

MATSU KINA

Childhood in Taba

In the old days the village was called Taba. I think there were more than 100 houses in my village but I'm not sure. Mainly they were *kayabuki* (thatch roofed). There were very few houses that had tile roofs, so everyone admired the tile-roofed houses. If you were rich you owned that kind of house. My house was *kayabuki*.

In the village, it was all agricultural. But there were people who used to sell *tōfu* or sew, or things like that. Even the *kuchō* (district head) was from our area. We also had representatives for the *sonkai* (village council).

Anyway at that time (ca. 1912), my father was in Hawaii, so only our mother stayed with us. I don't remember exactly how many *tsubo* (3.95 square yards) our field was, but we were growing cane in an area of about 20 *chō* (1 *chō* = 2.45 acres). We also grew potatoes, grains and beans. Mother worked all by herself. We couldn't help because we were small, but I did what I could to *kōkua* (help). I felt I had to do those things, since my mother was the only one working. Our livelihood wasn't any different compared to those of our neighbors. The little ones would help as much as they could. The parents had their children do whatever they could handle.

For clothing, mother used to make for us the winter and summer clothes. Like the other mothers, she made material. What we needed, she would make herself. For the winter, she made cotton material. In the summer she made material using *bashō* (Japanese banana plant). The plant, *bashō*, is like a banana tree, but is short. You go and cut it, and you steam it in a big pot, then get the fibers. But, I don't know the process too well because I wasn't interested in it then. I just wore the material that was made.

Before I came here in 1918—I think I was 17—it was very popular to

make Panama hats. I made them for half a year or so. We did those kinds of things after our other jobs in order to sustain our living. A company provided the materials, and we worked for them. Then, they came back, and they priced the finished hats. We could sometimes finish one hat in a day, if we worked very late. The payday was a certain day, so before payday, we would work all night. On those days we could finish one hat. It was about 30 *sen* (100 *sen* = one *yen*) or something like that, in Japanese currency.

We had school back in the old village. I went to the Gushikawa-*jinjō-kōtō-shōgakkō* (higher elementary school) up to the sixth grade. My first four years, I studied very hard; but in fifth and sixth grade I was big enough to help my mother, so I only went to school three or four times a week. I liked school, but I had to help my mother. In school we learned reading, arithmetic, arts and crafts, geography, and history. I liked arithmetic, composition, and arts and crafts. I think I was suited best for those things.

It wasn't difficult to learn the standard Japanese in school because the students spoke Japanese. We couldn't use Okinawan at school or else the teachers would punish us, so we learned quickly. We had to learn Japanese.

The teachers were very strict, but I like strict teachers. Once I did a bad thing in school and a strict teacher reprimanded me. I was tall for my age. I was sitting in the back of the class. I couldn't see what was being written on the board and I hit the boy in front of me, but the teacher saw. Then I was reprimanded. It may seem unusual to feel this way, but I like the teacher to this very day.

To Hawaii as a Yobiyose

When I quit school I had a hope that I would go overseas and make a lot of money, and then I would return to Okinawa and build a fine house. The rich people, I don't think had those kinds of dreams, but for the middle and lower classes I think they had the same kinds of wishes. In those days, there was a big difference between the important people and the common folk. The rich people used to look down upon the poor people.

My old man was in Hawaii, so I came here as a *yobiyose* ("summoned immigrant"). My father had come 6 or 7 years earlier. He worked for three years in Hawaii and then returned to Okinawa. Then he came back to Hawaii.

I didn't know anything about Hawaii before I came here. There was no one who could tell me anything. My father didn't write letters about the place. He just sent papers for *yobiyose*. All I know was before his second trip to Hawaii, he used to say that Hawaii was the nicest place in the world. But he didn't talk about the conditions or anything like that. So I couldn't imagine how it would be. After I came to Hawaii I learned.

From Hawaii they sent a passport, a certificate for *yobiyose*, and we had to take it to the *mura-yakuba* (village office). Then we had to go to the police station to get a certificate, because at that time, although the *yobiyose* certificate was sent, different people other than those called for would go to Hawaii. It was a common occurrence. So the policeman investigated your

identity. I was once suspected by a policeman, so they didn't give me the certificate right away. I didn't know if the policeman was investigating me, but he was asking about me like a detective. I asked many times if the certificate was ready, and they always told me that it wasn't. Finally, I told them it had better be ready or I would go to another police station instead. You come here if you had the certificate and passed the investigation, but the investigation was very thorough.

