CHÔKI OSHIRO

The younger generation will never understand how the old days were. When I worked in Puunene Plantation, I worked about ten hours a day, from 4 o'clock in the morning, and received $12.50 a month. I told this to my children, but everybody laughed and never believed what I said.

Can You Write Your Name?

According to our family records, I was born on March 9 in the 24th year of Meiji (1891). However, my mother never forgot to remind me that although the official registration came later I was actually born in January. There were nine members in my family: my grandparents, parents, two younger brothers (Shige and Shigeru), two younger sisters (Ushi and Fusa) and myself. My grandfather’s name was Chôfu. I do not know when he was born, but he died about 1871. My grandmother’s name was Kan. As the first grandchild, I was her great favorite. I remember her as a very gentle-hearted, sympathetic and kind woman. I have no memory of her scolding me, not even once! She sometimes took me to see the Chondara Puppet Show that played in a big hall at the center of the village. I still remember one of the puppet’s lines: じゅまんごくのうちじょや、みみの鼻にうさぎの角 (the stipend of 100,000 koku was only a rumor). I recall she carried me on her back all the way from our place at the west end of the village; she did this until I became three or four years old. Whenever I recall this, I am filled with gratitude.

Chôki Oshiro, a retired plantation worker and accountant, wrote about his life as he neared his 88th birthday celebration (Beiju) in 1978. He dedicated the writing to his mother. His original name, Ogusuku, was changed to Oshiro when he was naturalized as an American citizen in 1953.
Edited by Robert Ellifson and Chad Taniguchi.
I remember my birthplace, Aza-Noha of Tomigusuku, as a relatively wealthy village. I started school at six years of age. In those days, elementary education was from the first grade to the eighth, consisting of four years of ordinary education and four years of more advanced education. Since the school system accepted everyone who wished to learn and study, there were married persons and others in their twenties among us younger students. When we lined up, quite a few students were taller than our teachers.

I recall one school day I cut class and went swimming with older friends. I almost drowned in the deep part of the lagoon. One of the boys rescued me and hung me up-side-down, by holding my legs, so I could disgorge all the salt water I had swallowed. Then they made a bonfire that warmed and revived me. I have never forgotten this incident. When I was at the bottom of the lagoon, I saw beautiful things. I even thought that so-called Gokuraku-jōdo (Paradise) must exist at the bottom of the sea. Anyway, this experience was very significant to me—I had faced death and felt I could face it again without fear.

Besides the lagoon, which was a good playground for us students of Noha to swim and fish in, I recall many famous rivers in Okinawa: Tengan, Kokuba, and Noha. I remember the Noha overflowing when I was small, causing a great deal of damage and loss to the farmers. Also, I understand that the river’s origin is near Ozato, and that it was once called Chōkō, or long river. The Noha flows out of a valley and forms a lagoon. There was a time, before cars and trucks, when people went from this lagoon by boat to Naha to get night soil.

When I finished my first four years of elementary school, my father, Chōsuke Oshiro, asked me if I could write my name correctly. After I proudly answered him “Yes,” he said: “That’s enough for you. Now quit school and help me.” My father was a very hard worker, an extraordinarily strong man who could go to work everyday carrying his specially-made, extra-large honey buckets. He was supporting our family by himself. My mother, Fumi Nagamine, overheard us while cooking sweet potatoes in the kitchen and said, “I don’t know why you say such a thing, my husband. In the future, the one who succeeds will be the one who has real ability. Kame (as my parents usually called me), you must study hard. Don’t give up, don’t quit.” I am grateful to my mother for allowing me to continue my schooling, even though she was struggling with the family’s financial problems.

When I reached the seventh grade, our principal regretfully had us transfer to another school because our village could not afford to hire one teacher for only three or four students who wished to go on to the eighth grade. I wanted to study hard and finish my elementary education so I would not betray my mother’s hope for me. But, what kind of school should I choose? I was confused because I needed a school that would fit my parent’s poor financial condition and my future plans. I decided to transfer to a school affiliated with a teacher’s college. In this way I could become a teacher, earn ¥12 a month for my parents, and at the same time open up a
path to my future success. Fortunately, I passed the examination for transfer students.

The teacher's college had burned down the previous year so students from the teacher's college, girls' school, and technology school were using Shuri Castle as their classrooms.

It was about two ri (seven miles) from my home to the castle. I had to walk to school because my parents could not afford paying ¥3 a month for me to board near the castle. I carried my books in a *furoshiki* and tied my *geta* and *zori* on my waist. I washed my feet in the river at Kanagusuku in Shuri and wore my *geta* to school. The water of Ryuhi Fountain was cold as ice, but I felt great because here I was drinking the precious water children of farmers were never allowed to touch in the old days. I considered myself very lucky. I never imagined studying at a place like Shuri Castle—a king's palace where ministers of state and nobles had gathered to discuss politics.

Sometimes during the physical education hours I saw my uncle from Itokazu practicing *karate* with his teacher, a six-footer. He moved his hands with a great shout, hitting his teacher's chest. I was impressed by his unusual force and skill. I admired him as a karate expert.

Three months had passed as quickly as a dashing horse. Senior students who had been our practice teachers passed their qualifying examinations and became teachers. We eighth graders also ended our education as our families could not afford more schooling.

**Tokyo or Hawaii?**

One of my senior friends, knowing that I was unemployed, recommended me as a part-time copyist for our Tomigusuku village office. My salary was 15 sen a day. I went to work only when they were busy, carrying my *imo-bento* (potato lunch), and wearing a worn out *hakama* (a divided skirt for men's formal wear). This was in 1904. The next year another senior friend advised me to work as a pharmacist for Dr. Seisei Gibo's medical office, where I could live in, eat free meals, and earn ¥3 a month. So I decided to quit my copyist job.

