

# Kung Sheong Doo Newsletter

May 2023

Issue # 11

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Aloha KSD members.

It was great seeing all of you at KSD's Annual Spring Banquet at the Jade Dynasty Restaurant. It was a fun evening for all.

Keep June 11<sup>th</sup> open for our next membership meeting, again at the Harbor Village Restaurant in Hawaii Kai. (See details in article) In addition, there will be a Zoom Scholar and Youth Presentation night on June 10<sup>th</sup>. (See details in article) The pandemic had enabled KSD to utilize Zoom to continue having meetings for its membership and Youth/Scholar programs. The general membership functions will now be in person and Zoom meetings will continue in support of our programs.

After 3 years of drive throughs, KSD will finally resume its Annual Summer picnic at the Ala Moana Park on August 12. Join us for the fellowship, food, games and prizes, and our signature root beer floats. (See details in article)

Thank you for your support and participation in KSD activities.

Wes Mun, President

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President's Message

#### REPORTS

- Membership
- Rental Property
- Spring Banquet

#### EVENT CALENDAR

**6/11/23 11:00 AM**

General Meeting  
Harbor Village

**6/10/23 5:00 PM**

CEP Presentations  
Zoom

**8/12/23 9:00 AM**

KSD Annual  
Summer Picnic

#### Announcements

- KSD 1<sup>st</sup> Alaska  
Cruise

#### Deadlines 12/31/23

- Youth Cultural  
Education Program
- CEP Application
- Performing Arts  
Program

#### Condolences & Prayers

Lynette Mun



Wesley Mun, President  
Russell Mun, Asst. Treasurer\*  
Elaine Lee, Chinese Secy.  
Preston Lum, Sergeant at Arms\*  
Newsletter Editor: Liane Fu

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Christy Aiwohi, English Secy.  
Darlene Robertson, Asst. Chinese Secy  
Dudley Akama, Sergeant at Arms  
Norman Chock, IT Director

Bonny Tung, Treasurer  
Brytne Andrade, Asst. Eng. Secy  
Vivian Loo, Auditor \*  
Lance Luke, Immed.Past Pres\*

## Membership

**Kung Sheong Doo would like to welcome new members:** Kalani Brady, Carla Wong, Lauren L.C. Chee, Carlton K.W. Chang, Christopher K. Wong, Carlton S.C. Wong

We request members update their contact information, i.e. change of name, address, phone number, email address, date of birth (especially for children). Send updated information to: KungSheongDoo@gmail.com, Attention: Chinese Secretary.

## KSD Rental Property (Restaurant Pinoy One) Damage Update

Most of the repairs have been completed with only the painting remaining. Other items such as the roof required extensive repairs, increasing the cost to KSD. These repairs will maintain the rental property for years to come and will continue to provide KSD with a source of income to fund its activities

## KSD's 1st Alaska Inside Passage Cruise

Join KSD's 1st Alaska Inside Passage Cruise! September 24 - October 1, 2023 Escorted by Past President Preston Lum and Hosted by President Wesley Mun! We'll be sailing on Holland America Line's ms Nieuw Amsterdam from beautiful Vancouver, British Columbia to Juneau, Skagway, Glacier Bay, & Ketchikan, Alaska via the smooth & scenic Inside Passage. Balcony cabins from \$1599 per person and includes: Moon cake and salmon cooking demonstration from Wes Mun, Wifi & Beverage package, \$100 Shore Excursion discount, 1 Specialty dinner. Call or email Preston Lum for details. LumPreston@Gmail.com, 808-228-3420

## Kung Sheong Doo's Annual Spring Banquet

The re-launch of our in-person spring banquet on March 18<sup>th</sup> was a huge success! KSD members dined on a sumptuous 7 course meal on 27 Jade Dynasty tables. Evening highlights: President Wes Mun donated copious amounts of deliciously seasoned wild octopus he caught himself, a delightful enhancement to our standard open bar and pupu fare. Our centerpieces featured a golden chocolate rabbit sitting atop a stack of Chinese pretzels in a golden detailed box. Each attendee received a mini red palanquin favor containing tasty sweets. The musicians organized by Lance Luke were enjoyed by all. Our sing along of Hawaii Aloha signaled the end of the evening's festivities. Your support of KSD made this spectacular evening possible. We look forward to celebrating with you in-person next year in 2024.