I left in 1918 from Naha to a place in Oshima, then to Kobe, from Kobe to Yokohama, changing ships at those places. From Yokohama to Hawaii I was on a ship called *Tenyō-maru*. In Kobe, I was given examinations. One for hookworms, a physical, an academic test and an eye test. The academic test was very easy in Japan. They have these books laid out and they ask you to read. That was it for me. The eye test was rather severe then, because there was widespread trachoma.

Tenyō-maru was a big ship. It was the top-rated ship for sea travel. It was really big. There was nothing like it. She held many passengers, many kinds of people from mainland Japan, China, and I guess other Asian countries, too. There were also different fares: first class, second class, third class. I was in third class, the very bottom. The ship had bunk beds. It was just like sleeping on shelves; I was in the third or fifth bunk from the floor.

There was a doctor on board, so if you got sick, you didn't have to worry. But, I was well all the way. Since I was from Okinawa, I was used to very plain food, so the food on board seemed very good. There were various types of foods, and to me, it was like a feast. Since I was young and not working, it took a long time for me to fall asleep after a meal. When it became too long, I would get hungry. There was a place that would sell *sōmen* (vermicelli) and *soba* (buckwheat noodles) and all the young people used to go there and eat. I guess it cost about 10 *sen*.

The person that I came with was named Saito, so I used to talk with him all the time. He told me all about Hawaii—like, what kinds of jobs there were. But I didn't think too much about work. I learned about the jobs after I came here. From just talk, you couldn't really tell about jobs.

We landed in Honolulu Harbor in December of 1918. From Yokohama, it had taken 8 days. I was glad that I arrived. At the immigration office I was given mainly examinations, just like the types I went through in Japan. Physical, eye, and . . . academic, those three. Anyway, the eye and physical tests were the same, but the academic test was very different. You were given a card and you were supposed to follow the instructions on the card. For example, when it said raise your right hand, you raised your right hand. You didn't have to say anything. If you spoke you couldn't pass.

After I passed the examination, I went to Kawasaki Ryokan (inn). I was of age so my father didn't come to pick me up at the immigration office. Kawasaki Ryokan sent presents like *mikan* (oranges) and so forth to the immigration office where we were. I thought it was strange, but when we were ready to go, they came to pick us up, so there was no worry. Kawasaki Ryokan was good. They treated us very well. They all spoke in Japanese, so we

could understand. I guess I stayed there about two days. And though that *ryokan* was in the city of Honolulu I didn't see the city, except for the area immediately around the *ryokan*. Honolulu is a city, and I was from a country place. Well, a city is a city. It wasn't much different from Naha, but it was an occidental city, since it was American.

First Stop: Puunene #6

From Honolulu we got on board a ship called *Mauna Kea*, and went to Lahaina. From Lahaina, we rode through different plantations. In the beginning, since my father was in Puunene #6, I went there. Then I went to Kihei for a job. I also had a cousin there, my mother's big brother's son. So, I went to Kihei for a job, but the job in Kihei wasn't too good. It was *ukeoi-kibi* (contracting to grow sugar), it was *hanawai* (irrigation). They only had that job there. Since I wasn't used to that kind of a job, I couldn't handle it. I was there for one week.

I thought the jobs weren't suited for me, so I soon moved to Mill Camp and I did *hāpai-kō* (carrying cane). In Mill Camp the people there were mostly Japanese, including Okinawans. There were quite a few people from Okinawa and there were many *Naichijin* (mainland Japanese). It was a big camp, filled with *totan* (corrugated iron) roofed houses. I don't know if the Okinawans were segregated because I wasn't there very long. But it didn't seem like it was mixed.

Although I was single, I didn't stay in a single-man's house because there was this couple from my home area, named Ura who gave me one room. In the camp there was an *ōgokku* (big cook, chief cook). He cooked for the Okinawans. The food was really good. We paid as much as \$15 per month for our food, at that time. It was like a feast every day. *Ōgokku* made various things, mainly meat dishes and fish too. You could drink milk as much as you liked. And for about three dollars extra, the cook's wife did the laundry. There was a common toilet in Mill Camp but it was separate from the bath area. For the bath area there was a woman who boiled the water. I think I paid \$1.50 per month for bath use, but I'm not sure.