When I told my parents about the new job, they were happy and proud of me.

After some time, Dr. Gibo wanted me to go to Tokyo and become a medical doctor. He said there would be no worry because he had many friends in Tokyo. After thinking about this offer again and again, I decided to decline the offer and go instead to Hawaii to work. I felt I was not tough enough to work my way through college in Tokyo. Working in Hawaii would be a short-cut for me to make money and financially help my parents, I reasoned.

My mother agreed and helped me get permission to go to Hawaii. She took me to the Emigration Agency; it was during the Bon Festival in the 39th year of Meiji (1906). The people of Noha, seeing me busy preparing for
the trip, talked about me a lot. They said things like: "That woman sends such a young boy to Hawaii, you know." Although I was 15 years old and considered myself a mature man, I was still regarded as my mother's helpless child.

Mother somewhere found money to make the trip possible. Support and additional help came from Kyūzō Tōyama, a well-known man in Okinawa. According to a biography of Tōyama, written by Seiyei Wakukawa, he went to see the governor, Shigeru Narahara, several times to request approval to send emigrants from Okinawa. With no luck on these occasions, he made up his mind to talk with the governor one last time. He took a dagger with him, determined to kill the governor if he should deny the request again, and was prepared to commit suicide himself. Governor Narahara, realizing how serious Tōyama was, finally gave him approval for a "trial case." It was lucky for us who wished to go to Hawaii, and I am grateful to Tōyama.

When I departed Naha Harbor my mother sang loudly and danced with other women relatives until my ship went out of sight. Her song went like this: Kariyushi nu nashigwa, kariyushi nu funi ni tabi nu ichi, ichimu-dui mudui ichu ni we kara (my beloved child, on this auspicious ship, may your journey be as safe and straight as if linked by a silk thread)." I cried grateful tears when friends told me about this later.

Our boat first arrived at Naze Harbor, Oshima Island. When we landed, several women boarded and tried to sell kimonos which we did not need. At our second port, the harbor of Kagoshima, I remember we recited a famous phrase of Saigō Takamori: ten o uyamai, hito o aisu (Revere Heaven and Love People).'' Also, we visited Takamori's last resting place, and admired his teaching: "One does not buy beautiful rice paddies for his descendents," which means one should not spoil his children by leaving too much material wealth for them.

Next, our boat went to Kōbe. On the second day after arrival, we were given eye examinations. Following another two-day wait at a hotel we went to Yokohama to board the Mongolia that would finally take us to Hawaii.

Marooned on Midway

We were told the ship would reach Hawaii in less than 20 days. However, after one week, the ship ran aground near Midway island. All of us worked to move things from the front to the rear, hoping this would free the ship from the reef. The ship would not move and we began throwing heavy things overboard, keeping records of the things lost. A navy ship, the Ane-gawa, was in the area but could not rescue us because she did not have enough fuel. So, we landed on Midway and stayed in a tent for about a week.

Some passengers were allowed to stay in barracks at the U.S. Army Camp. It is embarrassing to mention, but the passengers had no knowledge of the western style bathroom with a flush-type toilet. Consequently, when
one military policeman came to check after two days, he was shocked and angry to see the toilet bowls overflowing. The whole room smelled bad. It was an unbearable sight! And as a result, they were chased out and ended up living in a tent on the sand with the rest of us.

There was nothing but the Army Camp on this small island; all we could see were miles and miles of water. There were many sea birds that seldom flew. When we chased them, they would escape to the ocean and swim away. It was good exercise because we slept better after chasing the birds. We got fresh water by simply digging about two feet down. And I recall the nights when small crabs came out and pinched our legs and arms. We all wished that a rescue boat would come quickly so we could get out of the mess. In the meantime, we discovered a Japanese cook in the camp and enjoyed visiting with him.

Finally, after a week, a boat named the Siberia, came and rescued us—our dream come true. Then as the boat started to sail a strange thing happened: the Mongolia, which had remained stuck on the reef, started to move. She sailed with the Siberia all the way to Honolulu.

**Burning Blisters Over A Fire**

After one week, we arrived in Honolulu and were sent to the Immigration and Naturalization Bureau. There were some “picture-brides” on our ship who met their husbands-to-be for the first time. Some were happy because their husbands were as handsome as they had expected. Others were disappointed when they found husbands who did not look like their pictures. Finally our turn came to be interviewed. My interviewer was Mr. Katsunuma, a very humorous man:

"Are you Choki Oshiro?"

"Yes, I am."

"You went to school wearing hakama didn’t you?"

"Yes, I did."

"Why didn’t you come wearing hakama today?"

"I didn’t because I thought hakama was not proper for work here."

That was all he asked me. Having passed the interview, I was sent to Kawasaki Hotel. I found out I was assigned to Spreckelsville on Maui. It is part of Puunene Plantation now. It was decided that I would work in East Camp, No. 5.

Mr. Kawasaki, the hotel owner, asked if I would like to work for him. He thought I was too young to work in the camp and said I could go to school from his place. I did not have an ear to listen to his kind words and told him I was a son of a poor family who needed to work to send some money home to help my parents. Thus, I politely declined his offer. This was just a few days before the Emperor’s Birthday, the third of November, 1906.

