BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Raku (Saka) Morimoto, 93, retired Immigration Bureau interpreter

Raku (Saka) Morimoto, the youngest of four children, was born in Spreckelsville, Maui, on March 20, 1890. Her parents, Shoshichi and Chika Saka, were among the first contract-labor immigrants who arrived from Japan in 1885.

Her father, originally a copper and brass smith, labored on the sugar plantations of Kekaha, Kauai and Spreckelsville, Maui. He subsequently moved his family to Kula and entered farming.

At Kula, Raku attended one of Hawaii's earliest Japanese-language schools. Later, at the age of ten, she began her English-language studies at Kealahou School.

Later, she boarded at the Susannah Wesley Home in Honolulu and attended Kaahumanu School. In Honolulu, she became an active member of the River Street Methodist Church and subsequently, married the Reverend Jitsuzo Morimoto.

For a while, Raku and her husband lived in Puukolii, Maui, where the Reverend Morimoto ministered to his congregation's needs. After his untimely death in 1919, Raku returned to Honolulu.

In Honolulu, Raku raised her three children and worked for more than twenty years as an interpreter for the Immigration Bureau.
Tape No. 10-5-1-83

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Raku (Saka) Morimoto (RM)

June 9, 1983

Honolulu, Oahu

BY: Michiko Kodama (MK)

MK: This is an interview with Mrs. Raku (Saka) Morimoto at her home in Honolulu, Hawaii on June 9, 1983.

Okay, Mrs. Morimoto can you tell me when and where you were born.

RM: I was born in Spreckelsville, Maui, March 20, 1890.

MK: And at that time, how many children did your parents have?

RM: My parents had four children, two boys and two girls.

MK: And what number child were you?

RM: I'm the last one. (Laughs)

MK: So, the youngest.

RM: Yes, the youngest.

MK: Can you tell me what you remember about your father's background?

RM: Yes. This is the way I understood. My father was a copper and brass smith in Yokohama. And he was quite a drinker. [But] he was a good worker and his boss let him make a six-feet high flower vase and ten-feet high garden lamp to send to Paris for exhibition. So he made that—those two. And then he told me he worked right along with best Japanese artist. He painted pictures and then they have to bake them. They call them shichihōyaki, and then send to France and seems to me it was pretty good. And the boss was very much pleased with his work. He got some bonus. (Laughs) So that's what he told me.
But you see his friends were all—-he drinks a lot and then his friends are all drinking friends. They always think that he gets more money, let him treat them, you see. So my mother told me they call him to come for certain meetings. That was only to get him out from his house you know. (laughs) Then the meeting was not going on, but you see they call him that way and then they start to drink. After that, they said, "Let's go to teahouse and have more drinks." Then when they arrive in teahouse, they get the geisha girls and that means lots of money to spend. They make my father spend all that money. And that happens often and sometimes it ends in a fight.

My mother didn't know where the money was going. Because sometimes when he [i.e., RM's father] has money, he was going to buy material, you see. So he had the money and then his drinking friends saw him going with the money. They call him in and then instead of going to buy material, he goes with the drinking friends to the teahouse—-I mean, what do you call—-not teahouse but (laughs) drinking place. Then he spend all the money.

So it seems to me my mother had a hard time. [She] told him not to go, because the meeting was not going on but they always tell him, "Important meeting going on, so you better come." It happens that his boss lost big money on stock and bonds. So he was not able to pay my father regularly, you know, little-by-little. Then my mother said, "I have to let go of the maid and try to economize," whatever my father gives her you see. But my father's trying to get rid of that bad habit, but you know, that habit, seems to me, stayed with him and seems to me, he couldn't get rid of it. So my mother had a very hard time.

Around that time, you see, people start to talk about Hawaii. And the one thing impressed her was this: Hawaii is a very good place, and there's not a drop of liquor, not a dribble or drop of liquor.

So my mother said, "Let's go to Hawaii."

My father said, "Well, I understand that you have to work as a farmer when you go to Hawaii, but we're not farmers, so there's no sense of we going over there, because we cannot do a farm work."

But my mother said, "No, let's go, let's try and go." Well, it seems to me she spent quite a time persuading him to come.
Finally he said, "Well, okay, let's go." So you see, they came. My father's name is Shosichi, Shosichi Saka. My mother's name is Chika. And my two brothers, Yoshitaro and Eizo came along with them, you see. I understand they were allowed to bring only two children at that time. So they came and then they arrived in Hawaii, February 8, 1885 on City of Tokyo.

But my mother was so seasick. I don't know exactly how long it took from Yokohama to Honolulu, but she said during that time, she said she never ate anything, only water. So seasick. Then she heard that some of these people who saw her in that condition was talking about her: "Ano Yokohama no okami-san wa Hawaii e ikumade totemo motanai daro." That means she won't last until she arrives in Honolulu, see.

But somehow she was alive and she said when she landed here, two men has to carry her into what they call senningoya. That means a house full of 1,000 people so must be great big house on Sand Island. And she said two men had to carry her and took her into the house.

I don't know exactly how long they were there, but while she was there she looked around and saw the place was so muddy, and grass houses here and there. Then saw fat dark-colored Hawaiian woman, bare-footed Hawaiian woman was walking around the place and she said she couldn't stop crying. She thought it was much better than that. (Laughs)

So I don't know exactly how long they kept them there, but she said King Kalakaua was very good, very kind to them. She said to the children, he used to send candies and fruits. He came to see the immigrants, you see. He said, "Let them form double line, two line." And he walked between them and shook hands, you know stretching his both hands and shook hands with them.

So my father used to say, "I'm very proud of two things."

And I said, "What are they?"

He said, "I worked with the best artist in Japan when I was in Japan, and then I came to Hawaii and I shook hand with the King Kalakaua." (Laughs) He said, "I'm proud of that."

Then they were sent to, I don't know exactly how many of them, were sent to Kekaha, Kauai. But you know,
they were all sent to various islands, you see. My parents were sent to Kekaha, Kauai and they worked there for three years.

But my father used to tell me, "You know, we Japanese talked to ourselves saying how lucky we are, because our hair is short." But you know, Chinese they used to have a--what you call--queue, long hair. They wind them like this [around their head] and just stick it in. But when they move around, it comes out. Then you see those luna, the overseers. When he's not pleased with their work, he just get hold of the hair, wind it around his wrist, I mean the palm, and just drag them here and there. And she [i.e., RM's father] said, "Oh it's so pitiful," to see the Chinese put the palm together and almost crying and asking them to let them go. But he said, "We Japanese are lucky because our hair is short." (Laughs)

But their treatment were terrible you know. They were just contract labor by name but they are actually like slaves. So the Japanese get together and said, "Let's write to the Japanese Consul in Honolulu and tell him to come over and see what he can do for us." It's terrible. So they wrote the Japanese Consul Jiro Nakamura, asking him to come. But no, no matter how many times they wrote, he didn't come. So they said, "Well we have to write the petition and let somebody else take the petition to the Japanese Consul in Honolulu." Then bring him along when he comes back. But the men can't stay away from work. They were getting only nine dollars a month, working ten hours a day. And if they going to stay away from work, they have to pay $6.00 or $6.50 fine. So they talk about it, and said, "Well, we can send the women to Honolulu for Consul to come over."

But it happens that they chose my mother, you see, to come over. So my mother doesn't know anybody in Honolulu. She was in that senningoya, big house in Sand Island when she arrived you see. I don't know, [but] seems to me, she was pretty brave in coming over here, knows nobody, you see. She was told by these Japanese people over there [i.e., Kauai] that don't come back without Consul. So she went--brought the petition and went to Consul but the Consul didn't move right away. So she had to wait and so she had to find a house. And it happens, I don't know how, she met this man, Mr. Kintaro Ozawa, who came here gannen, 1868. He was a cook for a white family. My mother said, "Taihen osewa ni narimashita." That means he was very kind to her. [He] found a house for her to stay.
I don't know how long she stayed in Honolulu, but she stayed there. Probably she went to Consul so often to tell him to hurry up and go, see. Finally Consul went and, of course, my mother went along, went back with him. Consul heard the complaints from the Japanese and instead of making things smooth, he told the Japanese "Now you people have a house free, water free, wood free." What are you kicking about?" So he didn't do any help at all.

So the Japanese [at Kekaha] were very angry and said, "Well, Japanese come and [the Japanese government] send him to Hawaii to protect us, but what does he do? He hasn't done anything for us. We were treated like slaves, but he didn't do anything."

And one of them was so angry, he said, "If I kill anybody, I know I have to die, so I'm going to give my life and I'm going to kill that Consul." He said, "If that Consulquit the work and somebody else comes along and takes his place, then that second Consul follows the footsteps of this one, we get no help at all. So for that matter I'm going to kill him."

And so he knew Consul was going from one plantation to the other plantation camp and he has to pass along a place, you see to reach there. So he was hiding. Then when the Consul passed on the buggy, he just jumped from the back of the bush and hold on to the horse bridle. But the horse was so frightened didn't expect anybody would jump out from the bush and hold the bridle. So the horse jump up, and the bridle gave way. So that's the reason the Consul was safe, because he whipped the horse, and let the horse run as fast as he could.

But my father said the man who said he's going to kill the Consul was a big man. My father said, he used to miyazumo, so I guess he was a wrestler. I think in a temple or omatsuri, I guess. I didn't ask him what he was doing. But anyway, he was "miyazumo o totta hito da" (A person who wrestled at a temple). And he was a very big man. And Consul Nakamura was a small man. So if that big man got hold of him, he had no chance. But the good thing, the bridle gave way so he escaped. So that was the story. (Laughs)

MK: I was just wondering, since your father was a coppersmith and brass smith in Japan and your mother too had never done any farm work, how did they go pass the recruiters and all the officials and come to Hawaii?
Um, I don't know, can't tell. At that time, lots of people came over who were not farmers, you know. But I'm sure my parents had a hard time, because they never did farm work. So anyway, they work three years in Kekaha, Kauai. And then, around that time, rumors going around saying that Mr. [Claus] Spreckels who owns Spreckelsville is a man that treat the Japanese much better than other plantation managers. So it seems to me lots of Japanese went to Spreckelsville. I think my father was no exception. (Laughs) So that's where I was born.

What was your father doing in Spreckelsville?

Oh, he said when I was born he was cleaning the train, plantation train. So he did some cane field work, I guess; but later on, I think he changed his job.

Did your mother at any time work in Kekaha or in Spreckelsville?

No, I don't know. She didn't say, but I suppose she did work at Kekaha, because the way I understood was woman [paid] so much and the man so much, you see, the contract paper says. But she didn't tell me anything about her work, so I don't know.

So they were in Spreckelsville about four years, I guess. I was born there and I think when I was about four years old, they moved to Haleakala Ranch, Kula. At that time, they leased the land from Haleakala Ranch and raised corn for the cows and horses. Food for cows and horses, pigs and chickens, you see, all that, they used corn. That's where I lived till I was fourteen years old.

I was wondering, what kind of people lived in that same area of Kula that you lived in?

We have Japanese, but oh, about ten, fifteen people in so many acres for one family. And Chinese and Portuguese too, you know, all around.

Then when I was four or five or six years old, I attended Japanese [-language] school there. Mr. Tamaki Gomi is the teacher. And there was a Mr. Seiji Fukuda who owns the store. He was a policeman and at the same time he was in charge of the Japanese division. I think he got Mr. Gomi who was on his way to Mainland. He had to stop over to Honolulu and he was going to Mainland to study. But seems Mr. Fukuda talk it into
him and then [he] come over to Kula to be a Japanese [-language] school teacher.

I remember he was a young man. I often thought afterwards, you know after I grew up, how a young man came to that kind of place, no electrical lights. And the farms, you see the houses are so far apart. Whenever you go, you have to ride on a horse. He was a young man, but I was wondering (laughs) how he happened to come.

But he said in a letter, after he went to Japan, he said he enjoyed teaching the children in Kula, what he called, "terakoya shiki," eh. That means like Japan, olden time in Japan. The Japanese priests used to teach neighbors' children, yeah, well, that's about the same style. But, of course, we didn't squat on the floor (laughs) to learn. He had about fifteen, sometimes twenty children, so many different--of course we don't have "ichinensei, ninensei, and sannensei" (first grade, second grade, and third grade). They didn't call it that way. So the teacher was very busy because so many classes, you see. You saw that picture [i.e., Hawaii Herald photo of Kula Japanese-Language School class]?

MK: Uh huh [Yes]. I saw the picture and you were right next to Gorni-sensei. Could you describe what that Kula Japanese-language School looked like?

RM: Yes. Mr. Gomi is good in Japanese and English. Of course we didn't know that. We were too young to know that, you know. But he felt so sorry because we were so far away from English school [i.e., public school]. So I went to English school when I was ten years old, you see. We have to go pass such a big pasture, one pasture and then a big gulch and then again, one pasture and then another big gulch to go to school. Start about as early as six o'clock and arrive about half past eight or nine o'clock. So I didn't go until I was ten. And lot of children never went to English school. Of course, a truant officer didn't come around at that time. When I was ten, I think truant officer came around because so many big boys and girls didn't go to school, you see.

So Mr. Gomi felt so sorry for the children. He taught the Japanese lesson. At the same time, he had a chart. Chart is ABC, alphabet. One sheet, the chart is nothing but the alphabet. Well, we all learned; we all learned the same thing. And then he turned the chart the next week. Then the second chart has a picture of
a dog and they'd say dog underneath. Picture of the cat, cat underneath, and so on. So that's how we learned. That was a great help, when we went to grammar school. If I'm ten years old and I don't see, know ABC, we have to start from ABC. That's going to be terrible isn't it? But we knew some English, so it was a great help.

MK: What else did you learn at the Kula Japanese school?

RM: Well, he had a book, we didn't have a book. That's what I remember. I think we had the tokuhon. That's all, because he has so many classes, so you see, after we went to English school and we rush back, and right away we start learning Japanese, you see. So he always write on the blackboard. If I'm now highest class, well, he writes new words and pronunciation and then meaning along side of it. Then I have to copy that. Then I have to open the tokuhon and then I study, look at my notebook, which I copied from the blackboard. Then I read, while he is teaching other classes. By the time he comes around, then I read maybe twice or three times so I know, see. Then he makes us read and then if we read it right and he ask the meaning and all that, then we answer them okay, then that's pau. (Laughs)

MK: So in those days, how long was Japanese school? How many hours?

RM: Well, we went there about three o'clock and we learn till about five o'clock, five-thirty. And he used to teach Japanese times table [i.e., multiplication table] too. And that was a great help. You know English times table is too slow. Like you know, two times two are four, two times three are six. That was too slow. But [in] Japanese ni ni ga shi, ni san ga roku, it's very easy. So that was a great help, you know, when we went to our English school.

MK: What was the name of the English school you attended?

RM: Kealahou. Now its name changed. Now days, the school bus come around and if you live beyond three miles from school, they give a free ride to the school. But at our time, you know in the morning, when we ready to go, all barefooted, grass are all white with frost. And so, we have a blister (laughs) from the cold, eh. So when we go get in the hot bath, does it hurt! (Laughs)

MK: Gee, I was wondering, what were the teachers like at the English school?
RM: Oh, English school. English school is well, all done. We had three teachers and principal teaches the highest class. His wife taught first grade, and the other teacher taught the other classes. Only the first class taught by the principal's wife was the only one class taught by one teacher. But the others hold two, three classes, you know. So about the same. (Laughs) Of course the time is longer so we learn more.