In Mill Camp it was mostly *hāpai-kō* for men. It was the most strenuous job I had in Hawaii. I wore *ābina* (denim) from the jacket to the pants. Since I was young I worked hard. I couldn't get used to the work so I couldn't work as a full-fledged worker. But it was better than *hanawai*, because I worked on my own. I could rest whenever I wanted to. There weren't *lunas* (overseers) looking over us all the time. The *lunas* would just look over what we did from time to time. We really worked on our own. They wouldn't say anything no matter what you did. If you wanted to work, you worked diligently.

Then at the end of each pay period they paid me according to the tons of cane I carried. I had to pay the *ōgokku* for food, my laundry, and my bath. I had only a little left after that. Since I wasn't used to the job, I couldn't earn a lot. While I was on Maui for maybe three months, there was no money to send back to Okinawa. And I had expenses, like my clothes, so

I couldn't save anything. I saved quite a bit and sent money home only after I came here to the Big Island.

In my free time at Mill Camp, I read used magazines. The Ura couple had a *shamisen* (stringed instrument) so I played it and I had a lot of fun. I liked the *shamisen*. At night, I played around with it. I didn't learn how to play the *shamisen* from anyone. I just listened to people and learned by myself. In our area back in Okinawa at that time, they played mostly folk songs. Young people gathered in the fields and had fun. So from the time I was very small I practiced the songs that we sang in our groups. In Mill Camp, the young people gathered and I played the *shamisen*.

Sometimes I felt homesick at Mill Camp because I had just come from Okinawa. Although the food was good, I wasn't used to the job, so I missed Okinawa. At one time I was determined to go back since I couldn't get used to the job. But I didn't tell anyone. If I told anyone that I felt like that, then they wouldn't feel too good either.

Life in Kukaisen, Big Island

I left the Puunene area after two or three months because I felt I could do *hāpai-kō* for only a short time. It was easy to do this because I was a free immigrant. I was on my own, so even if I didn't say anything and just left, the plantation couldn't say anything.

I went to look for my aunt at Kukaisen in Amaulu on the Big Island. I think Kukaisen got its name, meaning "ninth line ship" because many of the families at Kukaisen traveled on that ship on their way to Hawaii. There were many Okinawans and some *gaijin* (non-Japanese) in Kukaisen. There were Koreans, but they lived in a camp above ours and had different kinds of jobs. Their *uke-boshi* (independent contractor-boss for sugarcane cultivation) was different too.

The houses in the camp were made of one-by-twelve boards, and we sprinkled lime over the boards. I don't know why we did that. Compared to today, the houses were worse than chicken coops. The toilets were also terrible. All of the camp people went to the same toilet. You had to wait in line, while the people sat. We didn't even have a place to wash clothes. We went to the river for that. After some years, though, because of the sanitation problems, they built one toilet per two households, or something like that. Those toilets were the flushing type. They also built us separate laundry facilities. The government wouldn't allow the old sanitary conditions.

Anyway, there was an *uke-boshi* there who got jobs from a plantation, and I went to ask for a job. I was given a *bangō* (employee identification number) and I worked for him. The *uke-boshi* was from Okinawa, so we were all Okinawans. He had workmen under him. He contracted with the plantation the price per ton of cut cane. So, he had his men work for him, and at the end of the month if you cut three or four tons a day, and if you worked for 10 days, you would be paid accordingly. There weren't any *lunas* around, just the *uke-boshi*. There was no need for a *luna*. If you cut more you would get paid more. We were to compete with each other, so we

worked very hard. There were mainly men working in our group because it was hard work. In Hawaii, *kachi kane* (cutting cane) and *hāpai-kō* were the hardest jobs, and they were not for women. Also, women had babies, so they couldn't possibly work that much. We worked from 6:30 to about 3:30.

There weren't any stores, but there was a *kōbai* (cooperative store). This *kōbai* had been there a long time. It was a house that the plantation gave to the workers and made into a store. We called it either *kōbai*, or *kumiai*, short for *kōbai kumiai* (cooperative association for purchases). The workers gathered and elected the people who worked at the *kōbai kumiai*. We had an election and elected one boss and two clerks. These three bought things at wholesale prices, took a commission, and sold the goods cheaply to us.

