visit to a shrine is introduced on the front page of this newsletter.

Okuizome

Okuizome is a ritual that began in the Heian period which is also referred to as *hagatame*, *momoka*, *mana hajime* and is usually performed on the 100th day.

This ritual is performed so that the child will never go hungry for the rest of his or her life.



Hatsu-zekku

Hatsu zekku, or the first sekku of the child's life is either Tango no sekku on May 5th for boys or Momo no sekku on March 3rd for girls. Dolls are usually sent to the child and a little feast is prepared to celebrate the auspicious occasion.

Hatsu-tanjo

Hatsu tanjo is the first birthday of a child. In many regions of Japan, mochi is pounded into a large round shape, wrapped in *furoshiki* and tied to the back of the child as a symbol that the child will be strong and healthy.



Shichigosan

Shichigosan is a traditional event celebrated by 3 and 5 year old boys and 3 and 7 year old girls.

On November 15, children dressed in kimono visit a shrine to report their healthy development and to receive divine blessings.

Shichigosan is said to have originated from the ancient rites of passage for children such as Kamioki or growing of hair, Hakamagi or wearing of hakama for boys and Obi-toki or the use of Obi for girls.

Nyu-en / Nyu-gaku

The new school year in Japan begins in April, when schools across Japan welcome incoming

first-graders with a special entrance ceremony, or *nyugaku-shiki*.

Given the importance of the step up to first grade, parents and children dress up for the school entrance ceremony.

Nyu-en shiki is a ceremony for those entering Pre-school or Kindergarten.

Jusan Mairi

Jusan Mairi or literally "Thirteen year-old Blessing" is a special blessing to affirm the emotional, psychological and physical changes challenging 13 year-olds.

Sotsugyo

Sotsugyo or graduation from high school promotes reflection on the significance of completing compulsory education and those who have made it possible, and motivations for beginning the journey into adulthood.

Sejin shiki

Sejin shiki or Coming of Age Ceremony is a ceremony to empower one through the many significant changes and transitions of becoming an adult and celebrating new beginnings of discovering your life path.

2007 Top Ten Children's Names in Japan

Boy

大翔 Hiroto

蓮 Ren

大輝 Daiki

翔太 Shota

悠斗 Haruto

陸 Riku

優太 Yuhta

優斗 Yuhto

大和 Yamato

健太 Kenta

Girl

葵 Aoi

さくら Sakura

優奈 Yuna

結衣 Yui

陽菜 Yohna

七海 Nanami

美咲 Misaki

美優 Miyu

ひなた Hinata

美羽 Mi-u

Suitengu Shrine 水天宮

Deity of Water and the Protector of Children,
Motherhood, Fertility, Easy Delivery

There are seven shrines at Hawaii Kotohira Jinsha - Hawaii Dazaifu Tenmangu.

One of the seven shrines is a branch of the famed Suitengu shrine of Kurume, Fukuoka. The Hawaii shrine still maintains close ties with Suitengu in Fukuoka, which is the head shrine of the hundreds of other Suitengu shrines throughout Japan.

The actual date and circumstances involved in the establishment of Hawaii Suitengu is unknown. All documents and photos were destroyed during World War II by the founders of the Suitengu shrine in Hawaii in fear of being falsely accused of subversive activity.

Hawaii Suitengu was eventually closed by the federal government, sometime in 1941. After the war, Hawaii Suitengu was not able to resume activities and brought the *goshintai* and all shrine related paraphernalia to Hawaii Kotohira Jinsha to perpetuate the Suitengu traditions on their behalf.

Suitengu Shrine

The main Suitengu shrine was established in Kurume, Fukuoka about 700 years ago.

It began with the Genpei War, a culmination of a decades-long conflict between the Taira and Minamoto clans over dominance of the Imperial court.

Consequently, the Taira clan was destroyed, and the Minamoto victory was followed by the establishment of the Kamakura shogunate.

The battle of Dan-no-ura, was the decisive sea battle occurring at Dan-no-ura, in the Shimonoseki Strait



off Yamaguchi-ken on April 25, 1185.

The Minamoto clan fleet, led by Minamoto no Yoshitsune, defeated the Taira or Heike clan fleet, during a half-day engagement.