To become plantation workers, we had to get numbers from the plantation office. When I went to get my number, a Caucasian officer looked at
me, took my hands, and then shook his head. Later I learned that whether we were under a good haole foreman or not was actually a matter of life or death for us plantation workers. I was unlucky; the foreman who gave me the number was a bad and mean guy. He had given me a non-adult number. Unfortunately I did not realize this until my first payday when I found my salary, $10.00, was not full payment. Since the work there was hard, we could only work about 20 days a month. From my $10.00 salary, I paid $7.00 for meals, $1.00 for taking a bath, $1.00 for tabi (Japanese foot-wear), and $1.00 for a bentō box. It was unfair; I had to work as an adult worker, yet the salary was paid according to non-adult rates.

We ate breakfast at 4:30 a.m. and started work at 6:00 a.m., going to work by train. We suffered from blisters on our hands all the time. Because we did not have any medicine, we tried to cure them by burning them over the fire, at night, while we prepared for the next day’s work.

I remember I cried, regretting I had come to the camp. I thought I should have listened to the kind owner of Kawasaki Hotel. I worked about 20 days a month, and yet I could not send any money to my parents. There was no money left for me to save.

"Four-Finger" Counts "Animals"

One morning, when I went to work, a kokua luna (assistant foreman) asked, "Hey! How many Okinawans came?" He counted us as if counting animals. Since he used the Japanese counter for animals (-hiki), I did not comprehend what he had said. I asked him politely, "What did you say?" He yelled back at me angrily and became more aggressive. I remember asking myself, why? I was taught we Okinawans were also subjects of Imperial Japan. Also, I remembered the advice of one of my senior fellows: "If we should stumble down, we get up again. Thus we make Okinawa known to the world." And yet, this foreman was treating us like cats and dogs. Why? I was very, very hurt and before I noticed it, I was crying angry tears. I grabbed my lunch bag and rushed back to our camp. I did not see anyone on my way because I was crying so hard.

When I got there, an old man, who shared a room with me asked, "What happened to you? Isn’t it too early for you to come back? What’s wrong?" With tears, I told him what had happened—that I could not stand the nasty, cruel foreman and his insults. The old man held four fingers straight up in front of my eyes and told me the foreman was a Chōrinbō. I had never heard that word. There were no Chōrinbō in Okinawa.

He said, "These Chōrinbō are not allowed to sit with us ordinary people. Never mind what they say. Don’t pay any attention to them."

What he told me then jarred my memory. Our teacher in Okinawa, Tokiwa, once told us there were millions of Chōrinbō who did not have any family registers in Japan. Their ancestors were from Korea. They had come to Japan in groups as instructors in ceramics and other things at the invitation of the Japanese Government. Their descendents became butchers and
were discriminated against as pariahs or outcasts in our society because they broke the Buddhist code against killing. Consequently, they lost their dignity and society’s recognition of them as human beings. Since I was unfairly treated by one of these people at the plantation, I thought I had to work and study harder to be able to compete and surpass them—to be equal or better than they were. Thus, at every possible opportunity I read newspapers and magazines to improve myself.

A Friendly Angel

One day, a friend informed me that a school teacher had come to Paia to marry one of the plantation workers. “Why don’t we go to see the bride?” he said. I debated with myself: “Isn’t it silly for a man to peep at someone’s bride just to satisfy his curiosity?” There are probably special reasons why she wanted to come all the way from Okinawa to marry a plantation worker—it was a rare incident. Anyway, I decided to go and find out.

We reached the plantation camp early and walked around the camp since we had nothing else to do. Walking up a hill we passed a house where many people were gathered. A man about 40 or 50 years old, wearing a western suit, came out and invited us in. Since he was very polite, we went inside. We tried to sit in the back, but a man led us to the front. It was a Christian church. The polite man was Rev. Fukuda who began preaching the story of the Prodigal Son. I remember being very impressed and happy because this was the first time I was treated fairly and decently. I recall thinking that the world looks small, but is actually large, and that if there is a God who deserts us, there is also a God who saves us. Even I, a Prodigal Son, should not give up but must try my best to live as a human being.

After this initial contact with the church, I changed my work place from Spreckelsville Plantation with its “hey-how-many Okinawan (animals)-came-foreman,” and its $10.00 monthly salary, to nearby Wailuku Plantation. For two weeks, I did various jobs, oiled the sugar mill, and then went to work in the cane fields.

I remember an old couple, the cooks for the camp who made bentō (box lunches) and meals for me. I paid a cheap $6.50 a month and was grateful. They lived in the back of Wailuku town with two daughters and took care of several plantation workers. The younger daughter was a frank, humorous and friendly person. When I was in Okinawa, my teachers always scolded me for bad posture; I did not sit straight. Whenever the younger daughter saw me eating supper, she would hit my back lightly. Her mother scolded her, saying: “How impolite! You should not do such a thing to our customers.” I always told her mother that I did not mind it at all and was rather glad she cared enough to try to correct my posture.

On Sundays, about 10 o’clock, she would lead me to church through Chinatown, silently holding my hand. We went to church like this for about seven months. Even now, at the age of 87, I still remember her clearly. What she did for me, I can only understand as the deed of an angel, someone sent
from heaven to lead me to the church. She was about 13 years old, and I was 16 or 17. I already knew about *koi* (adoring, yearning) and *ai* (love); however, we never talked about *koi* or *aijo* (love, affection). Our feelings were truly naive, innocent and those of friendship.

Through the church I met friends like Mr. Gotô and Mrs. Kanda. Mrs. Kanda was a teacher at the Köken Girls’ School in Wailuku where she taught 14 or 15 girls etiquette and other things required to be good housewives. Also, I became a good friend of our minister and his family.