## The Youth Cultural Education Program

Youths of all ages are invited to enroll in the Youth Cultural Education Program. All members will have the opportunity to earn awards by participation in the functions and will receive a Happy Birthday greeting and gift from KSD. Enrolled high school youths (9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grades) will have the

opportunity to earn CEP awards (up to \$500) by participating in the KSD Service Program and receive a congratulatory graduation award. Get your applications in, contact the committee at [Kungsheongdoo@gmail.com](mailto:Kungsheongdoo@gmail.com) for applications. They will also receive a Congratulatory High School and College Graduation gift.

### **The Scholar Cultural Education Program (CEP) for College Students**

KSD members attending college and working on post graduate degrees will have the opportunity to earn an annual \$1000 award. All scholars must meet the "Member in Good Standing" criteria (Parents' or scholars' attendance at a minimum of 50% of KSD functions) in the year preceding and during the enrollment year, attend 4 mandatory meetings, and work on 2 projects, which could be a presentation or help with the KSD Service Program. Contact the committee at [Kungsheongdoo@gmail.com](mailto:Kungsheongdoo@gmail.com) for an application. If you are already enrolled in the Program, complete the update form. Applications and application updates for the 2024 year will be accepted by December 31, 2023. For 2023, there are 13 scholars in the program.

### **The Performing Arts Program (PAP)**

Are you taking music, dance, or other performing arts lessons? KSD's Performing Arts Program will provide you with a tuition award. All participants must meet the "Member in Good Standing" criteria (participants' attendance at a minimum of 50% of KSD functions) in the year preceding and during the enrollment year. You will be required to assist at the Palolo Christmas Caroling event and provide an additional performance (maybe videotaped) or presentation to the KSD membership. Please contact the committee at [Kungsheongdoo@gmail.com](mailto:Kungsheongdoo@gmail.com) for an application.

### **General Membership Meeting - June 11th, 2023, 11 am**

KSD will be having its General Membership Meeting on June 11th, 2023, 11 am at Harbor Village Chinese Restaurant, 7192 Kalaniana'ole Hwy #C123, Honolulu HI 96825. Phone (808) 395- 2311. This is in the Koko Marina Center, Hawaii Kai, (Kokohead, makai end of the Center)

Please send your RSVP to [kungsheongdoo@gmail.com](mailto:kungsheongdoo@gmail.com) by June 7<sup>th</sup>. **Please mail in a payment of \$10** per member (refundable upon attendance) and \$25 per nonmember (nonrefundable). Please arrive early to allow time for check-in, return of your payment, and the seating of your party. Space is limited to 9 tables.

### **Cultural Education Program Presentations - June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, on Zoom, 5 pm (Zoom Meeting 423 785 4504 password 185628).**

All KSD members are invited to attend this program. As this is not a "lunch" meeting, registration via email is not necessary. KSD's CEP Scholars will be presenting a cooking program about "Noodles". Participation/attendance at this program will count towards the attendance requirement of a "member in good standing,." in lieu of attending the in-person June 11<sup>th</sup> General Membership Meeting.

KSD youths are also invited to attend. They will be able to earn a \$50 award by presenting a piece about noodles. Please register (youths presenting) at [kungsheongdoo@gmail.com](mailto:kungsheongdoo@gmail.com) to assist in coordinating the program.

### **United Chinese Society Picnic – July 23, 2023**

Volunteers are needed to assist KSD in serving root beer floats at the picnic. Lunch will be provided. Contact Wes at [pokefish808@gmail.com](mailto:pokefish808@gmail.com). **Scholar volunteers needed**



*Kung Sheong Doo Society*  
*P. O. Box 22370*  
*Honolulu, HI 96823*

## **KSD Annual Summer Picnic – August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 9 am to 1:30 pm**

The KSD 2023 annual picnic will be held on Saturday August 12, 2023, from 9 am to 1:30 pm at the Ala Moana Park, picnic area #14. (Same place as previous years) Please join us for fun, fellowship, food, and games. You may choose from either a Young's Market Hawaiian plate lunch or a pizza and salad lunch. Please send your RSVP to [kungsheongdoo@gmail.com](mailto:kungsheongdoo@gmail.com) by August 5<sup>th</sup>. Please mail in a payment of \$10 per member (refundable upon attendance) and \$15 per nonmember (nonrefundable). Indicate your choice of lunch.