MK: What kinds of things did you learn at the English school?

RM: Oh, reading, writing and arithmetic. I was pretty good with arithmetic, it seem to me. My classmate--seat mate and I used to go to the other higher class when arithmetic time came. I don't know how long I spent, but every now and then when arithmetic class comes around, she say, "You two go in the other class." (Laughs)

MK: In those days, what kind of classmates did you have in your English class?

RM: Oh, we had the Japanese, Portuguese, few Hawaiians, but more Portuguese I think.

MK: And when you folks weren't studying in the classes, what did you do for play?

RM: Oh, we--I don't remember what I did.

MK: Were there any games that you played with the other children?

RM: No, no we just get--you know how girls are, get together and talk. I don't remember exactly what we did for play.

MK: You know, in those days in Kula, what were the holidays that were celebrated in that area?

RM: Oh, they celebrate, of course among the Japanese Tenchō-setsu, the Emperor's birthday. But Christmas--Mr. Gomi is a Christian, and Mr. Fukuda was a Christian too so for that reason, Christmas is the biggest holiday. And we used to have a long table under the Eucalyptus tree, Eucalyptus trees all surrounded our school yard. Then I think Haleakala Ranch boss give, cow and somebody donate pigs, somebody donate two bags of peanuts, or something like that. And then they have a regular luau. They dig up the ground, eh. (Laughs) Laualau, make Laualau. They all
come around. And before that you see, one day all the farmers come around and clean the place for the holiday. Then we have a long table.

MK: You mentioned that there were Portuguese children in the school. What were the relationships between say the Portuguese and the Japanese in that area?

RM: Well, it seems to me we have two Portuguese boys, we call one of them Joe. I don't know what the name of the other one, but they're two brothers you know came to Japanese school. And I always wonder, at that time I didn't, but later on, what did they learn in Japanese school.

(Laughter)

But it seems to me, I wonder if they went to English school. I don't think they went to English school. So instead of going to English school, they came to Japanese school, I think.

MK: You know you mentioned earlier that there was no electricity in Kula. How about other facilities like transportation. What kind of transportation was there in Kula?

RM: Horseback. You go to Kahului, you go to Wailuku, all horseback, and the neighbors too. I used to go to a store, Mr. Fukuda's store on horseback. Sometime my father would put the saddle on the horse back for me. I was about twelve years old. But sometimes when he's busy he says, "Well, you put the saddle on the horse back, and go." So I have to put on the box. I have to step on the box and horse is so tall, eh, put the saddle on. That's not very hard, but you have to make the belt tight. Otherwise in a hilly place I have to go down, so that's the hardest part. So when I go to store, you know I go down like that in a hilly place, the saddle moves toward the horse's neck. (Laughs)

So when I go to the store, the man who works in the store says, "Well, what's the matter with your saddle?"

I said, "I did my best to make the belt tight but, that was the best I did it." But you see, I couldn't do it so tight, so it came way down, so the man in the store just make it right for me so when I go home, it won't go backwards.
(Laughter)

So my father owned three horses. The farmers, they all have the horses, you see.

MK: You mentioned Fukuda store. Were there other stores in that area?

RM: No, no, just one store. So we didn't need the money. Lots of times, you bring maybe ten dozen eggs, something like that, and then Mr. Fukuda gives us two small, what they call techō, the book. One--how much we put in; one--how much we bought. So ten dozen eggs, maybe twenty-five cents a dozen he figure out. And then if we buy sugar, rice or something, he adds, he shows in other book, how much we bought. The whole year we didn't pay anything. The end of the year, then Mr. Fukuda will tell them bring the book, "You bring the book." So we would bring the book. Then he would add them all up and then we owe so much. Mr. Fukuda used to get chickens and eggs and he used to send them to Honolulu, you see. Not only that, vegetables too. We didn't use the money, I didn't get the money. (Laughs) I don't remember spending money.

So I was there till I was fourteen years old. Then my parents came to Honolulu. Of course my sister and my brother was already in Honolulu.

MK: How come?

RM: They [i.e., RM's brother and sister] wanted to come to Honolulu, so he [i.e., RM's brother] had a friend who came to Maui. Mr. Fukuda's store to work. And then he came back to Honolulu, so I suppose my brother get friendly with him and maybe they thought it's better for him to come to Honolulu, so he came and my sister came too, through Mr. Gomi. I think she came to work in--Susannah Wesley Home, part-time worker. Then she studied. Of course she didn't go to English school. But superintendent over there used to teach English at home and then she went to Japanese [-language] school on Nuuanu Street. So they were here about a year before we came. So my parents came over with me.

Susannah Wesley Home, the way I understand was founded by a Japanese women's [club], Fujinkai of River Street Methodist Church. And they said that's for the girls only, yeah, Susannah Wesley Home. They said we help poor people. Some of them, maybe girls don't have mother or father and have a hard time. This is not
money making purpose, you know, to help them, so it seems to me that was what Fujinkai the one that founded the Susannah Wesley Home [was doing]. Of course, Board of Mission help too. And paid the superintendent wages and all that. But the superintendent used to come to River Street Church and help teach English night school and Sunday school and all the church work. And then ladies of the town, like Dr. Hasegawa's wife and Mrs. Soga, the Hawaii Times', Mr. Soga's former wife, and other ladies came and learned English and piano lessons and all that. That's where my sister worked when she came over---I mean when she was in Honolulu.

MK: What kind of work did she do at Susannah Wesley?

RM: Well, there were small children. Small children with the father, no mother. Mother died. I went there too, you see, after my sister left. There were seven or eight children. One was a motherless girl and father is a newspaper man, or something in Mainland. Then the other one was fatherless little girl, mother was working in a haole family. Live-in you see, so can't take the little girl with her. So she was there. After Mr. Fukuda sold that store to Mr. Gomi and went to Nahiku. And the school was too far and the children couldn't go to school, his [Fukuda's] three children came over [to Honolulu] and stayed. And there was about seven or eight of them. My sister would just look over, help them. Because a lot of them were about six, seven years old you see. That's what she did, part-time job. (Laughs)

MK: Oh, and that's what you did later on? Is that what you took over later on?

RM: No, I went there, regular--what they call them, boarder or guest. You know both my parents are both same age, you see. Forty years old. When my mother was forty years old I was born and the Japanese always said, olden time, fifty years the length of our life, eh. So forty years, pretty old. They call, "Toshiyorigo." Means child came when their mother is so old. So I was kind of spoiled child.

(Laughter)

So my brother was eight years older than I. When he saw me, spoiled so much, he thought it was best for me to go to that kind of place [i.e., Susannah Wesley Home]. Then, good for me.
He said, "Wagamama, eh, very selfish, so no good."

But my parents said, "No, those places are for the poor people who have to--with children--who has no father, no mother. But your sister has we to look after. Why go to a dormitory."

But my brother said, "No, I think it's better for her to go."

Then they argue, then my father said, "Well, leave it up to her. If she wants to go, let her go. It's up to her." They thought sure, that I won't go, you see.

(Laughter)

But I said, "Since Mr. Fukuda's children were there, I'll go." That was so unexpected for my parents, you know. But my father can't back out since he said, "Well leave it up to her."

"Okay," he said. "Now I was not the one that trying to send her over there." He told my brother, "You were the one persuade us to let her go. So we're not going to pay a cent."

And my brother said, "Okay, after all I was the one told it's best for her to go over there, so I'm going to pay her board and I give her pocket money."

END OF SIDE ONE

MK: Okay, you were just saying that your brother took care of your pocket money.

RM: Yes, and paid the board. He did everything for me, so I was lucky. That place is, of course, Christian dormitory. In the morning we get together, after breakfast, and the superintendent give a morning prayer, then we fix our room and we went to school. Then come back, well we study. Saturday night, we have more time, so the superintendent will tell us a Bible story and all that. And Sunday we have to go to church. So I used to go to River Street Church, because my sister was going River Street Church when she came here. She told me to go, so I went over there. After church, I went to my home and we can't stay over night, you see. Even my parents' home, I have to go home. So I have supper, and then went home.

But after about a month or so, my mother was telling my brother, "Oh, something different."
And my brother said, "What's different?"

She said, "Now days, your sister doesn't complain about the okazu.

You know, I used to say I don't want this, I don't want that, you see, so my mother used to say, "Oh, you don't eat this, so I prepare something else for you." My brother used to see that you know.

So my mother said, "Oh, now days, she eat what she didn't eat before. Before I would give her tofu, she say she doesn't like it. Then I give something else, she doesn't like that. I have to prepare something different for her. But now she eats almost anything."

Then my brother says, "See." (Laughs)

Well, I have to eat. Girls over there eat or else I went hungry, eh. (Laughs)

My mother, "Oh, big difference."

So my brother said, "See that happens when she goes out, you know, stay with somebody. She can't be like staying at home, saying I don't like this, I don't like that. Too wagamama." (Laughs) So my brother was very good to me.

MK: At that time, where were your parents living?

RM: My parents were living in Honolulu.

MK: Were they living very far from you, from Susannah Wesley's?

RM: No, not very far. About twenty minutes' walk, or something like that. Sorry, I can't get that name, below Beretania Street.

MK: Uh, King Street?

RM: No. [It was Pauahi Street.]

MK: Where was Susannah Wesley's located at that time?

RM: Susannah Wesley Home was on School Street, School Street several houses toward town from Nuuanu Street. And of course, we moved again because the house was small, to School Street, second from the corner. Then afterwards, we moved again to S. King Street, old
Melrose Hotel. I don't think you know, but it's very near [to where] the police station [is] now located.

MK: You mentioned the River Street Church. Who was the reverend at that time?

RM: Well, it changed so much. At that time it's Mr. Motokawa, Gennosuke Motokawa.

MK: At that Church, were the ministers and services all in Japanese?

RM: Um hum, but they had a night school, English night school. Oh, there were so many, you see, at that time, those boys and girls, the parents left in Japan when they were small, came [back to Hawaii] when they were about fifteen, sixteen years old, and they can't get in regular school. So they came in the night time and learn English. Yeah, the Japanese teachers taught the lowest grade. Of course, you have to explain in Japanese, you see. But the top class, upper class were taught by English people.

MK: When you were at Susannah Wesley's, what school did you go to?

RM: I went to Royal School. And then after we moved to Melrose Hotel in S. King Street, I went to Kaahumanu School where I graduated from. (Laughs)

MK: Did you go beyond Kaahumanu School?

RM: No, that was the end. (Laughs)

MK: What did you think about your school days at Royal and Kaahumanu School?

RM: Oh, I had a hard time because I was fourteen years old, eh. So when I came from Maui, and I was big for my age, so they put me first in fourth grade, and then the fourth grade was, seems to me, full, so they pushed me to fifth grade. But you see, country school and city schools are all different, you see. Lot of things that I don't know they had been doing you know in the city school, so I have a hard time to keep up with them. (Laughs)

Then, Kaahumanu School was known as Chinese school. Like McKinley High School, they used to say Japanese school, so many Japanese students go over there. But Kaahumanu School when I went, Miss Felter is a principal. And all the teachers were women, you know.
And I understand, Miss Felter likes the Chinese very much. So, oh, so many Chinese went over there. All my classmates, Chinese. (Laughs) Chinese boys and girls.

Now, when you see a little boy about twelve, thirteen years old [and ask], what grade are you? They'll say, "Oh, I'm in the seventh grade, or sixth grade." But no, around that time, eighth grades are all men and women. Lots of them were in a country place and they didn't go to school until they were pretty old. A lot of them graduate seventeen, eighteen years old, you know in grammar school.

MK: Even the Chinese children, were they older too?

RM: Yes, I think a lot of Chinese that came from a country place, too, you see.

MK: At those schools that had Chinese and Japanese children, was there a lot of play and talking between the Chinese and Japanese children during your time?

RM: You mean play together?

MK: Right.

RM: Oh, yes, but you know, I was really shy because I was from the country. (Laughs) Hard to mingle with those city children.

MK: How about your Japanese schooling, did you continue here in Honolulu?

RM: Yeah, I went to Chuo Gakuen. It used to be Nuuanu Nihongo Gakuen, Nihonjin Shogakko. Because when I came from Maui, Japanese school principal let me read *tokuhon* and I can read and he asked me the meaning, I can tell him. But I didn't have that Japanese *fude* every day. Shuji. We didn't have time to, in the country place. So that is something new to me, you see. I see my classmates write so nicely and mine is so terrible. (Laughs) I was shame. So my writing even now, is pretty bad. I don't like to show my writing. (Laughs)

MK: How long did you attend Japanese school?

RM: Just one year.

MK: One year?

RM: Yeah.
MK: How come just one year?

RM: Well, I don't know. They put me in kōtō sannen. Or they make me read and write and I satisfy the principal, so put me in kōtō sannen and kōtō yonen, is the last eh.

When I was a little girl, I used to like to read the Japanese storybooks, you know. And Mr. Gomi used to give us, he order from Japan the storybook. And so we have nothing else, eh, in the country place. So we read. And my father used to say, "I went to school for six months, Nihon no terakoya. You went to school a long time, so you are supposed to be better than I am." (Laughs) So Mr. Fukuda's store had books, you know, those Miyamoto Musashi and all these, samurai books. So he said, "You buy some books from Mr. Fukuda's home, and come home, come back, and read to us." That's what my father said. My father lied down and I have to read. And lot of samurai language I don't even understand.

So I ask him, "I don't understand, I can read, but I don't understand what that means."

"Oh, uh," he says, "that's samurai language. That supposed to be this and that." He explained to me.

So then you see I'm interested in. So I can borrow some books from my friend and I read. And so I think my Japanese was kind of improved by reading those books, you know. So, I wish I had that shūji, what do you call, calligraphy. Are yatte tara ne, the writing is good you know. When you practice with that and then use a pencil or pen. You see, you can write nicely but without that my father used to tell me, "Omae no ji wa nani ka kaze ga fuitara korogeru yō na ji da" (Your writing is such that if a wind were to blow, the letters would fall).

(Laughter)

He said, "I only spend six months in terakoya but I can write better than you."

MK: What about your mother? Did she have some education, too?

RM: No. Japanese old woman, no, they don't have education. They always say the Japanese alphabet. "Kore to, kore ga watashi no nanae ne" (This alphabet, and this alphabet form my name). (voice fades). She says her
name is Chika, eh. "Kore ga chi, kore ga ka, kore to futatsu de watashi no namae ni naru" (This is chi, this is ka, these two spell out my name).

(Laughter)

MK: Going back to your parents, I was wondering, do you know anything about their parents, your grandparents, their background?

RM: I don't know. My father's father, my grandfather is a crystal cutter. That's what my father used to say, but I haven't heard anything about my mother's side.

MK: He came from a line of craftsmen then.

RM: Yeah, uh huh.

MK: I was wondering when your family moved to Honolulu what kind of work did your father do in Honolulu?