I worked at the *kōbai* later. The first year I was elected clerk. The second year, I had to rest. You could not serve there every year. You had to take an inventory to determine the profit. I was chosen to be boss, the year after. I was re-elected many times.

Since I was young, it wasn't difficult to work at two jobs. There were really few things to do anyway. If we needed certain goods we wrote to the supplier and he sent them through the mail. The salesclerk wrapped the goods, and the boss kept the books. We didn't have to deliver. We were open two nights a week. People waited for those nights and came to buy. Since there were many people, we had good sales. We used to sell 30 100-pound bags of rice.

The Okinawans made the *kōbai*. We all benefitted from it. We could buy clothes at prices near wholesale, and we didn't have to pay cash. We kept a book, and we paid at the end of the month. We wrote down the customers' names and did not identify them by *bangō* like at other plantation stores.

The people got along well at Kukaisen. We were all from Okinawa. I think there were many people from Gushikawa, and some from Nakagusuku. But, most people came from Gushikawa. Some years later, around 1938, they organized *sonjinkai* (clubs based on Okinawan home villages).

We organized *seinenkai* (a young people's club). We had to have the consensus of the camp, so at the camp's general meeting, we brought up the idea of starting a *seinenkai*. We felt we had to improve the way we lived. We had to do something about it. The *seinenkai* was proposed to take a leadership role in this. If you wanted to have a public celebration, you had to report to the *seinenkai*, and state the reasons. If it had to be done, we would approve it, but the celebration had to be under \$50. That's the way we decided. Otherwise, the poor people donating funds for the celebration would suffer more. Later, as time went on, people wanted to spend more money.

Tenchōsetsu (Emperor's birthday) and New Year's were the two big celebrations we had. During *Tenchōsetsu* there was a big area by the camp and we would build a big gate. We built it in one day. It was big, it was just like a *torii* (a Shinto shrine archway) and each family made special foods and

celebrated. Sometimes we had *sumō* (wrestling) at *Tenchōsetsu*. I heard that earlier it was very popular, but it was not that popular when I came. The young people didn't participate in wrestling too much.

For New Year's, we just had special foods to celebrate. The good foods back then, compared to today, weren't as elaborate. But the women made all kinds of food, mainly with *tōfu*, (bean curd) and pork, of course. All the Okinawans liked pork. For every three households, they killed one pig. Three or four households would share one pig.

We had other celebrations. When you had a baby, on the day that the baby was born, you go into town, where you bought a big wooden barrel of *rakkyō* (pickled scallions) and a five gallon tin of cooking oil, and one sack of *panko* (flour). During the six days after the birth, people used to gather after work at 3:30, and we would feast on the things that we had bought. We also bought three sets of *hanafuda* (playing cards), and people would play it here and there. On the sixth day there was a big celebration for the baby. A pig was a necessity at the celebration. But, since not everyone raised pigs, we would buy one from someone who raised many and then we would kill it. We also made various feast foods and had a big celebration.

We were all young in those days, in our 20s or 30s, so every year we had children. Since there were many of us, we had sometimes two or three babies in a month. The cost of living increased along with the celebrations, so we had a hard time. But because it was the custom at the time, whether you were rich or poor, you had to give those celebrations.

We had few big religious ceremonies because we had no Buddhist priest at Kukaisen. A priest came only for funerals. For each funeral, there were about three persons in charge. They took care of everything. In those days the dead were buried. But the ceremonies were Buddhist style, mostly in the Hongwanji style. Once in a while priests came for other ceremonies, but it was rare.

We didn't have *bon* (Lantern Festival) dances at first. We started a *bon* dance in our *seinenkai* later on. There was a coronation of the new emperor and that's how it started. For that celebration, we decided to put on some plays. Since so many of us wanted to be in the plays, we decided that all those 25 and younger should put on *Naichi* Japanese plays. The older ones should put on Okinawan plays. Our plays had a high reputation and were known throughout the Big Island. First we were scheduled to perform for two nights, but since so many people came to see us, we performed for two more nights. The *seinenkai* made money for its fund. After I moved to Kaumana, there were two more series of plays. One for the tenth anniversary of the *seinenkai*, and one on another occasion.