These friendships had become possible only through the help of my “angel.” When I remember her, I regret not doing anything in return for her. I intended to give a present, a token of my gratitude, but ended up not doing anything for her, something I have regretted throughout my life.

**Hunting for the Right Job**

At one time, I worked as an apprentice at an auto-repair shop, but quit since I could not stand the terrible smell of gasoline. I did not receive any pay there. I even had to bring my own lunch.

Next I worked for a laundry where I started from scratch and learned the ABC’s of the cleaning business. I learned to do my job successfully. It was during the Depression and the economic situation was bad. Therefore I received many orders for changing the color of dresses by re-dyeing them. I did it from the early morning on. Then I prepared my ironing set. It was an old-fashioned hinoshi iron with hot charcoal.

When I mastered handling and managing the laundry store, I began to go out. I bought a bicycle and went to the camps of Puunene Plantation and other places to take orders. At one time, I used a horse and buggy for taking orders and delivery, but since I had to feed the horse, it was rather troublesome and not very profitable.

I moved to Y-gap camp on the same plantation because friends from my hometown were working there raising sugarcane. One day, Matayoshi, one of my senior fellows from school, suggested we walk to Lahaina Plantation. Three of us started out about nine o’clock one morning. The road was winding, like *Nago no nanamagai* (Winding road of Nago), with very few cars. It was fun at the beginning and we felt like we were walking on a private road. But by four o’clock that afternoon when we came to Olowalu camp, our feet started to hurt and we had to rest and refresh ourselves with some soda drinks. Walking slowly, we finally reached Kiawe Camp on Lahaina Plantation.

We stayed at Matayoshi’s friend’s house and started to work after several days. I asked some young boys from Kin who were very good at chopping firewood to teach me because it was used to boil water for baths and being a good wood chopper was one mark of a good laborer. These boys from Kin were also taking English classes at night. I joined them and learned the Baldwin Reader up to Volume Four. Besides English classes, I started to learn how to cook and smoke. I knew very little about cooking, only how to
wash and cook rice, and even less about smoking. I tried smoking because it was the only way for us workers to get a few moments rest during the working day. I tried it, but had to give it up because it was too bitter. I have never smoked again.

I also remember my first drinking experience. It was on the Emperor's birthday, when we toasted with beer. I was drunk after the fifth bottle. I lay down on the grass in the yard to rest and fell asleep. When I woke up my friends teased: "Didn't those people come in your dream? You are sleeping on top of them." I had been sleeping on an ancient Hawaiian graveyard.

In that area there were many mango trees on both sides of a river. Picking and eating mangoes was a great pleasure for us.

Maruyama Camp was located on a hill. I worked in the sugar cane field there for 18 months and earned almost 300 dollars. I think I sent some money to my parents at that time.

Lahaina Plantation was unique. When it rained and the reservoir filled up I was assigned to hanaawai, field irrigation. I went to work carrying a lantern and my bentō. I also always secretly kept my Baldwin textbook in my pocket. I had to fill the ditches by myself. It took a long time and had to be done skillfully, otherwise there would be no time for me to catch some sleep. First I opened up the water gate for the upper two or three ridges, then waited until the water reached the lower ridges.

One day, while reading my textbook and waiting for the water, I heard a sound like human footsteps walking through the cane field. I looked up wondering who it could be. To my surprise it was my grandmother in her everyday clothes. I called "Grandma!" then she disappeared. Three months after this incident, I received a letter informing me of her death. She must have been worried and wanted to see for herself how I was doing in Hawaii. She came to see me that night in the cane field and probably was relieved because I was well and doing fine. I cried, thinking of her deep and beautiful love. Whenever I remembered this, I cried in gratitude.

**Move to Honolulu**

I made up my mind to study as much as possible so I would not have to be insulted and discriminated against by the Japanese any more. With that resolution I came to Honolulu at the end of 1910. For a country boy, it was not easy to find a job in Honolulu. But as a professional laundry man, I soon answered a want ad from a laundry specializing in western clothes. When I started to work, I found it was not an ordinary laundry shop. They washed nothing but army clothes such as uniform khaki pants and leggings. The clothes were boiled in a huge iron pot with washing soap and petroleum. I had to wash these steaming hot clothes with a scrubbing brush. It was a painful job, and my nails split and started to bleed. I quit after one week. I again looked for a laundry that specialized in regular western clothes. Fortunately I found one owned by Mr. Nakamura from Okinawa.

One day Mr. Nakamura asked me if I was a believer of Christianity or a
believer of Buddhism. I told him I was a Christian. Then he told me to visit the Salvation Army, which he was a member of. The Army building was next to the laundry shop and there was a gathering of Sunday school children. As soon as I sat down, he introduced me as Oshiro sensei (teacher) and told the children I would speak to the morning class. This was the first time in my life I had been called sensei. I stood up, but my legs were shaky and I don't even remember what I talked about.

Learning English and Waiting

I worked as a waiter and orderly at Queen's Hospital in 1911. About four o'clock in the morning I started my first job, unloading ice from a truck and storing the ice in refrigerators. Then, after breakfast, I worked as a waiter and orderly.

In those days there were many wounded outpatients at the hospital. My job was to move them from a stretcher to a bed. As an orderly, I had to hurry to the bed of a patient whenever he rang the bell. I sometimes mistook my bell with a nurse's call or otherwise goofed, but it became my charm and pleased the people around me.

There was an old patient at the hospital who came from the mainland. I helped him take a bath and gave him a massage for 15 minutes. In return he gave me a dollar. On the way to my evening English class, I dropped by the Blaisdell Hotel where he later stayed and got one dollar, which was a lot of money. This became my daily routine. When he returned to the mainland he gave some money to each of the people working at the hospital, as was the custom when a rich patient was released. I worked at the hospital for several years.