RM: Brass and coppersmith. That's the time he made those two [objects recently photographed by Bishop Museum personnel]. And his client is all that white people. You see brass and copper is very expensive so the Japanese people they don't buy it. At that time Japanese people as you know, they didn't mean to live in Hawaii permanently. As long as they make some money they want to go back to Japan. That's their idea, you see. That's why they don't buy anything expensive but only the white people.

There's one very rich woman in Manoa I forgot her name, she used to travel to Europe every year. She used to give my father a lot of work. She used to bring us a sample from Europe, you see, Russia, and what do you call that tea brewer--Russian people brew tea. Samovar, yeah?

She used to bring, you see, from Russia and then tell my father to change this place different way and add something else and used to tell my father, "When you finish don't let anybody see. Just wrap it up until I come and pick it up." So she brought lot, always come around and bring a catalog or a--things like that and tell my father to make them.

And there's army officer's wife I remember brought so many silvers, you know of spoons, knives and forks and asked my father if he can melt that and make a teapot--and a, fancy type of teapot you know. My father says yeah, he can do it. So he did it.
And Mr. Davies, they called him General Davies, used to be the boss of Davies. And he used to come now and then.

He said, "Oh, my friend is coming from New York pretty soon so I tell my friend to come over to see you." And then after a few weeks, four or five of them coming in you know, my father didn't like it.

He [i.e., RM's father] said, "Small workshop, you see." They think my father has a machinery to make it but regular Japanese old way, you see. He has a small place—only one chair and then he's working regular Japanese way and pounding on the brass and copper. These people think well how he makes it. They just go come and get in his workshop, about four or five of them there. [RM's father said,] "Komaru na" (What trouble).

(Laughter)

"Jamanaru ja nai ka" (They'll get in the way).

(Laughter)

They are from mostly New York. Of course, Mr. Davies brought for my father lot of things and he introduced these people to my father. They said, "Well, put your name on things that you make." So my father put his name on with a chisel. So these things last for ages you know, so I think some people in New York still have what my father made.

MK: How was his business, was it a very good business?

RM: Yeah, pretty good, because it's very expensive. When he puts in the time like that, he charges so much and they don't mind paying it.

MK: How long did he continue doing that type of work?

RM: Well, until he died. (Laughs) A year before he died he lived with me, you see. After I get married, he live alone for quite a while. But he got sick so he came, told him to come and live with us. But he doesn't want to sit still, you know. He want to keep on working. So my husband built a small house back of our house and let him do what he wants. So he was making it. Pots and pans---I mean tea pot and cream pitchers and all the things that he thinks is useful. And used to send to his friend in Honolulu. They used to auction it.
So after he died, I had to send them to my friend in Honolulu.

MK: When did your father pass away?

RM: Oh, fifty-three days before my husband passed away. That was December 30, 1918. So within two months, I lost two, my father and my husband.

MK: Must have been a hard time.

RM: Oh, yeah!

MK: Now that you mentioned your marriage, can you tell me what your husband's name was?

RM: Jitsuzo Morimoto.

MK: And what was his occupation?

RM: Minister, he was a Christian minister.

MK: And how did you meet him?

RM: Well, the regular Japanese way. (Laughs) At that time, Mr. Chuzo Nakamura was a River Street Minister. And my husband used to come from Maui at conference time every year. I saw him but I never talked to him. My husband was thirty-five [years old] I think, or somewhere around there. Single, still single. And you know how Japanese are. It best for him to get married and all that. I was going to River Street Church often. My mother died 1907 and my sister went to Taiwan, my brother went to Mainland, only within a few years, you see. So I was so lonely. Church people were so nice to me, so I used to go to church often. I used to go among the grown-up, like married women with couple children. I always go with them in Fujinkai [Women's Club] and all that. I knew Reverend Nakamura well and Reverend Nakamura knew my husband well, so they think it's best for me to marry (laughs) and for him to marry me I guess. Regular Japanese way of....

MK: So it was omiai kekkon [an arranged marriage]?

RM: Yes, I guess so. You see, but I never spoke to him and he never talked to me.

MK: Was your husband also a nisei?

RM: No, he was born in Yamaguchi-ken. And he came here. He didn't mean to stay here long, but his uncle was
here and it seems to me uncle didn't write to the family much, and the family was so worried. My husband I guess wanted to come to Hawaii to get the uncle and bring him back. So he came, but seems to me, uncle went home by himself and my husband left behind.  

(Laughs) And he attended Lahainaluna School, so he graduate from Lahainaluna School. If I'm not mistaken, he's maybe among the first that, first Japanese who graduated from Lahainaluna. I'm not quite sure, but it was around 1906, I think.

MK: That he graduated, he graduated in 1906?

RM: Yes.

MK: And when people first mentioned the possibility of you two getting married, what did you think?

RM: Well, I don't know. Like around that time all the Japanese girls are married that way. Like my sister too. Go-between think that she is good for this man and this man is good for her. Well, we feel that the Reverend Nakamura knows him well, knows me well. So I guess it's okay. That's the idea, you see. You had no choice around that time.

(Laughter)

MK: How was your wedding ceremony and your reception that time?

RM: Oh, about the same. Of course, I really don't know what to say. Pretty quiet though. You married in a church. And invite all the church members. Afterwards, we invite those close friends. That was about all, I guess.

MK: And at the time that you got married, what were you doing? You were already out of school. So what were you doing in Honolulu?

RM: I was teaching kindergarten. They put up a kindergarten, a school, Japanese school where I graduated, you know. Japanese kindergarten in the afternoon. So, the principal said, "I know you well, and I know Miss Asahina." That's Dr. Asahina's sister, who died. But if she's living, she'll be around my age or a few years younger. She and I taught kindergarten. But my father didn't like me to work out. I wanted to do some kind of work, you see, outside. Just my father and I, and not much work, you see. But, the trouble is, my father doesn't speak English and his clients are all English. Of course, the client doesn't come every
day. But now and then, come--my father can't talk English, and they can't talk Japanese. So he must have somebody who speak English. So he said, "Omae ga hatarakanakutte mo ii" (You needn't work) to me. So I wanted to teach longer as a kindergarden teacher. But my father spoke to man in charge and said "Uchi de iru kara, yame sasemasu" (I need her at home so I'm having her quit the job). (Laughs)

MK: When you were a kindergarden teacher, what kind of things did you teach to the little children?

RM: Oh, we get together and let's see now. Miss Asahina was more like a principal, and I was a helper. Let them sing and yugi, yeah. I don't know, that was all I guess. I didn't remember.

MK: At that time in your life, what did you want to be as a worker? What type of work did you want to really continue with?

RM: You know, I my brother is in the Mainland. We don't know when he's coming back. And I thought I have to live with my father. My father, of course, was working and he earn the money, so okay. But after he quit the job, no longer can work, then I have to support. So I thought I have to learn some kind of trade. But I'm no good in hand work, you know. I'm too clumsy.

(Laughter)

So I thought, maybe I'll become a nurse. So I knew a haole nurse. So I spoke to her. It wasn't so hard like now---now you have to graduate University to become a nurse. But at that time, it wasn't so hard, I guess.

She said, "Oh, you want to be a nurse, well I see about it and let you know."

So I spoke to my father, "I want to become a nurse." And he was angry!

He said, "Oh, doctor and nurse does nothing but dirty work."

(Laughter)

You know how old people are.

He said, "You know what kind of work nurse has to do? Clean the dirty people and all that. I won't allow you to become a nurse."
(Laughter)

So I have to give up, yeah!

MK: By the time you got married you were kindergarten teacher, and got married and then, where did you and your husband live at that time?

RM: Puukolii. My husband was the minister in Puukolii, Maui first and then we were married in Honolulu. And then I went over there. You see country minister has to teach Japanese [-language] school. Japanese school, and then, oh, you have to do all kinds of work because plantation is helping them too, you see. Whenever plantation need an interpreter, he has to go to the office and do the interpreting work. When plantation clerk, store's manager--I mean bookkeeper was sick and no bookkeeper, he had to go and do some bookkeeping work. All kinds, you see.

And we have to teach at night--lot of young Japanese people came around. During the day, they work in the cane field. And then in the night, they want to study English. So we taught English too, you see. So I taught the English too because beginners is okay (laughs). Upper class out here I won't be able to teach, but start from ABC. It's okay so, my class is always big because the new arrivers start from the starting.

MK: And what did you think of Puukolii? What did you think of Maui at that time when you went back?

RM: Oh, I don't know! I don't think I....I never had the plantation life, you see, until then. So I know those people work early in the morning and then....Well, they so quite different from town. Like they have movie twice a week. So those young people, they have no place to go. And so, of course, we had three nights English, but the rest of the nights are free, you see. And they have a early supper, and so those who used to come over to night school and become our friends, they all come around in the nights, you know. Oh, the house is full. (Laughs)

They bring---some of them said we going make sukiyaki tonight. One bring a piece of meat, others bring yasai and some people bring bread and some people said, this time we going to have rice.

He said to me, "You put up the rice, I'm sorry to bother poor minister, but you have to put up the rice and shōyu and sugar and we bring the other things."
So I say "Okay." In the night time I have three children, so I'm busy and let them have a bath and let them go to bed. So I said, "Well, kitchen is all for you, you people go ahead and do whatever you like." And some of them cut the vegetables, some of them cut meat and they cook, you see. And then maybe sometimes about dozen of them eat and sometimes they sing and then sometimes they tell the stories.

Seems to me different from, you know city life in that way. I like it that way, because you become more friendly, yeah? And they have no place to go. Nine o'clock the bell rings, they have to be in bed, you see. So, then can get up early in the morning to go to work. So nine o'clock [p.m.] the bell rings and off they go.

(Laughter)

MK: As a minister's wife, did many plantation people come and talk about any problems that they had, or their hardships on the plantation?

PM: No, talk to my husband, but not to me. But I found out that the [plantation] manager's wife is a caseworker, until then I didn't know that they had a more like welfare, you know. But they called them Child Welfare Association, with head office in Wailuku side. The manager's wife is caseworker for Lahaina side.

There was a woman who had three children and husband had, I think heart attack or something. Died suddenly, you see. So I thought well, at that time, not like now, you see, the wages are low. I think I either wrote or telephoned to manager's wife and explained that this woman became a widow, husband died all of a sudden and maybe needs some help. So manager's wife came and of course, the woman doesn't talk English, so I had to go with her--manager's wife. And then the manager's wife ask all kinds of questions about the financial condition. And then the association paid--send fifteen dollars check every month. Came to me and I always bring the check to her.

There was another couple. It was the same condition. So she got fifteen dollars. Then another one, she had one baby and then husband died, suddenly. And she had a ten dollars. So that kind of work, you can do in a country place. They don't speak English, so just go as an interpreter.
MK: Were there any other unusual cases or anything that came up during your stay in Maui when your husband was a minister?

RM: Oh, there are, you know the Lahaina [plantation], the Puukolii is—belong to Lahaina, but the manager stays in Lahaina and the office in Puukolii. It was run by head overseer. Lots of times, you see, they send out what they call it, contract laborers. You see, like you, your family has maybe two, three—two boys and a father and a mother and they contract so many acres, you see, so many acres. And of course while the cane is growing, I think plantation is supporting them. I think year and a half or two years, until the cane is made into sugar. Then I think the plantation pays so much. But it's a family work, you see and they call them contractor. And then every three years, the contract change, you see. So it's in English. So they all bring the papers to my husband and ask him to explain.

I remember one Okinawan man. You know lots of times, they speak Japanese but not so good. So he brought son who graduate from Japan, Chūō gakkō. Of course he's good in Japanese, as a interpreter. (Laughs) So my husband read the contract paper and explained to the son in Japanese and son in return in Okinawan language to the father, so the father totally understood. So lots of cases like that.

And my husband use to do a lot of those reporting—what they call cases, i.e., birth, marriage, death and all that. You see, in Japanese, they have to report [to] murayakuba, eh, village where they came from—office. They come and said, "Oh my father died," or something like that. Well you have to report to the Board of Health, I think, eh. And then to the Japanese Consul, that has to go to the village office. So that's plenty too.

MK: Gee, he was very busy then.

RM: Busy, yeah very busy. Because when picture bride came, he has to say that this man is good—man of good character and he has to sign his name and Japanese "no han o osu no ne" (stamp his name). And that goes to the Japanese Consul and Japanese Consul forward that to village office in Japan. Then picture bride can come.

So there are lots of times—few times we had a big laugh because there was a man who came and said that
I want to get the picture bride from Japan. And my husband said okay, you bring your passport and your koseki tohon, family record. And so he brought and that man's name is Mr. Yanai, known as Mr. Yanai by everybody. My husband look at the passport and family record there's no Yanai on that passport or family records.

So he said, "Mr. Yanai, I think you made a mistake and you brought somebody else passport and family records."

And he said, "No, I don't get hold of anybody's passport and family record."

And he said, "No more Yanai over here."

And then it came to himself, he said, "You know, I ran away from one plantation because treatment was so bad, I have to change my name or else they catch me and take me back. So I was thinking, what kind of name I have to go under hereafter." And he couldn't think of any names suitable for him but he said he was born in Yamaguchi-ken Yanai-machi.

So he said, "Well I think I'll take that name Yanai. (Laughs) Ever since [then] I was known as Yanai." And he forgot completely about the change. (Laughs) We had the case like that you know, and I had to laugh.

And [RM's husband] said, "Oh, you don't have to laugh because ever since he change his name, that was maybe twenty years or fifteen years ago, yeah. He was known by that name, you see, so he completely forgot about his name."

So he [Yanai] said, "Oh I'm so ashamed I forgot my real name." (Laughs)

MK: I heard cases like that where people did, you know, run away from the plantation.

RM: Yeah, lots of them run away and change their names. And then ever since they change the name, wherever he went he used that name. So he believe that, he forgot all about his original name. (Laughs) Well I think this will be the end for today.

MK: Okay, thank you so much.

END OF INTERVIEW
MK: This is an interview with Mrs. Raku (Saka) Morimoto at her home in Honolulu, Hawaii on June 15, 1983.

Okay, Mrs. Morimoto, you mentioned that when you were about fifteen or sixteen years old there were events or experiences that you wanted to share with us. So could I ask you to kind of talk about those experiences that you want to share with us?

RM: Yes, when I was fourteen years old I came from Maui to Honolulu. I went to Susannah Wesley Home, as I said the other day. Susannah Wesley Home, as I said, was founded by Fujinkai of River Street Methodist Church. Of course, the mission helped, too. So, while I was there, early in the morning, it was still dark, someone knocked [on] the door--our cook was a Japanese woman, you see. So she opened the door and found a young Japanese girl dressed in Japanese [clothing] was standing over there. So she ask her what's the matter. And this little girl said, "Well, let me come and shut the door, then I tell you all about myself and why I came over to this place."

So the cook opened the door, let her come in, and closed the door. Then this woman started to talk. She said she was a picture bride, just arrived from Japan. She said the go-between in Japan told her a very nice story about her groom-to-be in Hawaii. Well, usually it's the uncle or brother or somebody in Japan [who] always, you know, go between and arranged the marriage. So this man said this--I think a nephew--nephew has been in Hawaii quite a long while. Show the picture of a nephew, young man's picture. And said he [nephew] has been in Hawaii a long time, and he was liked by the boss, and he has a very nice job. He is overseer for about fifty, sixty people working in the canefield.
And nice house was given to him, so when [she] go, [she] be very comfortable.