Besides the many prizes everyone will win, ice cold watermelon and root beer floats will be served. Bring your appetites and a big bag for prizes. Come early for parking and participate in the vegetable/snack mad dash free for all starting at 9:30 am. **Youth and Scholar volunteers needed.**



# Joseph Kekuku, inventor of the kika kila, the Hawaiian Steel Guitar

by Norman Kwai Cheong Kaleomokuokanalua Chock

(Kung Sheong Doo Board Member)

My great-granduncle Joseph Kekuku was just a 14-year-old high school student when he invented the kika kila, the Hawaiian steel guitar, which became known throughout America and Europe simply as the Hawaiian guitar.

Joseph was a half-Chinese, half-Hawaiian boy from Laie in the Ko'olau Loa area of the island of O'ahu. He was born in Kalama Valley in 1874. His mother was Miliama Kaopua, a direct descendant of Alapa'i Nui, the high chief of the Big Island. His father was Hu Yong Cheng, better known in Hawai'i at the time as H. Ah Mee, the owner of the Kalama Valley ahupua'a and a rice planter there.

Miliama said of her husband, "We lived at Kahana until the land of Kahana was sold...because of the desire of my husband to return to China...I was well acquainted with all the people that was living at Kahana at the time, because my husband with whom I was living then being Ah Mi, was the master over the people," *"ma muli o ka noho haku 'ana o ka'u kane e noho pu ana ia wa 'o ia ho'i 'o Ahmi."*

H. Ah Mee (Hu Yong Cheng) was born in Goo Hok, Kung Sheong Doo, Kwangtung, China (now Guhe, Zhuhai, Guangdong) in 1845. He was the son of Hu Dong Hoon, son of Hu Shi Leong, son of Hu Loong Ge, son of Hu Pei Sheong.<sup>1</sup>

Within a year after his birth, Joseph's father, Ah Mee, sold his Kalama Valley property and moved back home to Goo Hok. Miliama and their infant son Joseph stayed in Hawaii and moved to nearby Laie with Miliama's extended family, who had been living with the couple while they were at Kalama.

In September 1876, Miliama married Joseph Kekukuupenakanaiapuniokamehameha Apuakehau, who named her child after himself and adopted him as his own. At the time, surnames in Hawai'i were a novelty and were only just then being mandated and so the family would later take on the shortened version of the two Joseph's Hawaiian given name, Kekuku, as their family name.

Joseph Kekuku Junior was sent to boarding school at the Kamehameha School in Kapalama (now the home of the Bishop Museum) around 1889. It wouldn't be long before dorming there that he would invent his new type of guitar.

C.S. DeLano, publisher of the "Hawaiian Music In Los Angeles" and wrote the first original composition for the kika kila, "Hawaiian Love Song," wrote in a 1932 article:

"Joseph told me that he was walking along a road in Honolulu forty-two years ago, holding an old Spanish guitar, when he saw a rusty bolt on the ground. As he picked it up, the bolt accidentally vibrated one of the strings and produced a new tone that was rather pleasing. After practicing for a time with the metal bolt, Joe experimented with the back of a pocket-knife, then with the back of a steel comb, and still later on with a highly-polished steel [bar] very similar to the sort that is used today."

Kekuku would spend his high school years, not just perfecting his instrument but also developing his method of playing it and teaching that method to his classmates and others to play it.

John Troutman, music historian and curator for the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History who wrote in *Kika Kila: How the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Changed the Sound of Modern Music*, that while people have run objects over stringed instruments around the world for centuries, Kekuku created a musical technology that was refined, replicable and popularized.

"It's not simply running an object up and down a string," he says. "It's actually creating music with it, adapting it to play existing music at the time, and enabling it to play music that had never been conceived before."

After Kekuku's classmates caught on to his new style of playing, musicians all around Honolulu adopted his technique. The guitar, which scholars say made its way via the Europeans onto Hawai'i's shores, had not only taken hold on the islands but was modified enough to become an indigenous Hawaiian instrument—the steel guitar.



Kekuku notes that “It took me seven years to master the steel guitar. In 1904, I came to the States and played in every theater of renown from coast to coast.”