About that time, I heard a visitor staying at the Moana Hotel was looking for a waiter. They were a newlywed couple from New York and they drank a lot. When I got there at nine o'clock they were still sleeping. I went to work for them the next day. They were out and the room was a mess with dirty shoes and clothes. Fortunately I worked for laundry shops, so I knew how to handle the mess. I brushed out mud from the clothes and cleaned stains and dirt, using benzine. Then I pressed the clothes and hung them in the closet. I also cleaned and polished their shoes. They were very satisfied with my work. That became my daily assignment. One day the couple asked me if I would like to go to New York with them. They told me there would be no money problems because they would pay for everything. I was very grateful. However, Dr. Seisei Gibo, my doctor in Okinawa, came to Hawaii to open a clinic in Waipahu. Consequently I had to decline the invitation and stayed to help the doctor as his interpreter and pharmacist. This was in 1913. The doctor stayed for three years and returned to Okinawa. While he was in Hawaii, I drove a Ford as his chauffeur. I often went to Dr. Yamamoto's office in Waialua on various errands. I was the first Okinawan in Waipahu to drive a car. When he returned to Okinawa, he sold the Ford to Mr. Serikaku on monthly installments. Serikaku paid only at the beginning
and went bankrupt when his business failed. Since I was involved in the deal between them, I completely lost face, and was very troubled.

After the incident, I became an insurance salesman in 1916 for Crown Life of Canada, mainly on Oahu and the Big Island. In those days, insurance salesmen were considered bullies so I felt it was not my kind of job. Yet I could not quit because there were no other good jobs for me.

I was renting a house at that time. My landlord always carried a hammer when he collected the rent. It scared me, especially when I wanted to ask to put off my rental payment.

One day at the post office I met a middle-aged man from Okinawa who could not cash a registered money order from Okinawa for lack of a co-signer. Coming from the same prefecture, I felt sorry for him and co-signed for him. He was very grateful and thanked me repeatedly.

After that incident, the manager of a bank offered me work at $65 a month to start and gradual salary raises to follow. Finally, I solved my rent problems. This was in 1924.

Second Marriage

I married Uto Oshiro in 1918 and our son Albert Chosei was born in 1919. Uto died in 1920. Three years after her death, Seisuke Kaneshiro asked if I wanted to marry a very nice girl who lived on a plantation. I went to see her. She had just graduated from school and did not look like the type to work on the plantation. I thought I would take her as my wife if her parents and she would agree. My friends were very happy for me and offered to help as "go-betweens".

I went to see her parents with Mr. Ômine and other friends of mine. By chance her father, Mr. Takayesu, was the man I had helped at the post office and things went smoothly. He accepted my proposal, saying, "I will be very happy if it is you who takes my daughter Kiku as a wife." I consulted with the minister of our church concerning the procedure. Mr. and Mrs. Omuro of the Methodist Church kindly agreed to be our "go-between." Everything went favorably and we got married on May 9, 1924. My household worries disappeared. We had six children between 1925 and 1943: Nancy Keiko, Thomas Yukio, Ruth Taeko, Paul Yutaka, Alice Fujiko, and Timothy.

Working in the Bank of Hawaii accounting department from 1924–1941, I prepared semi-annual reports to submit to our main office twice a year, in June and December since I was the only one among the four staff members who could calculate the percentage of interest charged or earned on loans and deposits. As the only Japanese employee I handled Japanese customers' accounts.

I learned accounting and bookkeeping from Mr. Fukuhara, also from Okinawa, who worked at Asano Chuya Ginkô (Asano Day and Night Bank) in Honolulu. We met and became close friends while studying at the Y.M.C.A. Various people visited the Y.M.C.A., and I enjoyed listening to informal discussions with people like Mr. Sōga, president of Nippu jijisha
(the present Hawaii Times), and Mr. Kawakami, who had come back from the U.S. mainland. Since I had previously read the Accounting Correspondence Course from Waseda University, I had some knowledge about it, but meeting with these people and listening to their talks really benefitted me. There was a series of seminars on bookkeeping sponsored by the Japanese Chamber of Commerce. There were quite a few people studying bookkeeping, from the simple system to double entry. However, many of the people quit after one semester. Although I was not smart and quick, I never gave up and mastered the theories and practices of bookkeeping after the third semester.

When World War II came, I lost my job as bookkeeper because I was an alien. However, during the war many small Japanese merchants ran into problems because there was no accounting office which could help them. The office of a district court practitioner did some accounting and preparation, but the office secretary could not adequately explain in Japanese to the Japanese merchants so they began to ask my help in filing income tax returns. This got me started in my part-time accounting practice.

In 1942–1943 I worked as a laborer in the Kiawe Corps. We cleared a lot of kiawe trees on Oahu so the military could use the land.

In 1944 I started as a laborer for the Army Corps of Engineers and later qualified as a crane operator. I stayed there until 1947.

I opened an accounting office on Depot Street in Waipahu in 1948. My wife Kiku started a vegetable and flower shop at the same location. My accounting practice became successful over a period of time as more and more small merchants came to me. In 1956 I qualified as a Public Accountant under the Territorial Board of Accountancy. I officially retired in 1968 and finally retired in 1975, about seven years later than I had planned since my clients either could not or would not engage another accountant—I felt obligated to meet their needs.