This girl said, "I was born in a farmer's family, you know. But I didn't like the farm work, so I learn dancing and I learn shamisen and singing and all these things." She didn't care to be a farmer. But the story was so nice, and the picture was nice too, young man's picture. So she consented and came to Hawaii. But at that time, all the picture bride had to get married in immigration station before they are allowed to land. So she was married in immigration station, and her groom's home was in Aiea. So she went to Aiea and she was so surprised because that's a camp and single man's house; it's slightly bigger than a big box, you know.

(Laughter)

And then, first thing she was so surprised because her groom was such an old man. See, the picture was taken about so many years ago, you know. She said about twenty years ago the picture was taken, so the man looks very young. But no, the man was about twenty years older than she, or something like that. And she was so surprised to see the small house and everything so different than what the matchmaker said.

And then, a neighbor's wife came in and, well, they said they going put up a party, small party for her. So, they started to talk about her husband. She said, "You know, your husband owes us some money, but he doesn't pay. We have a hard time getting [it] back. So we tried to get the wife who works hard, and if both of [you] work hard then [we] hope [you] will pay us little by little. Not only us, you know. Some other people feels the same way, because he owes them money, too. So we tried to get the hard-working woman for his wife." (Laughs)

So she [picture bride] was so disappointed, you see, and didn't know what to do. But while they were eating, she sneak out from the back door. And then she didn't know where she was going. But she went out the main road. She thought, "Well, as long as I go follow the main road, maybe I'll go somewhere." When she was going on the main road, they found out that she left groom's home, so three men on the horseback came and tried to get her to come back, you see, following her. So she thought, well, she'll run away from them. So she went in the cane field. It was in the night, you know. She went in the cane field and she didn't know
where she was going, but she went up and up, up, up, up, she went. And then she went way up, pass the canefield, and stayed there under the tree for one night. And she was trying to come down the following day, but she thought, "No, I better not, because they will be looking for me." So she waited another day up in the mountain.

Then the following day, she came down early in the morning and knock at our cook's door. (Laughs) So she says she's not going back to that husband. She said old man and everything is so different. What the matchmaker said was not true. And so that was the first woman [who] came in the Susannah Wesley Home when I was there. But so many came afterwards. I have a picture there, but so many of them came. People started to call it Fujin Home [Women's Home]. (Laughs)

MK: About how many women eventually came while you were there?

RM: I think six or seven of them. Some of them, the River Street minister used to come and talk to them, you see. And some of them, well, after they think it over they went back to the husbands. But some of them didn't go back. So they stayed in Susannah Wesley Home and found a job in a Japanese family. And then [they] used to go back and forth to work, when I was there. Since they didn't speak English at all, I was the interpreter.

(Laughter)

MK: Oh, you were so young then!

RM: But you see, they just arrive from Japan. They couldn't speak bit of English, yeah, so the superintendent told me, "You better be a interpreter." He let them do some work around the house, you see. So I was the interpreter then. (laughs)

MK: Oh, so you got early practice for the job that you got later on. I was wondering, how did the picture brides know that the Susannah Wesley Home was a good place to go to?

RM: Well, this woman, she said she didn't know where she was going. But the first house she thought looks good, (laughs) she knock at the door. But others, it seems to me, had the relatives, you know. They went to their relatives, distant relatives, and then maybe the house is too small to keep her or something like that. So they brought her over.
MK: At that time, were there other services like that that could help picture brides or other Japanese women in trouble?

RM: No, so far I know, there was none. Maybe, but I don't know. And you know, Japanese contract laborers, when they came, they thought they planned that, end of three years, they would make money and go back to Japan. But that didn't come out that way, you know. Even after the contract's over, they went to various plantation to work, but still the salary wages were low. They didn't make enough money to go back to Japan. So these people get so disappointed and desperate. They didn't care very much about themselves, you know, call themself abandoned. And lots of them start to gamble. Lots of them start to drink so heavy. Trying to forget their woes, you know.

Then so many gamblers, organized gamblers in Honolulu. One--so far I heard--was one called Hinode Gumi. There's a boss and so many followers, you see. And not only they gamble, but they are more like white-slave trader. I understood the Maunakea Street was full of brothels, where they kept prostitutes. And not only keeping the prostitute there, but they are trying to get the woman and talk into them to go to Mainland, and sell them to Chinatown. So they are looking for a couple who doesn't get along good, you see. Maybe wife left the husband and staying with distant relatives, or something like that. They be friend to those type of women and talk into her and said, "Why not go to Mainland. Mainland U.S. is a big place and then you don't have to work so hard to earn the money. Easy job and you get the good money. If you have intention to go, I can arrange it for your trip." Something like that, talk into her, you see. Since this woman doesn't get along good with her husband, well, she thought might as well go.

So they arrange her trip and as soon as she arrives in San Francisco, there's a man, this gambler's accomplice, waiting for her and take her into Chinatown. And when they arrive in Chinatown there was elderly Chinese woman, dressed the Japanese woman in Chinese dress and fix the hair like Chinese woman's hair. So when Japanese look at her, they can't tell, you know, that she's Japanese, you see. And of course they watch her strictly, so she can't get out. And then if that woman gets sick and the owner thinks after a while she get well, then he'll have a doctor to see her. But if he found out that she'll be sick a long time and needs lots of money for doctor, he won't care.
He'll just let her go. And the poor woman has no place to stay and she's ill. It's a pitiful condition.

And it happens when I was going to River Street Church, the Reverend Chuzo Nakamura was the pastor there. He received a letter from a minister in San Francisco saying that they found a woman in that such pitiful condition. So they found a place for her to stay and get the doctor. Well, all the members collected the money and did it. And she's getting better. She's better, so we're very happy. But she said she's not going to stay in Mainland any longer. She wants to go back to Japan. So we gather the money again and bought the steamer ticket. But she is penniless, she has no money for her own, you know, pocket money. So this minister in San Francisco ask Reverend Nakamura to collect the money from the members of the church, to give it to her. And [the minister] describe how she looks and when she will be arriving in Honolulu port. I was still in school, but I give, (laughs) I don't know, fifty cents or one dollar for that, you see.

(Laughter)

And so, Reverend Nakamura took the money over to the boat and hand the money to that poor woman. So that, Hinode Gumi in Honolulu, was doing that you see. And it was terrible around Maunakea Street. All the girls are here and there. She said the line up, the haoles are just line up. So many prostitutes around.

And then there was this gambling boss in Hilo. He wasn't doing any white-slave trade, but he has followers and he had a mistress. And he found out the mistress had a boyfriend, so he was so angry and he killed the mistress. At that time, he ask his number-one follower to help him. Said to kill that woman inch by inch, torturing her. I don't know how, but that's what I heard. So both of them were caught and was in Oahu Prison. When I was in Pauahi Street, there was a woman, middle-age woman, very quiet woman, came every morning with stacks of newspaper and ask us to buy newspaper from her. So we used to buy newspaper from her, and my father asked her why she has to sell the newspaper early in the morning.

And this woman said, "I suppose you heard all about my husband, Funakoshi." She said, "I'm his wife. He killed the mistress, so he's now in a jail. But he's very selfish man and told me, he said, 'How can I eat the food they serve in here. You bring the lunch every day.'" But she said, "I have no money, so I went to
the newspaper company, ask them to give me newspaper with discount. And they did it for me. So every morning, I sell the newspaper and then have some money, income, and then with that I buy foodstuff and cook and bring lunch for him about eleven o'clock. I do that every day."

My father said, "You better stop it. He is there. It's coming to him. You suffered enough."

But, it seems to me, she was doing it every day, until he died in the prison. The way I understand, his number-one follower, who helped kill the mistress, didn't talk to him in the jail. They were not in good term. (Laughs) But when he came out, this follower, number-one follower, he learn shoe repairing in prison. So when he get out, he put the shoe repair shop in Palama.

(Laughter)

I have a friend in Palama, so they were talking about him. She said, "Oh, near to us he put the shoe repairing shop."

MK: So he rehabilitated himself?

RM: Yeah. I don't know how long he had to stay in prison. But he was forced to help, I think, the leader of the gambling group.

And then lot of people said, I don't know how true this is about.... They even sold their wives. They get so desperate, you see. They want to go back to Japan, but they couldn't go. Lots of them couldn't write a letter, so they can't communicate with relatives in Japan. And so it seems to me they were leading very wild life, some of them. And drinking and, you know, sometimes fighting.

This happened in Lahaina, Maui. When my husband was still in Lahainaluna School. He used to come down. Lahainaluna is located in a hilly place. He usually comes down weekend and spend weekend with the uncle in Lahaina town. And at that time, the minister of the church, Methodist Church, was Reverend Eisaku Tokimasa, whom I know very well. Around that time, they had the gamblers over there, too. Not organized ones. Two gamblers started to fight and then they said, well, one borrowed the money from the other, but didn't return. You see, that was the cause of the fight. Then one, the one who loaned the money said, "Well, I can get the money by force."
And the other one said, "Okay go ahead."

But they said, "We are not going to fight over here, because people are near here. So we better go to a lonely place and fight so don't give the people trouble." So they went to a pasture to fight, have a duel, you know. Then that one was killed, of course, the one who borrowed the money was killed. And the people, Hawaiians, used to call that place make place. "Make" is death and "place," of course, is English. I don't know, I don't think people know about it now because all the houses are built around there.

So when Reverend Tokimasa was teaching English night school one night, there came a big man, Japanese man came. He had a geta in one hand and bloody knife in one hand and came right up to him and said, "I killed a man, what I'm supposed to do?"

So Reverend Tokimasa said, "You give yourself up to the police."

So he went to police station and said everything, how it happens. So we understood that he was in jail for fifteen years. But people, some people in Lahaina was happy to see this man killed. Why? Because this man used to go to store and ask to see the store owner. And ask him to lend him some money. So of course, they refuse to do that, you see. Then he said, "Oh, [if] I ask you so much, you don't lend me the money, I'll do this." So he drag everything from the shelf, merchandise from the shelf, and throw them all in the street. And then urinated on it (laughs).... So a man [store owner] can't sell anymore, you see. He did that, I think, here and there, you see. But these people didn't report it to police because they were afraid he may, perhaps, he'll do something worse later on. So they were happy when they heard this man was killed [by the person who went to see Rev. Tokimasa]. (Laughs)

After I came to Honolulu, when I was, I think sixteen, seventeen years old, one day, someone was talking loud to my father. He said, "Aren't you otossan?" And said, "Haven't seen you for so long," and such a big voice in such a friendly way. So I look at the man and he was a tall man. Well, he was talking to my father in such a friendly manner. He [tall man] ran out and call the man who was on the buggy, passing in front of my house, you see. And he was talking for short while and then man on the buggy went away and he [tall man] came in to talk to my father. He called my father
otossan, otossan. And so I was wondering....(laughs) who he is.

And he said, "Oh, that man on the buggy was a prison boss. He was very kind to me when I was there. And since I left there, I didn't see him. So I met him for first time. So I thank him for his kindness and I told him, 'This time I'm good man, honest, good hardworking man.'" (Laughs) And so he said the boss was very happy. And then he [tall man] came in and talked to my father. He said, "Oh, when we are young, we do lots of foolish things." "I realize now," he said, "we are reckless. How foolish it was. That's the way I feel now."

"And otossan," he said, "I'm now a good man, you know. I work hard. I don't violate the law. No more gambling, so anshin shite kudasai (Set your mind at ease)."

(Laughter)

So that's the man that killed gambler in Lahaina. And I ask my father, "Why he call you otossan?" [in] such a friendly way.

He said, "Oh, he came on the same boat with me. He was a young man. I haven't done anything for him, but since he was a young man then maybe he thought I'm old enough for his father or maybe I did something that he feel otossan toward me." So that's the man that killed the gambler's friend.

MK: Do you remember that man's name?

RM: No, I never knew it. And he was telling otossan, he said, "Killing a person is so easy." He said, "Ore wa bikkuri shite shimatta." That means he was so surprised it was easy to kill a man. And he said, "I had a knife, that debabôcho." He said, "I stab him, stab his side. He fell down. I thought he was going to get up and come for me, so I got ready. But no, that was the end. So I call it very easy." (Laughs) He came after that few times, you know. But after that, he quit coming, so I don't know what happened to him. But everytime when he comes, he call otossan, otossan.

(Laughter)

MK: In those days it seemed so wild. I was wondering, did you ever hear stories about suicide among the Japanese?
RM: No! I never heard suicide among the Japanese. Killing though, well, I hear that. They always drink so much and you know, start to fight and all. Anyway, selling their wives, they said, no it was not selling. But wife left home, maybe has a boyfriend or maybe she didn't. Anyway, dissatisfied with the husband. Then this, you know, the Hinode Gumi gambler, see the situation and they trying to show that they going to patch up the trouble, you know. But no, instead of that, they separate them. They want to get this woman to go to San Francisco and they want to sell her in Chinatown. They told the husband, "You better, you give her up because she has no intention of coming back to you. So how much did you spend money for her passage coming over. I get it for you," or something like that. Well, that money belongs to them, you see. But temporarily they give the money to the husband. And well, husband has to be---she made the mind to not to come back. What's the sense of, you know, go after her. So just let her go. And that's how this woman was sold to the San Francisco Chinatown. They're looking for this couple that don't get along good, you see. And they actually didn't sell the wife. But that's how they got the money. So the thought was started. She said, "Oh, so-and-so sold (laughs) his wife for so much (laughs)."

MK: I was wondering if the Hinode Gumi used to threaten storekeepers then, in downtown Honolulu at that time, the way the man in Maui was receiving money from the Maui storekeeper. Was that occurring here in Honolulu, too?

RM: I don't know. Never heard it. So that's how, you know old-time things were going on here and there.

MK: What was the Japanese Consul reaction to this sort of activity?

RM: Well, I don't know. Seems to me Japanese Consulate didn't do much. I suppose he knew what was going on. Like I told you the other day, my mother came for him. Before that they wrote to him many times to come over but he didn't come. Finally he has to go because my mother was waiting for him.

(Laughter)

MK: How about the Japanese newspaper? Were they commenting on such activities?

RM: No, I suppose, I don't know. Never can tell. Cause these gamblers are, you know, you don't know what
they'll do. (Laughs) If they're going to write about them in the newspaper, maybe, they'll do something to newspaper man, eh.

MK: And you mentioned that your family lived on Pauahi Street and attended River Street Church. And that the gamblers used to be on Maunakea Street.

RM: Maunakea Street, yes that was the---before I came, you see, long before I came.

MK: Can you describe what downtown looked like back then?

RM: Around that time? Well, I don't know what to say.

MK: The stores, if you can remember the stores' names, kinds of activities occurring in downtown.