The 8-year old child Emperor Antoku was aboard one of the boats with his mother and grandmother, Ni no Ama.

When the Taira was defeated, Ni no Ama, Emperor Antoku and his mother, Kenreimon-in threw themselves overboard along with their vassals and attendants.



Emperor Antoku's wet nurse, Azechi no Tsubone was ordered by Ni no Ama, to build a shrine to pray for the souls of the Taira clansmen who perished as a result of the Genpei wars.

Azechi no Tsubone fled the Minamoto soldiers, crossed the sea to Kyushu and found safe haven in Kurume, Fukuoka.

There, she built a small shrine alongside the Chikugo river and spent the remainder of her days praying for the souls of the deceased Taira clansmen. This is said to be the start of the Suitengu shrine.

In the late 1500s, a larger Suitengu shrine was built by Tadayori Arima, the domain lord of Kurume at the present site in Senoshita, Kurume.

During the mid 1600s, Suitengu's reputation as the deity of the water and protector of children, motherhood, fertility and easy delivery spread throughout the country.

Today, thousands of expectant mothers line up to receive a blessing at Suitengu shrines throughout Japan on the day of the Dog.

Iwata-obi (Japanese maternity lumbosacral support)

There is an ancient Japanese custom called *Iwata-obi*, a long strip of cotton cloth that is wrapped around the expectant mother's abdomen, upon receiving blessings from Suitengu shrine.

Iwata-obi is also meant to stabilize the position of the child and prevent the child from over-growth.

The most auspicious day for the special blessing is usually performed on the first day of the Dog (Inu no Hi) during the mother's 5th month of pregnancy.

Iwata-obi was usually presented to the expectant mother from her parents, who had it blessed at a shrine. However, it is now more popular for the expectant mother to purchase it at a shrine or a department store.

It is believed in many cultures that dogs have very easy deliveries of their puppies. So, the energies of day of the Dog is said to help the expectant mother deliver a healthy baby as easily as possible.



Many times the priest or the obstetrician will write the word "sachi" or happiness on the iwata-obi sash.

A prominent example for the celebration of the day of the Dog was Princess Masako. In the presence of her husband, the Crown Prince Naruhito, and attended by her court ladies, she wore an *iwata-obi* in the Togu Palace on the day of the dogs in the fifth month of her pregnancy.

Unlike the ordinary Iwata-obi, Princess Masako's sash was made of silk, 4 meters long and presented to her by Emperor Akihito.

Days of the Dog in Fall/Winter 2008

November 11月

6日 (木) 18日 (火) 30日 (日)

December 12月

12日 (金) 24日 (水)

Japanese Child Birth Superstitions

Various cultures around the world hold vastly different views on childbirth -- particularly how a pregnant woman should be treated and how she should behave as the time of delivery approaches. Here are a few superstitions from Japan:

- If the stomach is cone-shaped, the child is a boy
- The child will be a boy if the mother's morning sickness is light
- The child will be a boy if the mother eats salty foods during pregnancy
- The child will be a girl if the mother's face becomes soft and gentle
- If an expectant mother eats crab during pregnancy, the child will become hairy
- If an expectant mother sees a fire, the baby will be born with a birthmark
- Calamity will befall the expectant mother that attends a funeral during her pregnancy
- If an expectant mother eats persimmons during the first 100 days of her pregnancy, she will not have enough milk to feed her baby
- Pregnant women must keep their bathroom(s) clean if they want a healthy baby
- If the expectant mother eats meat regularly, the baby will be a boy. If the expectant mother prefers fruits and vegetables, the baby will be a girl



The Suitengu Hyotan (Gourd) omamori has protected children and swimmers from the dangers of the rivers and oceans for centuries.

The small gourd-shaped omamori is made of wood and usually hung from the neck or wrapped around the wrist. This omamori will be available at the shrine during Hatsumode 2009.

Top Twenty Surnames in Japan

In Japan, surnames were allowed only to the aristocracy and samurai families until the 1870s. At the time of the Meiji revolution in 1868, only 3.6% of the population had legal surnames. Many merchants and artisans used the name of their business (*yago*) like a surname. So, they were referred to as: Charley of Zippy's or Richard of Macy's. This, however was not official and all commoners were mandated to adopt a legal surname in the 1870s.