Okinawan Issei Friends

Tetsuo Toyama joined the world of journalism from among a group of immigrant laborers. Competing with two large Japanese language newspapers in Hawaii, he never yielded his position to others. To me he was a model for the first immigrants in Hawaii. Throughout his lifetime, he competed with Japanese immigrants from other prefectures. He published *Jitsugyō no Hawaii* and after World War II, he also published a monthly magazine *Shimin [Citizen]*. He faced others with pride and great dignity; he was acknowledged by everyone as a great hero. I was his long-time friend. I cannot forget his wife’s strong moral support behind his success. She did all the miscellaneous jobs collecting advertisements and subscription fees. She was kind and helpful to the subscribers, and treated them as if she were their sister. She was a good wife.

Sanra Onaha was also from Okinawa, from Shuri I believe. I knew him since the time I worked at Wailuku on Maui. He was working at *Hawaii*
Hochi newspaper and whenever he saw me, he asked me, “Are you reading any newspaper?” When I told him that I was not, he delivered a copy of the newspaper to me the following day. He was an efficient and helpful person, and I learned a lot from him. I had many good friends from Shuri.

Since Onaha was a friend of Dr. Yamashiro of Wailuku, he often visited Wailuku and became a good friend of plantation workers, who were there from Shuri. Dr. Yamashiro was an officer in the Salvation Army and during the war, he went back to Okinawa with his wife to help Okinawans there. He worried about the poor medical conditions in Okinawa and tried his best to solve the problems. He even negotiated with the U.S. Army concerning the matter. He finished his life in Okinawa.

Now I want to talk about some Okinawan people in Hawaii who are my seniors. In Waipahu plantation area, where I live, there is Hodô Nagamine’s family from the island of Hawaii. Mr. Nagamine has already passed away, but his children all grew up to be successful. Only one of them is in Waipahu now, the others are in Honolulu. Nagamine was a very good leader for us, always willing to offer his time for people from Okinawa. He established an Okinawan society to guide younger ones and children. We do not see people like him often.

Chôzin Kaneshiro was also from the Big Island. He was my good friend and a sincere, frank person. His eldest son, Seiichi, and his wife are still active as exemplary leaders of younger people. Mr. Kaneshiro was tough. He was able to carry a cart as heavy as 300 pounds, I heard. He was a lovable and good-natured person. One of his sons was a captain in the U.S. Army during the World War II and became a schoolteacher. He was the one who saved my life when I fell into the sea and almost drowned as a child in Okinawa.

Seisuke Kaneshiro, at the celebration of his 88th birthday, invited a tour group from his wife’s hometown, Kin-son. He is lucky, because his children are all rich. His retired life is truly a happy one.

Chôgorô Ôshiro, a labor contractor in Papaaloa, was one of the most successful men in the days when the Big Island was more prosperous. He was from Aza Noha in Tomigusuku Village of Shimajiri County, Okinawa. He came to Hawaii by a ship, Chûsamaru, in January of the 40th year of Meiji (1907). He worked in Overend Camp of Honokaa plantation for about one year and was well-recognized by the plantation owner. There with the owner’s favor he started various jobs by contract. This was the beginning of his fortune. He was always nice and associated with others with a smile. He was talented, or rather had the unique ability to control his workers successfully and efficiently. Consequently over 100 workers, Filipinos as well as people from Okinawa, came to work under him. He was given a camp by the plantation owner and named this Ôshiro Camp. This camp was located on Papaaloa hill. His sugar cane lands were of an incomparably large scale. When there were enough plantation workers, he rented several hundred acres and made them into a sugar cane field. It is said that he once earned
over $3000 from one harvest. At present his farming land has been reduced to 200 acres, but there are not many who own 200 acres of sugar cane lands in Hawaii. This also will tell how big his business used to be. According to people, he already had several tens of thousands of dollars when he was as young as 32 years old. He was a man of gentle and sound spirit. He was also very steady and frank. He never showed a hostile attitude towards others even if they deserved it. Generally a person in such a situation becomes boastful and insolent. Also such a person usually does not care about other people’s pains and troubles. He was, however, really different. He was always humble and never infringed upon his worker’s rights. He was never elated by his success and other’s flattery. He loved reading books and tried improving himself. Although he had graduated only from an advanced elementary school, he had good knowledge and common sense. He deserves to be praised as a very valuable asset for the society. He served as a secretary of the Okinawan Kenjinkai in Hawaii and made contributions to the public. If I should talk about his contributions, I could talk endlessly. Later he came up to Honolulu and then moved to Lanai. One time he raised vegetables and another time he worked in a pineapple cannery. He unfortunately died in a plantation field. I think most of his savings were donated for the public welfare.

Besides him, there was another unusual, unique person. According to what I heard from him personally, he had never attended a school. In Hawaii, he, who was illiterate, realized the necessity of reading English and Japanese newspapers. He desperately studied both English and Japanese languages. His spare time was used only for studying. As a result of this long and hard battle, he became fluent in English as well as Japanese. He was a man of knowledge and was too good to be a mere laborer. I learned a lesson by reading his stories and other things written in English. They showed me that one’s effort could really produce something great.

Saburō Nakahodo’s wife became 88 years old this year, I think. His son is an engineer working for the government. Mrs. Nakahodo is living happily with her three grandchildren.

Speaking of Mr. Nakahodo, a daughter of the head household of the family is married to Chōho Ōshiro, who came to Hawaii as a laborer. Mr. Ōshiro was not a farmer. Since he had been a schoolteacher, labor jobs were not suitable for him. Later he was tempted by his friends and gave himself to gambling. There he forgot about his duty as a laborer and started to degrade himself. In the end he became a problem and had to go back to Okinawa. When he came to visit his relatives in Wahiawa, he told us about his going back to Okinawa. I tried my best to convince him not to return, but it did not do any good. It was too bad. If he had worked in the plantation, he would not have become involved with any bad friends and on the contrary could have found good friends. If the friends from the same hometown had respected him and helped each other according to the American laws, and had he paid his taxes, his retired life would have been comfortably sup-
ported by a pension. I don't know what happened to his wife. She has probably gone to the U.S. mainland or somewhere.