RM: Yes, you had the hotel, Komeya Hotel, Kawasaki Hotel. Kawasaki Hotel was on River Street. And three blocks down was Komeya Hotel. You know Mr. Kawasaki came on the same boat with my father. I don't know what way he went, but I heard the rumor that Mr. Kawasaki is a very kind man. I know, I know him very well, you see. We used to go to church together. Though I was sixteen, seventeen years old. My mother died when I was seventeen, so you see, I was pretty lonely at home, so the church people were very nice to me. I used to go and I used to go among the older people. So Mr. Kawasaki always talked to me and so would Mrs. Kawasaki. And Mr. Kawasaki's daughter, third daughter, is Mr. Baron Goto's wife. So I know her well, since she was a little girl. Mr. Kawasaki was founder of Harris Memorial Church, one of the founders. This is a story that I heard that in the plantation, some plantations, the manager get the rice for the workers. So the Japanese people said, "Ho, rice is almost gone, but we have to tell the boss about it, but we don't know how to say! Somebody has to tell the boss, the rice is almost gone and we want some more rice."

Then somebody said, "Well why not ask Mr. Kawasaki, because Mr. Kawasaki is a very kind man. He's willing to do things...."

And so, someone went ask Mr. Kawasaki and said, "Kome ga nakunarimashitakara, boss ni yutte kudasaimasen ka?" (The rice is all gone, won't you please tell the boss?)

Mr. Kawasaki said okay. And he ran in the kitchen, he got the rice bowl and the chopsticks, and with that he went office. And he said, "Hello boss," and then in
front of the boss he pretend he's eating. He said, "No more!"

(Laughter)

Then the rice came and after that the Japanese people, they said, "Ah, that's good. Anything happens, we ask Mr. Kawasaki. He is the man that get it for us."

(Laughter)

But one time, he was in trouble. He didn't know what to, how to say. The man came in and said, "Oh, Mr. Kawasaki, my wife gave birth, but after birth, not good, blood come out too much! Won't you tell...." He was at that time, Mr. Kawasaki was working for the plantation doctor, white doctor. And there was a little boy there and he was very much attached to Mr. Kawasaki. Mr. Kawasaki's name is Kawasaki Kiyozo. They call him "Kiyo." So this boy call him, Mr. Kawasaki, "Kiyo, Kiyo" and follow him wherever he went. Then this man came in and told him about his wife, after childbirth not so good. Want the doctor to come over and see. Now Mr. Kawasaki didn't know what to say. So he thought for a short while, and he saw the newspaper, and he got the string and tie a newspaper. Then he stretch his legs so wide and drop.

(Laughter)

And with the knife, he said, he just cut his fingertip and the blood came out, (laughs) was showing the blood to.... Then the little boy started to cry. "Kiyo, the blood come Kiyo's finger," he said, "Kiyo sore."

(Laughter)

And of course, the doctor didn't know exactly what to make out you see. (Laughs) [After] a while, he must have understood. He said, "Get the medical bag." He run out. So he said (laughs) this woman was so.... (Laughs)

MK: Gee that Mr. Kawasaki was a character then.

RM: Yeah, but, seems to me, he was very kind and always helpful and so everybody went [to] him.

MK: What plantation was he at?

RM: I really don't know where it was. That's hearsay, you know. (Laughs) This story I told you just now about childbirth, Mr. Kawasaki's daughter-in-law told me so
it must be true. (Laughs) She said, "Otossan wa anna koto shita..." (Father did that sort of thing).

(Laughter)

MK: Now I'm going to turn the tape over, okay?

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MK: Mrs. Morimoto, you were just talking about Mr. Kawasaki, Kawasaki Hotel, one of the businesses in downtown area. What other businesses and people do you remember in the downtown area?

RM: Oh, few houses away from Kawasaki Hotel, which was located on River Street, was a dry goods store, run by Mr. Hayashi. And he's a single man, but he was--he owned a dry goods store.... He was a member of our church, too. And let's see now. And there is a Yamashiro Hotel after you pass the bridge from Beretania Street. And I don't know, I didn't go that way very much.

MK: How about doctors and dentists in that area?

RM: No, they didn't have doctors and dentists around there. I think.... There were hotels, Kawasaki Hotel and Komeya Hotel and Yamashiro Hotel is there. And the little, you know, shops here and there, eating place and all that.

MK: How are the eating places back then?

RM: There was a saimin store. You know, it's a little store that sells fruits and candies. Small Japanese stores, you know, line up on Beretania Street.

MK: How about fishermen, were they also around the River Street area?

RM: No. Fishermen, I didn't see fishermen around there. I don't know exactly where fishermen used to live. But when I was working, well, I'm jumping now when I work in immigration station. Japanese fishermen--the boss, maybe not, but the employees--lots of them illegally entered.... Japanese you know. Most of them were working on the boat. Seamen. But when the boat was in the port for one day, they go out and see the town. And they thought, well, it's better to stay here than
go back to the boat and work. Well, when time comes, five o'clock, the boat has to move, you see, leave. Then he won't be on that boat, he's right here. But the law, immigration law, if he did that before 1924, the Exclusion Law pass in 1924. Before, then he can stay here. But once he leaves this country, suppose Japanese go back to Japan, he can't come back anymore because they won't give him a return permit.

So most of these illegally-entered seamen, they work on the boat, fishing boat. Then they're almost all single men. So even [though] the immigration officer knows where they're living, they said they can't find him. He's not at home most of the time. You see, as soon as they come home, they stay for a short while and off they go to call on their friends or go somewhere. So they want to check on them. But he said that [they] can't find them. So you know what they did? The man interpreter used to tell me, "Oh, I got up, I was up four o'clock this morning."

And I said, "How come?" [He] said, "Well, the inspector came and woke me up."

"Why?"

He said, "Go to the boat." Before the boat comes in the dock, they go on that boat. What do you call that little boat?

MK: Tugboat?
RM: No, not tugboat.

MK: Coast guard?
RM: Yeah, coast guard boats. They go on that boat and stop the fishermen's boat offboard. And then they get on the boat and check. Or else he said, after they had landed, [they] can't find them. So he said, "Ho, I was up four o'clock and went there," because they come in early in the morning, you see. So before they come in at Kewalo Basin, they used to go on the boat.

MK: Gee, so that was after 1924?
RM: Yes, before 1924 they can stay here. But after 1924, if immigration people investigate and make it sure that he came after 1924, they'll send him back to Japan. It's pitiful, you know, someone who married to Hawaii-born girl. There was one from Kaneohe and he had two, three children. Wife's parents are here, brothers and
sisters are all here, friends are all here. So wife said, "I don't want to go to Japan." So he has to leave his family and go to Japan and can't come back. But most of them were single men.

MK: Now that you kind of mentioned your work as an immigration interpreter, you worked there from 1925 to 1946. And you just mentioned some illegal immigrants. Were there other cases of illegal immigrants at that time?

RM: Oh yes, lots of Chinese. When I went there, 1925, there were eleven Chinese and they were waiting for deportation. They said they hid in a coffin (laughs) in the boat. (Laughs) But they were caught, so they were waiting for the boat to take them back. You see, I went there 1925, and I understood the year before, the district director there committed suicide, because.... On the account of Chinese cases. There were 800 Chinese came in here who are not U.S. citizens, but came as a U.S. citizen. They claimed that they were born here and went to China when they were little children. And now they're grown up and some of them are married and have children in China. But they came back. But it wasn't so. They were not Hawaiian-born, but they were born in China. But somehow they got the papers or something and came back. And the way I understood was, each one of them bribed inspector, $2,000. And 800 of them came. And then their wife can come as a wife of U.S. citizen. Their children can come as the children of U.S. citizen. Then how many going to come! (Laughs)

So after, the district director commit suicide. Of course, he said he doesn't know anything about it. But his workers, you know, the inspector is the one did it, but still he feels responsible for what has happened I guess. Anyway, the way I understood was, when we have somebody coming from Washington, head office, we know ahead of time somebody's coming. But that time, two inspector came from Washington, never said anything to district director, you see. But they were in town and investigate everything. And the last minute, they come in and show the evidence, you see. So that's how the district director commit suicide. And then so, my boss, my first boss, was the next one, you see. Oh, so he was very suspicious!

(Laughter)

But I was still new, so when I went---I phoned my children because I forgot something. And then the
206

crowd came in from the back way, from the boats, you see. Then he ask me, "Who did you call?" He thinks that I was doing something. (Laughs)

MK: By the way, who was your first boss?

RM: Mr. Burnett, I don't know what is his given name.

MK: And how did you get that job?

RM: Well, this is a story. You know, I came from Maui and, well, I thought I better find a job. I found a job as a kindergarten teacher. Well, principal get $100, but helpers, $25.00 a month, you see. Of course, we spend about two hours or so, yeah. And I was paying $25.00 for my rent, so I said, "What am I going to do. I have to look for some other job."

And while I was looking for a job, the superintendent of Hawaiian Mission, Methodist Mission, knew Mr. Burnett. Mr. Burnett said one interpreter going to quit. She is a night worker, you see. She does nothing but night work. And he said, "I'm looking for an interpreter, Japanese interpreter." So Dr. Fried, the superintendent of Methodist Mission, told me, "Go and see him." So, he's looking for an interpreter. And I said no, to be an interpreter you need lots of good education, both in English and Japanese. But my limited Japanese and English is not qualified for that kind of a job. So I wouldn't go. After a few days later, he asked me, "Did you go and see Mr. Burnett?"

I said, "No I didn't go."

And he told me go. "I heard it's not so hard. Try!" So I thought I'll please him.

(Laughter)

I know I'm not qualified for that kind of job, but in order to please him, I'll go and see Mr. Burnett. So I went see him. And he talked to me and he made me interpret for the boy that came from Japan. And he said, okay, he's going to notify the head office, recommend me to the head office. So until then, they'll pay me, you know, by day. And then after that, by month. So I went as a night interpreter. And of course, we are matron and interpreter, you see. And twelve hours, you see, seven [p.m.] to seven [a.m.], if you working at nighttime. Because we interpreters, we're not civil service employees, you know. All of them are not, Chinese and Japanese and Filipinos, they are not---now I think [they are], but long time they
were not civil service employees. So the boss can twist around you, so anyway (laughs) you don't bring the matter up to the service committee. So twelve hours, seven to seven.

Well, he told me, "After you're used to your work, we want you to work during the day." So I work quite a while at night. And then there was a woman, Mrs. Tanaka, she was working nothing but during the day. But she wanted work in the night, so ask me, "How about you and I change every month."

So I said, "It's okay with me, as long as boss says okay."

She says she is going to talk to the boss about it and boss okayed. So you see, we work out--alternately you see.

MK: And, you know, as an interpreter matron, what exactly were your duties? What exactly did you do on the job as an interpreter and matron?

RM: Well, matron's work is when a woman is sick. You know, guard can't go in to see the sick woman. Well, we had to go. And sometimes take her to the hospital; or you know, little things that happens, that men cannot attend [to], we have to do. But you see, during the day, I go there seven o'clock in the morning, one hour I'm matron in the back where the women gather around. And when eight o'clock, I come in the office and work as an interpreter. And then four o'clock, office closed, then I go back again to where the detention and watch the woman till seven o'clock in the night.

But you see, at first, I was called during the day when I was working in the night. Because boss call me up about eleven o'clock [a.m.] and say, "Come one o'clock [p.m.], we are very busy." So I used to come down one o'clock and then work till about four o'clock and then rush home and then rush out again at about six-thirty to be at the office seven o'clock, you see. And so, the security officer [who] worked with me, told me, she said, "Eh, that mean old man,"--that's what they always say--"that mean old man going to call you because we are busy today." "Don't answer the phone," one said; and one said, "Take the receiver down."

(Laughter)

They kind of feel sorry for me. And she said, "You know why I said mean? Because he won't call Mrs.
Tanaka. The other woman, she's a single woman and she's a rich woman. He won't call her! But he call you all the time, because he knows you have three children, you have to support them, and you can't very well say, 'You keep your dirty job,' and walk away, eh. So pick on you all the time." So, she said, "Don't answer the phone today, or else leave the receiver down." (Laughs) They sympathize with me.

Well, that is true, because that rich woman can just say, "You keep your dirty job," and walk away; but with me I can't do that, you see, when I have three children. So I thought maybe so; or maybe I'm new, so he wants me to get used to the job. Well, I take it in a way, good way. So though it was hard on me, I kept on doing it. And then later on, sometime when you're not busy, he said, "Take off half a day," or something like that. You see, that was very nice.

But, we keep on doing twelve-hours job, you see, until they get matron, night matron. Then night matron comes in in the evening, so we go home early now. But I understand the boss was commended by head office, that he was running that place with less money than former district director. So when the boss' secretary check our time sheet--that was after this, we had a fourth boss--check the time sheet, I had a four hundred and so many hours put in overtime. Nothing came to me. They don't pay overtime pay or give us time off, so that boss said, "Well, those who work till seven o'clock in the night,"--night matron comes seven o'clock to seven o'clock, you see, so we have to work till seven o'clock--he said, "those who work till seven o'clock come eleven-thirty [a.m.]." So you see, things they change to better. (Laughs) Until then, you see, we have twelve hours.

MK: You have three children, you have to work twelve hours in the night, must've been very hard! How did you manage to have your children taken care of while you were working?

RM: Well, in the nighttime, my uncle came and stayed with them. My children were not so small, so they were all right. Two of them--I think one was twelve, the other one was eight. The biggest one was fourteen, the boy was fourteen.

MK: You know, you mentioned a Mrs. Tanaka was working with you. Who are the other workers?

RM: Mr. [Chōmei] Tajima is man interpreter.
MK: What do you remember about Mr. Tajima? I've read about him in some history books that he was an interpreter then.

RM: He was, I called him pretty impatient person. And the way he talks, even Japanese, more like your mouth is full of water, you see, the way he pronounce. So it's hard for the people to understand. So sometimes they misunderstand him, you see. Then he gets impatient and bawled them out you see. So they said, "Imin Kyoku e itte okorareta," they don't like to go to immigration station, because they got the scolding.

(Laughter)

Now, Mrs. Tanaka passed away and Mr. Tajima passed away; I'm the only one left.

MK: I heard of a Mr. Tomizō Katsunuma. Was a Mr. Katsunuma working at the time you were there?

RM: He came as a temporary interpreter. He was interpreter for quite a while, before I went, you see, long before I went.

MK: Did you ever hear anything about his experiences as an interpreter? Did you ever hear anything about Mr. Katsunuma's experiences?

RM: No, Mr. Katsunuma came once in a while when we are busy but that was all. And I know Mr. Katsunuma, but we don't talk about the case and the work or anything. But I don't know him. Some people said he was not popular.

(Laughter)

But you know, that kind of place, sometimes like Japanese, when we ask the question, yes or no is sufficient, but they don't, you see. They beat around the bush and make the thing so long. And lots of---busy time when the boss take the case, and I don't know he used to call me, so I used to go. And then first question is name, age, occupation and residence and where were you born is next. And if you say you're born in Japan, you said when did you first arrive in Hawaii. That's very important because we have to check our record, you see. Then when we ask that question to Japanese people, they all going say, "Oh, when I left home it was winter, we had the snow."

(Laughter)
"And when we came to Yokohama, my wife fail in physical examination. So we miss our boat." Long story. Then the boss said, "What did he say, what did he say?" So I said exactly what he said. [The boss said,] "We are not asking anything like that. You go ahead and get to the exact answer."