Farming and War in Kaumana

I left Kukaisen after about 10 years, then I went to Kaumana. I left because I wanted to make money as soon as possible, so I could go back to Okinawa. At Kukaisen I didn't make much money cutting cane. For eating I didn't have any trouble, but I couldn't save any money, so I went to Kau-

mana thinking I could save more money there. There was an opportunity in Kaumana. There was a man named Nakagawa who had already started a chicken business, and I bought it to take over. I had two incubators, so I hatched a lot of eggs all the time; the eggs were warmed using kerosene. At that time I think I had 1,000 chickens if I include the small ones. The business was average sized or smaller. Other people had bigger businesses. But I failed in the chicken business because the chicken feed was expensive and the money I could get for the chickens was low. I didn't make money at all. I quit the business.

I also was in the vegetable business, growing mainly *makina* (Chinese cabbage). I also grew cabbage, cucumbers and things like that. I would go to the markets and I would make a contract with the markets. I would sell my vegetables at 2 cents a pound. My farm was about six acres and when I was doing well, I sold my vegetables at a good price. A big *makina* would weigh as much as five pounds. The vegetable business was like gambling. If you grew a lot, the price would come down, and if you grew just a little, the price would go up.

My wife's little sister and brother worked with us and at one time, they lived with us. In the beginning my father was also living and working with us. Later on he went back to Okinawa. I sent him. He simply wanted to go back. He was about sixty years old then. He had many children in Okinawa. I felt it was better for him to go back than to stay here in Hawaii. When the rains came I didn't make too much money on vegetables. So I stopped raising vegetables and instead I grew cane. You have a lot of free time, so you can raise pigs too. But I made the most money growing cane because the price was set.

While I was in Kaumana, there was a time of depression. I couldn't live on what I made, so I had to look for other jobs too. There was a government job available to help out the unemployed. They were building a street right in the back of us, and I went to apply for the job. I worked for them for several months. Then I didn't have to worry about eating because the monthly wage was good compared to the plantation. I think it was thirty seven and a half cents per hour, and over two dollars a day.

Because of World War II we had to leave Kaumana. The military took all the area around my land. They had an ammunition storage dump over there. They always had guards walking back and forth. That was a dangerous area, so we had to move back to Kukaisen. The government compensated me for that. I had no bad feelings towards the government when I was forced to leave. Since there was a war between the two countries, I felt that it couldn't be helped. No matter what you do, you can't change that kind of situation, no matter how hard you try.

Before I moved back to Kukaisen, there were several incidents which happened at Kaumana because of the war. When Bataan fell in the Philippines people came to warn us that the Filipinos were going to come and make trouble, so we should hide and take caution. We were scared and we gathered together in one place. I think the leader of the Filipinos came from

Mountain View. We three families were hiding all in one place because we were scared. There was that kind of incident.

After the war started there were blackouts but no one came to check on us. But there was an incident which made me decide to move. There was an ammunition dump by us, and the guards were always walking back and forth on our street. Because of that, one night, our dog barked a lot. I wanted to stop him from barking, so I went out. It was dark and they saw me wearing a white *yukata* (a cotton robe-like garment). Five or six of them started shooting. They said, "There's a spy in your house, bring him out." My son said it must be my father that you saw, but they said no it was a spy. They said come out with your hands up, so I did. They really thought we were hiding a spy. After that I felt I couldn't live there much longer. It was too dangerous. Interesting things sure happened then.

Going back to Kukaisen after ten years at Kaumana wasn't much of a change for me. I had an uncle there and I used to go back and forth to Kukaisen almost every week anyway. I didn't really notice the differences. It was as if I had been still living with them at Kukaisen. There were few changes. While I was in Kaumana, they had started a Japanese-language school at Kukaisen. That was probably the only change. Otherwise there wasn't anything really different.

At Kukaisen, I worked *kachi kane* and *hō hana*. Later, I quit *kachi kane* and went into trial cane. When you do trial cane you check the seeds to see which ones are good. We looked into how much sugar a particular type of cane would produce. There was a boss there, and I would report the results. We got up around 4:30 in the morning and my wife did the cooking and I fed the pigs. I lit the gas lamp and cleaned the pens. By the time I got home, my wife had prepared breakfast, and then I went to work for the plantation. After I came home I tended my own cane and fed my pigs. I raised about 50 pigs and I had about 20 acres of cane field. The plantation sold the land that they couldn't cultivate to people who were interested in buying it. My land was near a river. That's the way we worked. Now when I recall those times, I see that we worked really hard. That's why I could do all those things and put two of my children through college.