**Men and Women**

The problems between men and women in the old days were complicated. Once a woman in a plantation camp was kidnapped. We searched for her everywhere and finally found her in a hotel room in Honolulu. She was locked in there. I also went there with others to talk with the guy who had kidnapped her. The guy was tough and violent, but he had no reason to be: there is no law which allows someone to steal someone else's wife like that. He finally gave up, because we had told him we might sue him if he didn't listen. So we told him we wouldn't have a grudge or any hard feeling against him if he apologized and willingly agreed to send her back to her husband. He agreed and we took her back with us.

Another case happened at Ewa Plantation. A husband came home and found his wife had left him. She took all of her belongings with her. He went to report it to the office. Unfortunately the interpreter was out, so he found himself in a communication problem. He didn't know what to do. A white man asked him *osumara* (what's the matter?). He told the man, **"Mii, wahine, ten kuraaku, Honolulu kisha pau"** (My wife is gone to Honolulu. She took the 10:00 train.) In this way, our immigrants' lives, half a century ago, had many funny stories. And all this was because we could not understand or speak English.

**Communicating in old (Japanese) English**

Now I am writing about other people, but someone else may ask me, **"How about you? Could you use English fluently?"** My answer is of course **"No!"** I also goofed and had some embarrassing episodes myself. Once I heard one of my fellows asking what time it was. Another man answered **"Happa tsurii"** (half past three). Later when I was taking a bath, one of my senior fellows asked me how many bales of *pulapula* (seed cane) I had cut. So I answered **"Happa tsurii"**. Then he laughed and told me that I should say **"Tsurii no hafu baiki"** (three and a half bags).

Our English in those days was really funny. A contract worker in Lahaina Plantation was asked by his superiors **"How many people are working here?"** He answered, **"Ten, ten, wan burooku"** (Ten, ten, one broke), in loud voice. The supervisor said, **"All right, boys,"** and galloped away. What the worker meant to say is that ten plus ten minus one, 19. The English of our immigrants, who had come here early in this century, was really funny and you could hear hilarious stories like this everywhere.

Even place names were funny to us. For instance, there was a harbor, called *Laupahoehoe* on the Island of Hawaii. Though it is seldom used now, the harbor was busy in those days. While the ship anchored off the coast, a small boat handled by two crews took passengers to the shore. When the surge pushed the boat up, the crews helped passengers to land. The crews
would toss up a passenger and the people on the shore would catch him. It was certainly dangerous, but now it is a story of the past. Now Hawaii island has berths, in addition to airplanes and automobiles.

**Helping Hands**

While I was working at Queen's Hospital as an elevator boy around 1911, Mr. Yasunori (Hotoku) Higa came from the island of Hawaii. It was the best days for Okinawan immigrants and he soon became a manager of the Kyushuya Inn. We became good friends. One day I had to work late at night and decided to stay overnight at the inn. He told me to go to his house to rest for a while, as it was not very late yet. After a delicious supper, Mrs. Higa said, "Mr. Oshiro, you are a married man and your wife is waiting for you. So you should not stay out like this. It is not too late yet. Let my husband take you home." Then they gave me a ride home. Mr. Higa, since his young days when he was still a bachelor, was always willing to help poor students. With his help some became doctors and others became scholars and so on.

There was a Dr. Yamashiro who became an excellent doctor, thanks to Mr. Higa's help. When one of my friend's wife became seriously sick with a high fever and was in critical condition, Dr. Yamashiro came. He repeatedly said, "Mrs., I am a doctor. I will surely cure you. The gods will not take your life! Don't worry. Pray for Buddha's mercy and help. Don't even doubt it. Just believe in Buddha's mercy. I'll cure you by all means and you try to believe in your recovery." She recovered and has been healthy ever since. This incident became well known. When Mr. Higa became sick, Dr. Yamashiro did his best to cure him. Although he was unsuccessful, Mr. Higa must have been very happy and died in peace, for he had been attended to by his favorite doctor who was like a loving son. In fact, Dr. Yamashiro's case is only one example. Mr. Higa used most of his money to help others and was respected by many young people.

Mrs. Higa was also a great and wise woman. I think she believed in the famous Japanese saying, "Waga mi o tsunette hito no itasa o shire" (Give a pinch to yourself and know the other's pain). She was from Aza Taira of Tomigusuku-son.

When Mr. Higa went back to Okinawa to visit, he brought back cloth made from the fiber of banana leaves. When he passed away soon after that, people talked about the cloth, saying he probably had foreseen his death and brought back the cloth for his funeral. I believe he sacrificed his whole life to help and serve others. He spent almost all the money he received from the hotel, to help poor students. He was satisfied with it and was happy. Even after he got married, he never changed his ideal and spirit of sacrifice.