So I tell them, "Mō sonna koto iuwanai de, koko ni nannen nangetsu ni kita koto dake..." I'm telling them, "Don't say anything like that. You know, long story. But just tell me when you arrive here, what year and what month and what boat."

And then the boss said, "Are you telling him not to say this and not to say that?" He said, "Well, get the answer." Doesn't want that long story. But when I tell him [immigrant] not to talk so much, but just give the date of arrival and name of the boat, he [boss] said, "Are you telling him what to say and what not to say?" And then I cut [a response] short and just give the date of arrival and name of the boat. And then the boss said, "He said so long and you cut it so short. How come? You are nothing but interpreter. You are supposed to give everything what he said." That's what he said. So next time he bawl me out, I told him I was told by district director few minutes ago that I'm nothing but the interpreter and I'm supposed to give everything what the applicants say. And that was the exact word that he told me. So he was looking at the ceiling for quite a while, then never said anything.

(Laughter)

Sometimes you have to say it, you know. Oh, I don't know, eh. Until he trust me I think he was (laughs) thinking that I was telling the people not to say this and not to say this way and that way, I guess.

MK: I think Mrs. [Kazuko] Sinoto [KS] has a photograph that she'd like you to look at.

KS: This photograph was taken out at the immigration station. Came out from a book.

RM: Oh, this baggage examination.

KS: Yes, and I was told the man on the...

RM: Baggage inspection. I remember this. Yeah, this is a old immigration station.

KS: I see. When you were there, the building wasn't there anymore?
RM: No, this one isn't there anymore.

KS: Oh, I see. When that building was discontinued to be used?

RM: I really don't know. I was there, I think, 1925, yeah.

KS: That building wasn't there anymore?

RM: Uh huh.

KS: Oh, I see.

MK: This is the photograph from the Wakukawa book, yeah, Ernest Wakukawa.

KS: Many book have this....

RM: The baggages came in the back, you see. And then custom officers used to come. And when they need an interpreter, they used to call us, you see, so. So we had to go. And did I tell you about woman who brought futon with the silk lining, yeah.

MK: So this is the room that they check the items then?

KS: They have many yanagi-gōri there, you can see.

RM: You know, you handle all kinds of people over there, you see. Some of them look honest but they're not.

KS: When they first arrived, how did they dress, Japanese immigrants? They are all in kimono? Some people are all in western clothes?

RM: Yeah, some of them are kimono. But most of them are you know, what you call haole clothes.

(Laughter)

KS: By the time 1925, probably changing.

MK: I was wondering, you know, when you were working at the Immigration Bureau in the '20s, '30s, what were some of the major problems you experienced?

RM: Uh, they have all kinds of problems so I really don't know. I found a woman commit suicide by hanging [from] the bathroom rod, you know. I don't know exactly---she came with son, but son was adopted son, you know. Oh, he was about month old. I think a friend died when the baby was about month old. And she adopted. And
instead of reporting that she adopted this boy, she reported that she gave birth to this boy. So we just found out when she went to Mainland. So everything was okay, but when she came back with the son, son went out and left the mother. The mother was left in immigration station and so she thought her case was very hard.

At that time, I don't know now but if you give up the residence in Hawaii and meant to live permanently in Japan, you can't come back, you see. If you chose that, you made your mind up to go to Japan to live permanently. So I suppose she had that idea when she left here. But lots of people, after they arrive in Japan--after spending thirty, forty years in Hawaii, you see, the parents are not living anymore and brothers, sisters gone or something like that--they feel more like they are in a strange place. They want to come back, you see. They said Hawaii is better because they have a lot of friends here. So I guess she gave up her residence here, but after she arrived in Japan, you see, she wanted to come back. But she was alien. The son was born here, so son was landed as a citizen. But on that account, I think she thought she couldn't get out. And the husband dead, and she and the only son, you see, so. She wanted to stay with the son. But she thought she couldn't get out.

So she said she has a headache, that was Sunday. She has her headache, so I gave her two pills of aspirin. And she has a empty soda bottle and she walked outside and she can get the water by the bathroom. And she said she's going to take the two aspirins over there. And then Sundays, the office is closed, and so you see these lots of woman wash their hair or wash their clothes. And they spend lots of time in our bathroom, you know. So she didn't come out about hour or hour and a half. So I didn't think anything over it, you see. But I thought funny, I don't see her. She should be out. So I went in the first bathroom, I called out her name. No answer. So [when] I walked in the second one, you know, she was hanging. I thought she doesn't have to do that though, eh. Somehow she can get out I think, but I don't know. She get so disappointed because son was release and she was detained out there, you see, so.... Oh, the next day, district director and I and security officer had to go police station.

KS: After the union, she and her husband went home with adopted son to Japan. When she came back, the....

RM: No, she went with the son. The husband was dead, you see. She was a widow. And there are some cases, you
know. There was a man detained there. Of course, we have big crowd, so we don't know, you see; one case finish, another case, and always working. And usually aliens get out first because easy. If they have a return permit, if doctor okay, you get out, you see. But U.S. citizen—if they didn't bring a certificate of citizenship from immigration station before they went away, they have to wait till the father or mother come along to testify, you see. Saying that this boy or girl was really born in Hawaii and went to Japan when they were little boy and a little girl. You know, they establish their citizenship. So they have to wait a chance to be called, you see. Lot of times, you know, I feel so sorry for them because lots of them went to Japan when they were small—three years old, four years old. See, they said they send the children home back to Japan so the mother can work. Komeya Hotel man used to say, "Hey, Mrs. Morimoto, they used to send the children to Japan more like sending parcel post."

(Laughter)

And I said, "Is that right?"

And he said one man in Maui, I think, wrote to Komeya Hotel man and said that they want to send the children home, baby to grandma in Japan. And grandma will come to Yokohama to get the baby. But he can't go or his wife can't go. So he wants to know if somebody is going to Japan that is woman with no children, you see, going to Japan. He's willing to pay her, you see, and have the children, his children go with her. As her baby, you see. And he said, "Eh, three years old boy. Sometimes they wrap up in a blanket. Pretend that it's two-, three-months-old baby. So they don't have to pay bus passes." (Laughs) And then the man had the chance to send the baby that way, but after so many years, he doesn't know the name. He forgot the name of the woman who took the baby to the grandmother. And that child is coming back after ten years or twelve years. We have to check the departing records. Departing manifest, we have all the manifests. Steamer manifests. But, the father doesn't know the name of the person who took his child home for him. In that case, what they going do.

Then Komeya Hotel man is a hardworking man. I knew him since he was a boy. He's rough talker but he's good at heart. And so he said, "Oh, look at the chōmen, hotel book." And page after page, he looked through and then they found this baby went under the name of the woman.
So when the boy came back, he's seventeen, eighteen years old, you see. Father came in and the mother came in and testify saying he was born such and such a place and went to Japan at such and such a time. And [then] comes to the place [to say] who took him to Japan. (Laughs) Then they got stuck. Because they don't remember the name of the person who took him to Japan. But hotel book shows that they went under the name, and hotel man had the notation there. So we had to translate that in English, so it's going in the record.

But the case like that when child is gone so long and never saw her parents--maybe the boy or girl that's two, three years old and coming back seventeen, eighteen years old. I feel so sorry for them because they said they can't say otō-san and okaa-san, they feel like more like a stranger. And so with the parents. Here they have four or five children born after this boy was born. And they speak English between themselves, while this big boy couldn't speak English. You know, he was all by himself. And feel toward the father and the mother more like "yoso no oji-san" (unrelated strangers). I saw lots of them, so I feel so sorry for them, you see.

And one mother said, "Oh my daughter who came from Japan is very queer girl."

So I said, "Why?"

She said, "Usually girls always ask things to the mother, eh, talk things over with the mother. But my daughter, always ask the father, father's opinion for this and that."

It happens, mother had a little children so couldn't go to Japan while this girl was in Japan. But father went twice or three times, spend the month with her or two months with her. So she has a feeling toward the father and none for the mother. And here the little brothers and sisters all can talk in English and she can't talk in English. Oh, I feel so sorry for her. It's all right, if they went when they were about ten, twelve years old and write to each other, you know. Then it's all right but when the child is two, three years old and spend ten, twelve years away.

MK: Like strangers, yeah? You know in the 1930s, that's right before World War II, I've heard of Japanese children here being called for military service in Japan. Did you have any experiences with that kind of situation when...?
RM: No, but my husband used to write letter of extension you know. Japanese people, when the child is born, they said they have to register to Japan village office. So that means they report to Board of Health here and then to Japan—to Japanese Consul here. That means one boy is Japanese citizen and U.S. citizen. How... That can't be? (Laughs) But that's how it was. So when they come to the military age, you have to apply for extension saying that you are in a foreign country not able to go to Japan. So my husband used to write out letter of, you know, extension. Then they'll say all right. Or else they call the boy to Japan (laughs) to get in the military service. So I know of one consul, I don't know which consul it was, but he went around the island and gather the main person in a camp and talk to them and saying U.S. Constitution is no matter where the parents were born, if the child is born in U.S., they consider him as a U.S. citizen, so you don't have to register the village office in Japan. After that, I think, they didn't register them in Japan. But, long ago, they didn't report to the Board of Health here but they report to Japan, register their child's birth in Japan.

MK: Also while, you know, Japan was involved with its war with China in 1930, I've heard that some Japanese here served in the Japanese Army. Did you ever have any contact with Japanese men going overseas to Japan?

RM: No, not from here. I didn't hear. Maybe there were, but I know my friend's son who was in Japan, graduate the University [of Hawaii] here. And he couldn't get a job. He graduate Mainland university. I think he was a mechanic, I think. Not the regular mechanic, but mechanic for an airplane. But he couldn't get a job on the Mainland, so he came to Hawaii and for a short while, no, he couldn't get a job here too. So his parents send him to Japan and he got the job in Japan. But meanwhile, Japanese and China war coming out and he was taken in the army. So if the boy is in Japan, I think they'll take.

MK: Should we stop here? We've been talking for about an hour and a half.

RM: Yeah, (laughs) I think.

END OF INTERVIEW
MK: This is an interview with Mrs. Raku Saka Morimoto at her home in Honolulu, Hawaii, on June 30, 1983.

MK: Okay, Mrs. Morimoto, today we're going to continue with the time before World War II. You just mentioned to me that you had some personal acquaintances with people connected with the Myles [Yutaka] Fukunaga case [1928]. So, can you repeat for the tape recording what you were telling me earlier?

RM: I know, Mr. Yoichi Fukumoto who is related to [Myles] Yutaka Fukunaga. One day, he ran in to see our pastor, Reverend [T.] Komuro and said that his relative, Yutaka Fukunaga was arrested as a kidnapper. And he doesn't know anything about it, but now he [Myles Fukunaga] is at the police station and won't you help me, that's what Mr. Yoichi Fukumoto told Reverend Komuro. So Reverend Komuro went down to police station and asked the police all about it. And police said he is really the kidnapper of Mr. Jamieson's son, and he confessed to that. And so, Mr. Komuro told Mr. Fukumoto you have to wait, because the trial will come up pretty soon.

So the trial day, Mr. Komuro went down to the court. Before the trial, court opens about nine or ten o'clock--half past nine. That place was filled with the people. All the people lined up, up till King Street. They were so eager to go in hear how the trial going to be.

And [Myles] Yutaka Fukunaga confessed and said that his family was poor. After he through with the grammar school, he wanted to go to high school, but he was told no, because they are poor and he has to work. He was very sad, because he want to study very much. He started to work in Queen's Hospital. I heard his
father was working a yard work over there. But Yutaka doesn't like the work in the hospital. He said have to see sick people all the time, it's not the pleasant work. But he couldn't help it, so he kept on doing it. But, he was dissatisfied and he got some kind of poison from the hospital. This is hearsay. And then tried to commit suicide, twice. But before it was far gone, somebody found him in that condition and so he didn't succeed in committing suicide. And afterwards, he left his home and he had a different job. He worked in a hotel in Waikiki.

Around that time, he was thinking of sending his parents to Japan, because they wanted to take a trip to Japan but since they are poor, they couldn't do it. But he thought if he makes more money and give it to them, they can go. Then he went to a library and look at the true detective book. Then he tore a few pages from the detective book, an article of university students [who] kidnapped a boy in the Mainland. And so he took two or three sheets home and he studied it.

Then one day he went to, well I have to go back again. When he was in the hospital, a man dressed very nicely, used to come in now and then. And he asked the other worker, who he is and he was told that that man was Mr. Jamieson, Assistant Manager of Hawaiian Trust Company. The son is in the hospital, so he comes often to see him. So by sight, he knew Mr. Jamieson. And so, one day he found out that Mr. Jamieson's son got out from the hospital and attending school, Punahou School. So he went there on a taxi and told the teacher that Mrs. Jamieson met with an automobile accident and in a hospital. So, want to see her son.

So the teacher said, "We have two Jamieson boys, given name the same, which one you wanted to take."

And he said, "Well, son of Mr. Jamieson who is Assistant Manager of Hawaiian Trust Company."

And so the teacher let Mr. Jamieson's son go with Yutaka Fukunaga, you see. And he took the boy somewhere in Waikiki, lonely place and killed him. And, that's his confession, you see.

He said he saw his hands was bloody, so he came in Waikiki hotel, where other people, Japanese are working. And he knew, you know, these working people change their clothes, their working clothes and start working. And he knew where they hang the clothes, you see. So he went in there and then took his pants off and wore somebody else's. And then he came home.
From one Nuuanu Y [i.e., YMCA] he call a messenger boy. He told him to give this letter to Mr. Jamieson of Hawaiian Trust Company and told him be sure to hand it over to him personally. Don't give it to anybody else. Of course, he wrote the letter. When Mr. Jamieson read it, it says that your son was kidnapped. So if you want to get him alive, get ready ten thousand dollars. Then he said, don't go out tonight. I'm going to telephone to you when to meet me and you give me the ransom money and I let you have your son. So Mr. Jamieson was so surprised. Then he went to the bank, get the money, but all the serial numbers were kept and ten thousand dollars. And then he was waiting for the call. Then he had the call.

So he was told to go certain place, but he said well drive slowly for quite a while with your light on and off, on and off, on and off and stop certain place. He mentioned this place. And of course, Mr. Jamieson did that. The policeman's car was following him from, you know, quite a distance behind. And when he stopped the car where he was told to stop, the young man came out. And he took his hat off and say are you ready? He said yes. Hat off, and told Mr. Jamieson to put the money—count the money and put in the hat. So he was counting the money until four thousand dollars. Then of course, Mr. Jamieson afterwards said that young man was pretty nervous at that time. And four thousand dollars in the hat and well, ten thousand dollars, so he had more money to give it to him, but no the young man said, "You stop, I'm going to bring your son." So with that four thousand dollars he walked out. And here Mr. Jamieson was waiting, waiting, waiting, but he didn't come back. So he knows that was, he didn't mean to bring the son. But he just walk, Yutaka walked out with four thousand dollars.