The wage I received from the plantation was set. A dollar and twenty five cents a day. But it was raised gradually afterwards and although the profit from raising pigs and my own cane wasn't much, I made as much as I worked. It was better than nothing. I had children, and I needed money for their education. We couldn't spend frivolously.

Socially, there was nothing special to talk about since it was during the war. We gathered and played *hanafuda*. I didn't really like that game so I raised flowers and plants, anthuriums and things like that. Some people asked me why I raised flowers, because flowers were only for funerals, but I liked flowers. It was my hobby, orchids and other things. I like it to this day, so I still raise flowers.

And there were no *sumō* meets during the war. When a young person came from another place, we would see how strong he was by having him wrestle with another youngster, but that was about it. And there were no

Tenchōsetsu celebrations. It was natural that we didn't have any of those, because back then we separated into *kachi-gumi* or *make-gumi*, groups which insisted that Japan was winning the war or losing it. There were some fights over who was winning the war, not many in Kukaisen, but many at Kaumana. If you said that Japan was losing, then people would harass you. I liked Japan, so I wanted her to win. If I had said that Japan would lose, then people would do nasty things to me. I wasn't in any organized *kachi-gumi*, but I felt the same way. There were no associations of *kachi-gumi* or *make-gumi* in Kukaisen but I know that other camps had them.

I didn't send money to Okinawa anymore, but on some occasions after the war my brothers and sisters would write to me saying that they needed money. Then, I would send money. Also when there were people going to Okinawa I would ask them to take second-hand clothes with them. I also became involved in the Okinawa relief movement. In the beginning we gathered in Hilo. I was chosen to go as a representative from Kukaisen. We decided to gather old clothes and send them to Okinawa.

The Whole Camp Moves to Wainaku

In 1957 I moved from Kukaisen to Wainaku. The plantation made us move, because our place was far from things. Now I feel that it was good that we moved, because Kukaisen is in the mountains and the roads were always bad. Down here we have good roads. At one time, we thought that it was better in Kukaisen, but now it is different. This house that I'm living in is the same one that I was living in, in Kukaisen. It's not too different. We just moved it.

In Wainaku, there were only a few people at the camp. There were only 57 people or so who came to Wainaku. From Okinawa, I think there were six or seven households who moved from Kukaisen. So the Okinawan people mixed with the Japanese and Filipinos. I have never been looked down upon. Because of the place where I worked was mostly Okinawans, I didn't have any exposure to the Japanese. Since there weren't many Japanese they could not feel superior. I never really thought about it. There were many Filipinos. The Filipinos were mainly workmen. Young Japanese men didn't like the work in the mountains so they went to Honolulu. There were few *ni-sei* people working in the camp. Unless the Filipinos were brought in, the jobs wouldn't get done. That's how the Filipinos came here.

Anyway I worked trial cane. I was doing the same job as before. It was easy. I had two *makule* (old men) working for me. I did that until I retired in 1964. This house and the land belong to me. I bought it when I was working. I paid it off while I was still working. I had no debts when I retired. I was able to do this because I worked hard and partly because of the formation of the ILWU (International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union). In the beginning the people working in the mountains couldn't join, but later we could, so I did. I felt the laborers needed the union. The laborers never had any rights. We had to do what the plantations wanted us to do. After the union came about, the laborers had rights. So the thing that the laborers needed most was the union. That's how I feel. There was no

house that had a washing machine before. After the labor union, they raised our wages, so we became better off. We could buy washing machines, ice boxes, and cars. We could send our children to school. Without the union we could never have done anything like that.

But changes didn't come easily. We had to go on strike a few times, two . . . no, three times. The first one was about 1946 and we had another one in two years. When the union wanted a raise the management said no, and so there was a strike. The last one [in 1958] was long. They wouldn't raise the wages. If you were a union member, you couldn't go to work. Finally, we went back to work. We had leaders and we had no choice but to obey the leader. We didn't have to worry about food because we had community cafeteria for *kaukau* (food) among the strikers. The ones with many children, however, had a hard time, but we didn't. We could keep our car.