At 30 years old, Kekuku, ready to take his steel guitar to the world, left Hawaii never to return. He performed in vaudeville theaters with his group "Kekuku's Hawaiian Quintet" managed by "The Affiliated" as well as with the Toots Paka Hawaiians. After settling in Seattle, a newspaper called him “the world’s greatest guitar soloist.”

The Hawaiian guitar music grew wildly popular as Kekuku and other Hawaiian steel guitarists started touring the U.S., introducing both the ukulele and steel guitar at various expositions.

In 1915, the San Francisco World’s Fair opened, drawing 19 million people, and featuring the popular “Hawai’i Pavilion,” where visitors could hear the steel guitar, and where the islands’ government could attract tourists.

In 1916, 78 rpm records featuring Kekuku’s indigenous Hawaiian instrument outsold every other genre of music in the United States.

Troutman considers Joseph Kekuku’s steel guitar as not just notable for being wildly popular, but for how it influenced various genres of American music. The steel guitar’s impact would go beyond the Pacific and the West coast—Hawaiian musicians drew crowds as they traveled around the country, including the segregated South. Native Hawaiians barred from staying at whites-only hotels found lodging in boarding homes with African-American, native and immigrant performers, and it was in these spaces where Hawaiian musical traditions crossed paths with others.

“After their performances, they would all end up in boarding homes,” Troutman says. “This included mariachis, Chinese acrobats and all of these other performers, hanging out, playing music and having really good times together. They were kind of making the most of those conditions and learning from each other.”

Jimmie Rodgers, who Country Music Hall of Fame calls “the man who started it all”, played with several native Hawaiian steel guitarists, including Joseph Kaipo.

Delta blues singer and guitarist Son House, said to be the father of the slide guitar blues style, cited Hawaiian influence in an interview with music researchers.

“They kept asking him, ‘So where was that first slide guitar that you heard?’ And he said, ‘Oh, you mean the Hawaiian way of playing?’ And then he tells the story of the people that started demonstrating to him the Hawaiian style of playing music.”

Troutman notes that the ingenuity of this descendant of a Hawaiian high chief and son of a Chinese rice planter who migrated to Hawai’i from the village of Goo Hok in Kung Sheong Doo, Joseph Kekuku, may have not just been wildly popular in the U.S. at the beginning of the 20th century but may have been the catalyst that “resulted in the total kind of sonic transformation of the music that would become known as country, blues, and Rock ‘n’ Roll, and other genres as well,”

In 1919, says Kekuku, “I went to Europe for a tour of eight years duration and during this time, I played before kings and queens of different countries with the ‘The Bird of Paradise Show’”.

In 1927, at the age of 53, Kekuku eventually returned to the United States and settled in Chicago to open several studios and run a popular and successful music school. Five years later, Joseph moved to Dover, New Jersey with his wife and gave Hawaiian guitar lessons until his death of a brief illness in 1932.

Joseph never met his Chinese father as H. Ah Mee never returned from China to reconnect with his Hawaiian family. It is likely he never knew of his first-born son’s extraordinary talents, and the lasting contribution he made to the music of the world.

<sup>1</sup> 胡沛生 HU Pei Sheng (app.1698 Goo Hok – death)

胡龍舉 HU Loong Ge (July 1, 1729 Goo Hok– Jan 27, 1800)

胡始亮 HU Shi Liang (Sept 15, 1778 Goo Hok – Oct 1,1867)

胡东宽 HU Dung Hoon (app.1800 Goo Hok -death)

胡永成 HU Yong Cheng/ H. Ah Mee (app.1845 Goo Hok - death) & Miliama KAOPUA ( 8/6/1857 Ka’ao -1919)

Joseph KEKUKU (1874 Kahana -1932 Dover NJ)

<sup>2</sup> My handwritten copy of Kekuku Family Birth record states that he was born on December 29, 1875 in Kalama while all the articles I’ve read says it was in 1874 in Laie which would mean he was conceived while Ah Mee was still with Miliama in Kalama, but born after Ah Mee left for China which might mean he was born in Laie where Miliama moved after the valley was sold in 1875.

**Third graphic:** great grandnephews of Joseph Kekuku posing with his statue at the Polynesian Cultural Center in Laie on the day of its unveiling, from left to right, Kekai Chock, a 2022 Na Hoku Hanohano award winner, Wendell Chock, an amateur ukulele luthier, and me, Norman Chock.