And they couldn't find the boy's body, you know, for quite a while. Lots of people form a searching party and went house-to-house to see, maybe they can find the boy somewhere. But they didn't find him for quite a while. Then the police station receive a letter and when they open it was from the kidnapper. The kidnapper signed "Three Kings," you see. Then he was running down the police station for incompetence. He said so many days passed you still didn't find the kidnapper and all that, you see. And then to make it sure, he put the ransom money in it, so the police people will know it was not a fake. The kidnapper is the one that wrote the letter. And then when the funeral day came he bought the flowers from a Chinese florist on Nuuanu Street and send it to Jamieson's boy's funeral.
And then afterwards, he went to Waialua. You see, Yutaka was in Waialua for a while. I don't know how long, but before he came to live in Honolulu. So he went over there. With the ransom money, he bought the ticket. At that time, we had to go on a train to go to Waialua and Kahuku and all that. That's how policemen found out it was Yutaka Fukunaga.

Until then, they said looks like a Japanese young man, looks like Japanese that what the messenger boy said. But lot of people didn't believe it. They said, no Japanese never do that. Must be, maybe he was forced to help somebody from the Mainland.

But when my son was at the Y [YMCA], see the policemen came, and there were boys about Yutaka's age. There were several of them there. He said let them all line up, you see, and took a good look at them. And took one down. (Laughs) And I don't know how they did it, how they got the Yutaka's picture, but somehow this boy looks very much like Yutaka Fukunaga. So the policemen took him down. Then policemen went to Fukunaga's home and told the parents come down to the police station to identify. Parents refused to go. Then policemen took the sister. Sister was going to police station with the policemen and she happened to look outside and she said, "There's my brother." And they saw the young man standing by the corner of Beretania Street or somewhere. So the policemen arrested him. And so that's how he was arrested. Identified by the sister, you see.

But the newspaper said Fukunaga's family was living in a house owned by Hawaiian Trust Company and sometimes they couldn't pay the rent in time. And his sister, worked for Mr. Jamieson and was treated very badly, or something like that. And the way they put in is more like Fukunaga wants to revenge. But Fukunaga's confession never mentioned that. So you see, there's some difference.

But the Japanese people all sympathize with Fukunaga because he said, "Ova-kōkō." That means, he was thinking not [of] himself, but he was thinking of the parents, who wanted to go to Japan so much. So that's how he did that big crime. So, I don't know who was the one started it but, tried to get thousand mothers' signature, write petition. Signed by thousand mothers asking the court to, well they knew Fukunaga confessed that he killed the boy, so all he's going to get capital punishment. That means death. But they were asking for the life sentence. And so, I don't know
whether they really got thousand mothers to sign and give that petition to the court, that I don't know. But rumor was going on they were doing it.

So, Mr. Komuro said, one day, "Oh, I went just in a right time."

And I said, "What?"

"I went to see Mr. and Mrs. Fukunaga. And they were about to commit suicide to apologize publicly for what their son did."

But Mr. Komuro just stepped in and stopped them and he said, "You have small children, yet." Fukunaga has a sister, two little sisters, too, you see beside the other bigger sister, about sixteen, seventeen years old I think.

So Reverend Komuro said, "Well, I went in a good time, and stopped them, and talked to them and asked them what they want to do."

But they thought it's best for them to go to Japan and stay there than to stay here and just wait for Yutaka's execution day you see; it will be terrible, day after day, you are thinking of it. And the people would talk about it. So, I think it was Reverend Komuro told me that one white man offered to give them thousand dollars if they going to Japan to live. But they didn't--of course they didn't go to Japan.

And ReverendKomuro used to go to the Oahu Prison often to see him, you see. But he was busy and he had company from the Mainland. He couldn't go so often. Meanwhile, a Catholic priest went. He went every day. And so Fukunaga became a Catholic before he was executed.

Then, Fukunaga, just before he died, he wrote a long letter to Mr. Komuro, saying that he had all the chance like other boys had, but he didn't think that way. He thought, since other boys are going to school, he couldn't go to school and he thought well he doesn't have a chance like the other boys. And he was very sad about it. He said, "I don't need a friend." He seems to me, bookworm. He said, "As long as I have books, I don't need a friend." It was a rather long letter, I don't remember all that but this part I remember. He said, "I was given a marble and tools and I was told to carve my image. And so I was working diligently to carve myself. And first, I was all right. I was
interested in doing it. But pretty soon I get tired. And my tools get kind of dull. And you know what I did? I got hold of my image and threw it on the ground and it all came to pieces and that is me now." That's what he wrote. That part I remember (laughs).

And I [also] met Mrs. Fukunaga. Reverend Komuro's wife wanted to go Kaimuki to see a sick member, you know. Didn't see her for a long time. She asked me if I wanted to go with her. Then Mrs. Komuro said, "Let's drop in and see how Mrs. Fukunaga is." So she dropped in. So I happen to (laughs) see they live in a old house. Big, old house, but big house, well kept, you know. And I saw Mrs. Fukunaga then, just once.

So, those Japanese, seems to me, sympathized the family very much. There was a man from Hawaii who was living in the Mainland, was visiting Hawaii at that time. Around that time, Hawaii boys in the Mainland was not very popular with the Mainland people. I don't know why. They used to run down Hawaii boys. They said, maybe some of them wasn't very good. This boy came back, just when this Fukunaga case was going on. And he said, "Oh, when I get home to Mainland I can brag about Hawaii boys. I can say, 'Don't you see, we have a hero like Fukunaga in Hawaii,' (laughs) because he did the kidnapping all by himself.'" So, they have a wrong idea, you know. But anyway, my children were attending Royal School when Fukunaga's funeral was going on. And they came back and said, "Oh, you know so-and-so, and so-and-so, told me that they are friends." Told me that, "Oh we want to bring flowers to Fukunaga's funeral." So you see, all their sympathy goes to Fukunaga, none went to poor Jamieson's family. I think Jamieson's family, I think he was the only child in the house, if I'm not mistaken. There was a man who was employed by Mr. Jamieson, but who was kicked out from his work, and police thought he must be the one, so I think he was taken in the police station (laughs) and was questioned, quite a while I think. So I guess that's about all, about Fukunaga.

But Fukunaga seems to me was very brave when the time came. You know, lots of these criminals, when the last time comes, they couldn't hardly walk. They said, that somebody has to help both sides, could hardly walk.... But Fukunaga walked right up to it where he was going to be executed. So I think at last he knew he was wrong and he had to pay for it. We feel very sorry for them, but there was nothing we can do.

MK: That was your personal knowledge of the Fukunaga Case?
RM: Yes. The relatives who knew about Fukunaga... And in Japan, I hear his uncle is a principal of chūgakkō, yeah, Japan. And he wrote and said, "Don't come home." He said, "You put me in a hard spot, (laughs), cause your son is the kidnapper and murderer. That won't be very good, the people will be talking about it, so don't come back." So they didn't go back to Japan.

MK: I'm going to change the subject now. But in continuing from our last interview, we were talking about the time the war was starting, yeah, World War II? So when World War II started, what were you doing at the Immigration Bureau?

RM: Oh, I see. We were very busy, checking the aliens' registration. You see, they, I think it was 1940, the year before the war. All the aliens are supposed to go to post office and register, that means you give your name, your address, when you came from Japan and where you live. And they were fingerprinted too. That's not only Japanese, but Chinese, Japanese, Korean and all the aliens. So they were very busy. That went to Mainland and went to our head office. Head office send to us card. Came in the form of cards. All written down, you see. And they want us to check with our record that person's name and person's arrival and where they are. So we were busy. All the holidays we had was New Years, Christmas and, of course, Sunday we were off. But other holidays, we had to work, because they wanted us to do that soon as possible. They check, then okay card, we have to send them back as soon as they're finish. We have a record of aliens' arrival, 1900 on. And before that, the record is at the [Hawaii State] Archives. So those people who came after 1900, we have all the records. Five of us worked every day from eight to four o'clock. Nothing but checking the cards.

Then you see, Japanese names are so many variations. It's hard, especially Okinawan names, hard. I have to learn that. If you go according to a naichi way, it will be different altogether. And how do these haoles in the Mainland know this, even the character same. They won't know it's the same person. So we have to make a notation. Now we call Oshiro, Kaneshiro and Miyashiro in Hawaii. But when they came 1906, '07, '08, like that, they pronounce the name their way, Ogusuku, Kanagusuku and Miyagusuku. And now when they make a trip to Japan around here, they're known as Oshiro, Kaneshiro, in our way of pronouncing, you see. And when they made their trip to Japan, they use our way of pronouncing it. So how do they know it's the
same person? Of course, other details are exactly same, but the name is different. And like a given name too. You say Yasuo, they [i.e., Okinawans] call them Anyu. Masao they [i.e., Okinawans] call him Seiyu, entirely different. So we have to make—we interpreter has to make a notation, Japanese name, so-and-so, and so-and-so, are represented by same character. Then it will go, you know, steadier. But if not, they come back for us to investigate more.

(Laughs)

MK: So you were busy doing that type of work?

RM: Yeah (laughs) like Okinawan names, I'm not familiar with the Okinawan names. Okinawan hotel man used to come often. So I asked, "How do you read that in the Okinawan way?" So you see, coming in they use that name. Going out, after spending so many years in Hawaii among the naichi people, they changed the pronunciation of names, pronunciation different. We have to make a notation to make these people in the head office satisfied it's the same person.

MK: When war started, you were still working with the alien registration cards?

RM: Yeah, that keeps on---because there are so many, not only Japanese, but Chinese and Filipino and all, you see. And then we used to have about 300, 400 sheet now and then from the camp. You know those Japanese people were sent to a [internment] camp. And they, of course, write their names and age and when they came in to Hawaii. And if they made the trip back and forth so many times, all the trips departure and arrival, you see. So we have to check and then send them back to the camp. So we were very busy.

MK: So it was very different from what your friend told you, she thought that you were just taking it very easy during the war years?

RM: (Laughs) Yeah, my friend told me, she said, "Oh, you have no work to do, eh, nowadays, nobody travel."

(Laughter)

You know, one time we were so surprised and I'm sure these people were worried, surprised and worried. Big truckload of Army truck, truckload of people, Japanese came in, in peace. And we were wondering what's happened, came right in our yard. MP [Military Police] didn't know much, I think and all were Japanese man and
woman. They were so frightened, because the war was going on and they don't know what's what. Well, we ask an MP what's wrong. And this aliens—when they register, alien registration, the head office used to send what they call a receipt, with the fingerprint and everything. During the war, alien should take that along when they go out. But, no, Japanese said, "This is very important paper, so better keep it at home. (Laughs) So we don't lose it." They didn't carry that along. And then the MP get hold of them, ask them to show alien registration card. And, of course, they don't understand, they take things out and look, but no alien registration card. And the next one, the next one, the next...(laughs). So, put them all on the Army truck and brought them down to immigration station. And then, we found out all of them have them but they said, "Oh, I don't want to lose it, so I kept them very carefully at home."

(Laughter)

MK: And you mentioned that during the wartime, the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] or some organization took over some of the immigration buildings?

RM: Oh, yeah. Army took over.

MK: Army.

RM: More than half of—we were shoved in the corner. Army took over those people [Japanese aliens], FBI question and then ready to send to the camp in the Mainland, you see. So they kept some in back of our building, you see. We have a big building, the other side where they can sleep, you see. And then, part of them, are in Honouliuli. And then, after they question over there and think that they should go to the camp, they send them to the camp [on the Mainland].

MK: Were you in any way involved with that type of work?

RM: Well, we have to help in case they are busy. They have the one interpreter who spent ten years in Japan, studied Japanese. He was an interpreter, you see. But when they have a two, three places work, just one interpreter weren't enough. So they call us. Our inspector didn't like it because in the middle of the case, you see, I have to go. (Laughs) And then, they have to wait. We're not involved, but when they ask us to help, we can't refuse. Because Army was the one that, you know, trying to get everything right, I guess. We are supposed to help, that's what they said.
MK: During those war years, was there any unusual event or anything that you remember that stands out in your mind?

RM: You mean working with the Army?

MK: Working with the Army or with the Immigration Bureau?

RM: Well, there are lot of things with the immigration work. You're an alien and you're a permanent resident here, supposed to take trip to Japan and come back. And if you have a TB [tuberculosis] or some mental trouble, they won't let you---they won't land you, until they found out where you are sick. Of course, a doctor comes in---a public health doctor to examine, and then after he examines, they'll send the people to the immigration station for further investigation, you see. But if you have TB that you have to go to Leahi Hospital, in that condition they won't land you, they'll send you right back to where your home is in Japan. So with mental case, too. If you are mentally bad and you had to go to Kaneohe Institution, they won't let you land.

I had a woman who has two children here and a husband and she had a baby. And the way, I understand was, she had the mental trouble. So she was sent to Japan by her husband with the baby because her brother was a doctor in Japan. So send her to him thinking that he would do something---he can do something for her but the mental case, he can't do anything. So brother send her back to her husband here. She came along with a big crowd, but if you have a return permit, you're not sick. Doctor okay, you get out as soon as you come in.

But this woman was held, and she came to talk to me and said, "Why I am held here? I want to go out and see my children. I didn't do anything wrong. I'm hard-working honest, hardworking woman. But why they hold me here?"

And I said, "No, you haven't done anything wrong. They didn't find you're bad woman. But something wrong."

She doesn't sleep in the nighttime. And then she start to make big noise in the middle of the night and other woman folks in the same room always complain. And she doesn't sleep the whole night and so, you see, the next day, she was asked all kinds of questions. She doesn't answer right, you see. So they think something wrong, mentally. So I said, "You sleep well. The way I understand, you don't sleep, hardly any. You
disturbing people." So she and I had to sleep in one place. I was working in the nighttime, you know, in a big room and I said to her, "Now you go to sleep. If you going to sleep, and your head is okay, tomorrow when my inspector ask you all kind questions, if you answer right, you'll go out. But now you don't sleep, so you see---when the inspector ask you the question, you don't answer right. That's why they keeping you here, thinking that you something wrong with your head. Not because you did anything wrong."

She yell, "Oh, is that right?"

When I talk to her like that, she's all right. But the middle of the night, she start to yell, she said, "I want to go out! I want to go out!" Shake the door. And guard has to scold her and all that, you see.

And I was doing night work right on. So, one night she wasn't with the other women, you see. So I ask the guard, "Where is she?"

"Oh, she's in a hospital room."

I said, What's happened?"

He said, "She got hold of her little baby and just threw the baby on the floor. So they took the baby away and put her in the sick room, I mean a hospital room."

So I said okay, I'll go and see her. When I went, she had all bandage on her finger. So I said, "What's happened? What's wrong with your hand?"

And she said, "They put me in this room all by myself, took my baby away, so I hit my---I hit the glass door... (laughs)...with fist and get all cut."

Sometimes she talk sense, sometimes she doesn't. And she told me, "You have been very kind to me. So when I get out, I'm going to make my hair haikara, and I'm going to put the gold wristwatch and I'm going to put on my best kimono and I going to see you, visit you." Something like that, you know.

And sometimes in the morning, when we go out, there's a yard there. Big yard there and a place where women stay during the day. She has her baggage over there. She goes over there and she take her clothes off, put different kimono on and with umbrella, she goes back and forth, back and forth.
[I would say,] "Sit down and rest, you so restless."

Second boss said, "What do you think about her? Is she really crazy?"

And I said, "Well, I can't tell because sometimes she talks sensible."

