

MAEBASHI FOCUS

Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) Newsletter



PHOTO TAKEN MAY 2023

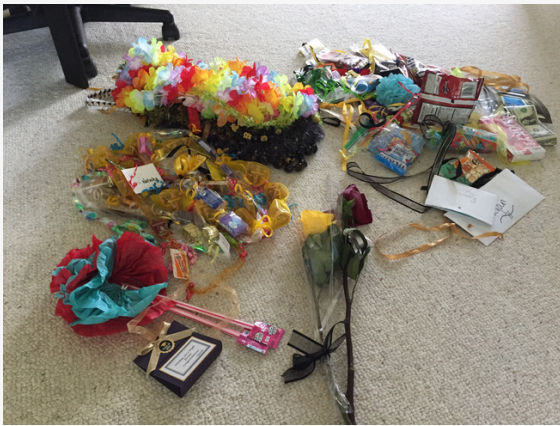


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"April showers bring May flowers." Growing up in Hawaii, I would hear this phrase often during springtime. In honor of this season during which many flowers bloom, I will briefly introduce Hawaii's lei culture.

When tourists land at the airport in Hawaii, they are welcomed with lei; such a scene may easily come to mind for many, but my family and friends often give lei for celebratory events. At high school or college graduation ceremonies, so much lei is given that the graduate's face is barely visible. Lei can be made out of not just flowers but kukui nuts, candy, and paper money as well. The lei is also an essential accessory when dancing the hula, a traditional Hawaiian dance. Whether the lei is handmade or not, it functions as an expression of love. Because fresh flowers are precious and do not last forever, the joy upon receiving them from a loved one is that much greater.

May 1st is a day with over 90 years of history special to Hawaii. Unlike the United States mainland, the day is referred to as Lei Day instead of May Day. This day is recognized as a time to appreciate lei, leimakers, and Hawaiian culture. A festival called Lei Day Celebration along with a lei contest is held, and one can enjoy hula performances and live Hawaiian music too. On June 1st, a May Day event celebrating Hawaiian culture will be held at the Itabashi Culture Hall, so please take this opportunity to experience lei culture firsthand!