When I look back I am happy that I was part of that labor organization. But I am also happy that I was part of all these social organizations. The *seinenkai* which made life easier in the plantations. The *kenjinkai* (prefecture club) whose main job was to have a welcoming gathering for VIPs from Okinawa. Sometimes the *kenjinkai* helped with funerals. We also had picnics. And lastly the Gushikawa Sonjinkai which was formed in 1938 and which still exists today. It was formed to promote mutual understanding and fellowship. Without it we wouldn't know who lives where, and so on. That's how it's been. We didn't function for a year or two during World War II, but after that we reopened. When it was formed it was really small, only two people were in it from Kukaisen and Kaumana. But the second time it opened, it included all the Gushikawa people on Hawaii. Today there are about 40 members, each person paying a fee. We have *nisei* (second generation Japanese-Americans), but very few *sansei* (third generation Japanese-Americans). Now days, *nisei* take the leadership positions because there are only a few *issei* (immigrant) people left. I feel we need the sonjinkai because without the association, it's difficult to find out about Okinawa. I hope that the young people are active in such organizations. They wouldn't be able to learn what the homeland is like, if it wasn't for the organizations.

But I don't think the Hilo *nisei* and *sansei* are interested in *kenjinkai* because there is no need for it. In *kenjinkai*, there are older people and not too much is done. There is also Hui Okinawa, a big club for Okinawans, so there is no real need for *kenjinkai* today. If I was to be here for a long time, I might suggest dissolving the *kenjinkai*, but I'm not going to be here much longer, since I am moving to Honolulu.

Looking Backwards

I feel some of the Okinawans in Hilo have done well for themselves. There are three *issei* doctors, Uezu, Yamanuha and Matayoshi. Then there are the *nisei*. The one who did the best is Mayor Herbert Matayoshi, and there's Representative Yoshito Takamine, and Councilman Steve Yamashiro. Those are the politicians. There are also many businessmen. The one that was most successful was Food Fair's Mr. Kaneshiro. Also Mr. Kuwaye in the trucking business. Okinawans have been successful in business.

I'm glad that I came to Hawaii. The standard of living here is higher than in Japan. I was able to raise a family. I got married to my wife, Ushi, in 1923. We were destined to get married. My father arranged the marriage. Since he himself was leading a lonesome life, he found a wife for me. There was no marriage ceremony. At that time if two people agreed to get married, that was it. Friends gathered and celebrated and that was about it. That's how it was. Nothing much. My wife worked in the fields. After she had children, she took care of them. When she could, she would help because we raised our own cane. But, she had children year after year, so she couldn't help too much.

Compared to now, the living was very plain for the children. I felt sorry for them, because there were so many children who were malnourished. We had to take them to hospitals often. Since the foods were very plain and poor, the children would catch colds very easily. The situation was terrible. Each family was more or less like that. But we didn't take them to the plantation hospital. Everybody talked badly about the doctor there. We called him a "vet." Really he was a vet. No one went to see him. We went to see other doctors. First we went to Yamanuha, and then Uezu, and then to Matayoshi. We mostly went to Dr. Matayoshi.

As for the children's education, since I myself didn't have much education, I thought that they should be well-educated to become full-fledged persons. Four of them went to college. My second son was a real hardhead, and so didn't go farther than high school. My first son went to college on his own, but the other three I paid for. I told my sons, if you don't go to college, you can only become a farmer. If you have an education, you get paid more for what you do. If you have money you can spend it. An education you can't sell, and no one can buy it from you. Education is something to be treasured. I used to say that many times. I encouraged my sons to go as far as they could in their education.

I tried to send them to Japanese-language school too. My first and second sons went, but the war started so my third and fourth and fifth sons didn't go. We spoke Japanese at home, so they understood Japanese very well. But I didn't teach them Okinawan culture. Back then, I wasn't interested in things so I wasn't knowledgeable enough. And although I enjoy playing the *shamisen* I didn't teach them to play it because it's up to one's personal tastes. The way of thinking is different between the children and myself. You can't force them to play. If they liked to play, I would be grateful, but I wouldn't force it on them.

Since I am an old man now I don't have too many hopes for the future, but I hope my children live peacefully and happily. As far as my wife and I are concerned, we are over 80 and hope to enjoy each day of our lives.

Soon I will leave Wainaku to live in Honolulu. I have many relatives there and I go there two or three times a year, so even though it's a new place I know it pretty well. Since none of my children live here on Hawaii, we feel lonely. If we go there we wouldn't feel this way. We are looking forward to spending the rest of our lives there.

UCHINANCHU

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UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I AT MĀNOA

HAWAI'I UNITED OKINAWA ASSOCIATION



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