She said, "I'm hardworking woman."

I said, "Who's taking care of your two children?"

She said, "My sister." But she said---she's worrying about the children, worrying about the children all the time.

So I said, "It's your real sister?"

She said, "Yeah, my real sister."

"Well, you don't have to worry. I'm sure your sister will take good care of your children until you get out."

She said, "You don't know my sister. You know, my sister is not like me. I'm hardworking, honest woman. But she is different. She wants to wear nice clothes and go out, she holoholo all the time. Not like me. What am I going to do if she gets friendly with my husband?"

I think that was in her all the time, I think. So I said, "No, I don't think so. Don't worry." She's just like a little boy, fretting, you know. Sometime throw herself on the floor and hit the floor with her feet and started to cry.

MK: There was a case like that?

RM: Yeah, yeah. And then one time, a man, woman and three children came. The youngest one was two years old, the mother was taking care of and the other one was two boys, the father taking care of. So the sleeping place, the man and woman different, so two boys sleep with the father, and the little---that was a boy, too, sleeping with the mother. And she was pregnant. She said, "Two weeks more then she's going to give birth."

But shaking up on the boat, sometimes it hasten the time, you see. She came to me and said, "More like I'm going to give birth soon."
And so, I said, "Well, we better get the doctor to see." So we call up the doctor.

Doctor came and said, "Cannot tell but because she...."

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

RM: "...since she have already given birth to three children, maybe tonight." So, we don't know what to---well, he said, "Better take her to the hospital."

But she has no friends or relatives in Honolulu. And husband is taking care of the other children and she doesn't know how the husband can take care of that little baby. Of course, she can't take the baby to the hospital.

So the guard said, "Well, let the man and his wife talk and decide what's the best way." So we call them in the hallway and talked.

The husband said, "You koraete ore yo." (Laughs) You know what that means: (Laughs) "Hold on to it." Then she said, "Doshite koraeru, Deru mono deru yo."

(Laughter)

That means, "How can I hold it when it's coming." So you had to laugh but it's not laughing matter to them. So we finally took her to a hospital, I have to go with her you see. And she stayed that night. She didn't give birth that night. But---so in the morning, I left there seven o'clock. I notified the office about condition of this woman, you see. And she's now in the hospital. But I went in the night and come to find out that she went out. Then I met the hotel man who was taking care of her case. I said, "What's happened to her?"

He said, "Erai, no?"

"Nani erai no?" I said, "What is erai?"

He said, "She had a mind of holding the baby, yeah."

(Laughter)

That's what he meant. And the baby was coming, but she was in the hospital, she's a Kauai woman, you see. So
have to go to Kauai, she was holding onto it. But she came back and the case was taken and she went out. He said, "That very day she gave birth."

(Laughter)

MK: You had a lot of interesting cases then, yeah?

RM: Yeah. And then there's some sad cases, too. You are alien and you make a trip to Japan and you come back. And within five years, you have TB or mental case, you will be deported. Of course, even the inspector there said, "Oh, that's inhuman way to treat the people because they don't care to get sick." And they suffering enough, but—and they are living here permanently, you see. Just made the trip and come back within the five years, they get that way and then they going deport.

There was a girl who came from Japan when she was a baby. And she was raised here, went to school like Hawaii-born girls. And she became a nurse. I think she was Waialua Hospital nurse. And she got TB and she went to Leahi Hospital. So we went there. And she was crying, she said, "I know what you people going to tell me. I went to Japan just once about two weeks vacation. I was born in Japan, but I came here when I was a baby. I don't know anything about Japan. I don't know the relatives. That was the first time I met my relatives. I don't know anything about them, anything about Japan. My parents are here, my brothers and sisters are here, all my friends are here. What am I going to do if you going to send me back to Japan?"

Oh, she cried. I feel so sorry for her. I don't know what's happened to her.

But I know before that, three women sent back. One Chinese woman, two Japanese woman. So upon their arrival, doctor examine and she or he is sick that way. Sure, they send right back but after they arrive here without any trouble and five years later, they get sick that way. They were sent back. So that seems to me terrible isn't it? I know she was crying, she said, "What am I going to do? I don't know anybody in Japan. All my families are here. I'm just as good as a Hawaiian-born." And she is because she was baby when she came.

MK: I also understand, looking at your history, you retired in 1946. Why did you retire then?

RM: I was not well. I was fifty-five. I could have worked longer. But I felt so dizzy, feel like nauseating and
I was under doctor's care. The doctor said indigestion or something like that. I had a stomach trouble, all constipated and all that, you see. I'm well today and the next day, I'm bad. I have to hold on to the wall to walk, along hallway. And my work---I have to talk, talk, talk. But when I get nauseated, I couldn't do it. That's why I quit. Because we work under second boss. Assistant district director is kind was not feeling well himself so people don't talk nice about him. They talk he's a selfish old man and then all that. But he isn't not well, so he pick on you, you see. Sometimes you don't do anything, but little things he picks on you. So you have to be always tense because we work under him, right next to him.

So you quit the work, like that, all of a sudden and when you stay home, well, you don't have to get up early in the morning. You can do things, if you don't want to do things today, well, you put off till tomorrow because you don't go do work. But that not good for your health. So you have to hold on to some kind of job at least few hours a day and gradually to nothing. I got really sick after I quit. I thought I'll be all right (laughs) when I quit my job, you see. But no. So I have been advising my friend who is about to quit the work. I said, "Well, at least have a few hours responsible job and gradually do nothing, maybe within a six month, you make it to nothing. Then you are okay, but all of a sudden you drop your work, of course, depend on what kind of work you do, not so good for your health.

MK: So after you retired up till now, what have you been doing mostly?

RM: Oh, they call me now and then when they are busy. Oh, they continue do it three or four years. And then they ask me if I want to work Saturday, Sunday and holidays. So I said okay, I'll do that. Sometimes even one or two women held in a station, I have to go there. I did that three or four years and I taught in night school, English night school for beginners for---I think three, four years, all of the students about sixty years old. There are one---two about forty years old. Girl---one born in Hawaii, but went to Japan and came back eighteen, nineteen years old and then get married and had the children one after the other and so far she couldn't study. Now the children are big and she can study, so start from A, B, C. (Laughs)

MK: So you taught school for a while?
RM: Yeah, so so.

MK: Here, I notice that, going back through your life, you've lived through so many governments, yeah? When you were born in 1890, Hawaii was still a kingdom. And then 1893, the Kingdom ended. Then 1894 to 1900, was Republic. Then it became a territory, and it eventually became a state in 1959, but do you remember how the Hawaiians reacted when Hawaii stopped being a kingdom as a young child?

RM: Hmmm, I don't know. Now, I think I was too young. Only I hear that they were very sorry that they couldn't see the Hawaiian flag any more. These people hoist the flag at, what you call that---City Hall? That was the time that they were having a kind of---changing time. United States never announced word that this place is taken over by United States, but the American flag was on top the Hall, I mean government building. And you heard about the battleship Naniwa came, came over with [Captain Heihachiro] Togo? And he didn't make any salute coming in because he said, "Well, this place we understood Hawaiian king is ruling, not belong to United States, but the flag is United States, American flag. We're not going to salute that flag." So he came right in! But he was told why he didn't salute? So he gave the reason. Then they took down the American flag and hoist the Hawaiian flag again. And Togo salute and came in. That's the time Hawaiians were so happy to see the flag again. And so they knows---all Hawaiians remember Togo and Naniwa. And lots of them named their children Togo or Naniwa.

(Laughter)

But the young people doesn't know. (Laughs)

MK: How did you feel when Hawaii became a state in 1959?

RM: Well, I thought it was okay because Hawaii people were---you know, how they are. They're a happy-go-lucky type of people. It seems to me nothing was done much. Like in the country, maybe they have a ten, twenty acres of land, all they cultivate is only one acre or so, plant sweet potato, banana all around, and rest of the place, are all wild and they don't care because they don't have to work so hard to live, you see. No progress, yeah? (Laughs) What do you say? (Laughs)

MK: But I was wondering, you've lived a long, long time. You've noticed so many changes, yeah? I was wondering
what were the most important changes you think you've seen happen in Hawaii?

RM: Well, I don't know. Maybe schooling like when I was attending grammar school. The grammar school graduate spend two years in Normal School can be a teacher. And then later on, much later on, those teachers have to spend summer to study to become a real teacher. I think only eighth-grade graduate and two years in Normal School won't be...(laughs) good enough for a teacher, don't you think so?

MK: So you've noticed that kind of change? And what do you hope for Hawaii's future, how would you like Hawaii to be?

RM: Well, I don't know. I've never thought of it (laughs). (Pause) I don't know because now sugar plantations close, a lot of places close up, so with pineapple, I hope they will do something. But the way I understand, sugar and pineapple coming from the foreign countries is cheaper than those raised over here. Think too much to the laborers, yeah. They have to sell them higher price. I don't know, what do you think of the union, they all get in a union, then they always strike here and there all the time.

You know like plantation when I was in Puukolii, Maui, of course, their wages were very low, but hospital was free no matter how many days and how many months you in, that's free. And of course, house free, water free, and all that. And the wood was free but salaries were very low. But after they make strike so many times. It's like Lahaina, they had a hospital but there's no hospital now. And of course, there's a doctor there, plantation doctor there, but hospitalize, you have to go to Wailuku side.

Of course, they said they [workers] getting so many dollars an hour and it's okay, but I don't know. Plantation has to make money, but so many of the strikes going on and the wages going up, up, up where plantation has to cut down something so they can make some money. Of course, plantation was treating the laborers more like slaves during contract [immigration] time. After contract is over, still they had to work very hard with a small salary.

Like Lahaina, two bosses were German people. And German people seems to me not so, I hate to say it then, but not like American people, you know. And the third one was American. And third one was very good.
Before that the house was terrible. The single men's house was more like a big box. But he [i.e., the American manager] saw that a couple with one or two children got the two-bedroom house with a yard around. And big family got three-bedroom with a fairly big yard around and all that, you see. And for the single man's house, they make it half moon shape and nice room. And so I heard the people were saying, "Oh, we have to buy some nice furniture to put in there because the house is nice." That man was very good. When the workers coming home from work about four o'clock, he happen to pass by, he stop the car and tell them to get on.

But laborers, get all dirty clothes on, said, "No boss. Too dirty, we pilau."

He said, "Never mind, never mind, you get on."

And then tell them to get on, so they would get on the car. Of course, he make it in such a way so this Japanese understand. [He asked,] "How you like your job or is it hard or is it you--you satisfy?"

But that boss was not liked by the [Hawaiian] Sugar Planters' Association because he spend too much money making all the good cottages for these people because they want to make more money than that, you see. He has been spending too much money. And I've visited his home but his home is---well, it's a boss home but not so elaborate home, you see.

But the one that came afterward, [after the American manager] got sick and he went back to Mainland, and died. The one who came afterward seems to me, built a nice, very nice house. Of course, I wasn't there then. But the people said, "Oh, that man, he spend so much money for his house. Two-story house or three-story house with elevator." That kind of boss won't care very much for the laborer but for himself.

MK: Those were the old days...?

RM: Yeah.

MK: As we bring the interview to a close, is there anything else you'd like to share for people who might read this interview later on?

RM: Well, I don't know now, but many students came from Japan while I was working over there [Immigration Bureau], and some of them really want to study. But some of them, they come as a student, but they want to
work and earn money. So, you see, at that time University [of Hawaii] and Hawaiian Mission and one more...I can't get that name of the school. Only three schools were authorized for the Japanese student to attend, you see. And, our office and the school has a close contact. And the school sometimes report so-and-so is not doing very well or so-and-so didn't come to school for few days or something like that. So we round them up, you see. And ask them what they do.

"Well, we got the notice from a school that you not doing your lesson very well, but what do you do? Don't you put whole the time in your study? You're a bona fide student, don't you know that?"

Well, he [i.e., the student] said he's working at the school, something like that. But he works---puts too much time on his work, you see, his study time is less.

"Well, you quit your work and then you go ahead put all your time in your studying."

One time, the inspector told me "Now, today we want---we have to go out." I went with the stenographer, and the inspector, three of us went to one school, Palama Japanese School. And he said, "We have to go to principal's office." So we went and he said, "Ask where is so-and-so." This man was a student, Iolani College student. And he was working afternoon as a Japanese schoolteacher. He's about, twenty-seven, twenty-eight years old. And school reported to our office that he didn't come to school for three days. They didn't know why. So we went over there, the principal told us where to go. So we went and he was teaching, you see. We ask why he didn't go to school. He said he had a cold, so he didn't go. But inspector said, "You have a cold, but you working now, you teaching." (laughs) We catch student like that often. Their intention is come to Hawaii as a student and make money and go back. Some of them are like that.

MK: So that was part of your work as an interpreter for the Immigration Bureau?

RM: Yeah. We had to go---one time, we went two days in succession to Kaneohe Hospital. And of course, mentally bad patient, but doctor always get in touch with our office, you see. And I must have given the names of those who may want to go to Japan. In that case, he can go with the government expense. So we went over and of course, inspector said, "Now, you are going
talk to the man---patient with mentally unbalance, so you have to be very careful. When they say foolish things, don't say that's not right or anything like that, but just say, in such a way to make them talk. If you say that's not right or something like that, they stop talking and don't say anything." He had the experience before. Took the man interpreter and then the patient stopped talking and had a hard time. If that person think he is a very wise, very important person, you talk to him that way too.

(Laughter)

So we went and then a man came in, big Japanese came in. And the inspector said, "This man thinks he's a big shot. He's doing lots of good. Working hard for Japanese convent over here. He has so many people working under him. So you have put that in your mind and you talk to him."

So I said, "Konnichiwa." Well, we ask his name and how old are you and all; this the first question. Second question is: When did you arrive in Hawaii. Ask that question and he remembers the date. He gave a date of his arrival but didn't give the name of the boat he came in. So, in fact they told me to ask the name of the boat he came in. So I said, "Nantoiu fune de kimashita ka?" He look at me shocked, you know, steady for quite a while.

And he say, "What do you say?" in Japanese, you know. "Fune ga irumon ka?" He said, "You don't need any boat. Why the stretch of land between Japan and Hawaii, why we need the boat for?" That's what he said.

So I said, "Well, I made the mistake. You are right then."

(Laughter)

Then he keep on talking.

The inspector said, "You are very intelligent, hardworking man. Japanese like a person like you to work in Japan for Japanese. Don't you want to go home and do that?"

And he said, "No, I'm busy over here." Hundred people working under me. I want to finish that, then go back. Now my brother, 200 people working under him. So he's taking care of Japan side, but as soon as I'm pau over here, I go back." (laughs)
MK: Oh, you had a case like that?

RM: Yeah, so we went two days, had the lunch over there, I work whole day, you know. You know all kinds and sometimes they just don't talk or sometimes talk so slowly.

MK: I didn't realize the Immigration Bureau was involved in that kind of work, too.

RM: Yeah, all kinds of work. They think just stay in the office and work, but no so. Lots of times we will go out.

MK: Oh, I think I better end the interview here, okay.

RM: (Laughs) Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW
FIVE LIFE HISTORIES

ETHNIC STUDIES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
University of Hawaii-Manoa

June 1983