Presently, there are over 100,000 different surnames in use today in Japan, which is due to the origin of family names allowed to commoners after the Meiji Revolution.

Commoners chose names from their occupation, famous aristocratic or samurai clans or geographical features around their home. It was also quite common for village chiefs to choose surnames for members of the village.

Up until the 7th century, *Kabane* (姓) or hereditary titles to denote rank and political standing were used instead of surnames for the aristocracy. There were more than thirty *kabane*. Some of the more common *kabane* were *omi*, *muraji*, *miyatsuko*, *kimi*, *fubito*, *agatanushi*, and *suguri*. The *kabane* system was abolished in 645.

According to the *Shinsen Shojiroku* written in 815 CE, there were 1182 registered surnames in Kyoto and the surrounding areas of Nara and Osaka. It is documented that over thirty percent of the registered surnames were those of Chinese or Korean immigrants with Japanese surnames that reflected their origins.

Japanese surnames were divided into three categories - 皇別 *Kohbetsu*, 神別 *Shinbetsu*, and 諸蕃 *Shohan*.

In the *Shinsen Shojiroku*, there are 335 *Kohbetsu* surnames, 404 *Shinbetsu* surnames and 326 *Shohan* surnames.

Kohbetsu were clans that are said to be descended from the imperial family (i.e. Shimada, Sonobe, Matsuura, Tamba, Miyake, Mano, Kiyohara, Tachibana, Kume, Ono, Ogura, Kashima, Abe, Iga, Kuwahara, Kusakabe, Namba, Waki, Abo, Asuka, Shouji, Oka, Kubota, etc.).

Shinbetsu were clans that are said to be descended from the *kami* or the deities (i.e. O-nakatomi, Azumi, Yugeshi, Kamo, Yuasa, Hozumi, Sekiya, Suwa, Sakurai, Fushimi, etc.).

Shohan were clans that were descendants of Chinese or Korean immigrants. Registered in the *Shinsen Shojiroku* were 163 clans from China (i.e. Hata, Nagaoka, Takao, Sakurada, Takeo, Sakurano, Koshi, Kitsu, Tani, Shiga, Hitohara etc.).

104 clans were from Paekche, Korea (i.e. Kudara, Wa, Ishino, Kanno, Kuzui, Miyahara, Miyoshi, Fuwa, Koshi, etc.), 41 from Goguryeo, Korea (Korai, Koma, Idemizu, Sakai, etc.), 6 from Shilla, Korea (i.e. Miyake, Itoi, Toyohara, etc.) and 3 from Gaya, Korea (i.e. Michida, Oichi, Shimizu, Tatara, Ohtomo, etc.).

The Chinese and Koreans that immigrated to Japan were usually nobles, artisans and scholars. In the mid-460 CE, King Muryeong's mother escaped the invading Goguryeo forces in Korea and fled to Japan. She went into labor as their ship entered Japanese waters and gave birth to him on a small Japanese island.

King Muryeong eventually returned to Korea with his mother, and later became the 25th King of Paekche (Baekje). Years later, King Muryeong sent his son, Prince Junda to Japan. A descendant of Prince Junda, Takano no Niigasa became the concubine of Emperor Konin and eventually the mother of Emperor Kammu.

Top Twenty Surnames in Japan

as of 12/31/2007

(Ranking, Name, Approximate number of people with the surname in Japan)

1	Sato, Satoh, Satou 佐藤	1,928,000
2	Suzuki 鈴木	1,707,000
3	Takahashi 高橋	1,416,000
4	Tanaka 田中	1,336,000
5	Watanabe 渡辺	1,135,000
6	Ito, Itoh, Itou 伊藤	1,080,000
7	Yamamoto 山本	1,077,000
8	Nakamura 中村	1,058,000
9	Kobayashi 小林	1,019,000
10	Saito, Saitoh 斎藤	980,000
11	Kato, Katoh, Katou 加藤	860,000
12	Yoshida 吉田	835,000
13	Yamada 山田	816,000
14	Sasaki 佐々木	716,000
15	Yamaguchi 山口	641,000
16	Matsumoto 松本	634,000
17	Inoue, Inouye 井上	610,000
18	Kimura 木村	584,000
19	Hayashi 林	541,000
20	Shimizu 清水	524,000