There is a person named Maruyasu, who also had only elementary school education. He is from Nishihara-son and quite different from other people. He is a very good writer. He was selling food and miscellaneous items to workers in Waipahu Plantation for a long time. Even during the
war, he did a good job in distributing those goods to the people. After that, he started a noodle shop with his wife. They also succeeded in that business. When they retired, they kindly transferred their ownership of the shop to my child. *Hibi kōjitsu* (Everyday is a good day) and *Hiyamikachi, mada korekara da, oretachi wa* (Let’s rise again, we are still young and have many things to do in the future!). With such mottoes, he makes a rich and happy life with whatever he has. He writes a good hand and reads many books. He is also a good speaker, but hardly meets with others, because he is shy and humble. However when he must, he gives an excellent speech. His speech is simple, clear and always impresses the audience. I am lucky to be his friend. He has various hobbies. For instance, he is an expert of *bonsai* (dwarf trees). His home life was not a very happy one, but it never bothers him. He is satisfied with what he has and optimistically lives his days. He says, ‘‘*hiyamikachi, mada korekara da, oretachi wa 75-sai no seinen de aru*’’ (Let’s rise again, we are 75 year old YOUTHS! We are still young). I learn a lot from him.

In the main section of Waipahu, there is a well-known Takayesu Bicycle Shop. Now Mr. Takayesu’s son is the owner of the shop. Both the father and son have been doing their business successfully. Mr. and Mrs. Takayesu worked desperately selling, repairing and established the foundation of their business. Their son sells various new models, made in Europe as well as in U.S.A. for the younger generation. Mr. and Mrs. Takayesu are very honest and kind. They also work hard and are loved by children. Even after they gave the store to their son, they were helping their customers with a smile. Now they are retired and although they seldom visit the store, they are still in good health. Mr. Takayesu is 91 years old now, but never looks as old as his actual age. Mr. and Mrs. Takayesu remind me of the saying, ‘‘*Shōjiki no kōbe ni kami yadoru*’’ (God dwells in an honest heart). They are eager believers and members of the Salvation Army. Some of their grandchildren are on the mainland (U.S.A.) and the others are in Pearl City. Both Mr. and Mrs. Takayesu are from Awase, Okinawa, and have been Christians from before coming to Hawaii.

The eldest son owns the bicycle shop and the second son is an attorney. The second son is an interesting man. During school vacations, he sometimes worked as a government construction laborer and as a salesman. He was very courageous and independent. Now, he is settled down, but he was very active when he was young. He called me, ‘‘Chōki,’’ and I was very proud of having such a young friend. His wife is from Maui. One time, when his wife went to visit her family on Maui, he went with her. He told her parents they should be happy and proud of their daughter being married to an Okinawan. I understand everybody burst into laughter. If there is one who can say such a manly thing, it is he. I was impressed by this episode and thought he was the very person we might call an Okinawan. He was brave, because people from Yamatu (Japan) and those from Okinawa were not considered to be equal in those days. I think it was the good old days,
when we could still see such a character as his. In those days, on one of the islands, a father committed suicide because his daughter had fallen in love and married a man from Okinawa. This tells the extent of the discrimination against Okinawan people in those days.

My World View

At present it is the time of second and third generations and we, the first generation, do not have any right to interfere. Free marriage is naturally accepted without any problem. My son once asked if he should marry an Okinawan girl. I told him he would not have to worry about her racial background and he could marry anyone of his choice. Now we live in such a blessed world, in which all of us are like brothers and sisters. Everyone should be friendly, help each other and try to avoid any possibility of wars in the future. Don’t you agree with me? People in some countries consider subjugating other countries to be good. I feel pity for such people. These type of people are always trying to find other people’s weak points. They often exaggerate it to put them into a fix. We must be careful about this type of people, because they are cruel enough even to laugh at others when they fall into a fix. However righteousness and justice will always overcome evil. It is just as said in a Japanese saying, *Tabi wa michizure, yo wa nasake* (In travelling, companionship; in life, kindness). We all must love each other, help each other, compromise with each other and make this world enjoyable.

In Mr. Higa’s days, Teikan Miyasato was working at the Yoneya Inn. He also devoted himself to helping people from his hometown. Later Mr. Miyasato went back to Japan and owned a successful Japanese inn in Kobe. When I stayed at his inn, on the way back from my trip to Okinawa in 1940, he said war might start soon and advised me to stay in Japan. I told him that I’d rather die with my children and grandchildren in Hawaii. If I had stayed in Japan one more week, I would have lost my job.

On December 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor was attacked by Japan. The Arizona was sunk with her crew aboard. It’s still there and people pray for the crew when they visit. I too have gone there two or three times. If it were in Japan, they would probably not leave her under the water and so close to the island. Their families would not let it happen because of a religious difference. Anyway it seems that many Japanese tourists also visit Pearl Harbor nowadays. Probably it is also recognizing a brave spirit to leave crew members with their ship like this.

I, from the bottom of my heart, wish we would have a peaceful world without any war in future. A peaceful world is the most desirable. I, as a pacifist, always believe in pacifism. Among my friends, there was one who came to Hawaii as an immigrant, when he was young, in order to avoid being drafted for military service in Okinawa. I heard he quit his schooling in Okinawa as a third grader and came to Hawaii. He was indeed a pacifist. When he was young, he sent out letters to various countries in the world to
advocate world peace. Almost all the countries responded to him. I was very much impressed when he showed those letters to me. I admired him, because he actually demonstrated and showed what he believed in. He did not just talk about it. This is Hashiji Kakazu of Kona, originally from Itoman, Okinawa.

The Okumuras of Makiki Christian Church

"Trust and love, then you will see no rivals," the late Rev. Takie Okumura told us. He also said we must make up our mind to stay in the United States as permanent residents. "We must raise our children to be sincere American citizens, so that they might be proud of themselves. Giving a good education to our children is the most important responsibility of parents. In order to move to the mainland U.S.A., where there is a vast land, as successful immigrants, it would be best if four or five of us make a team and work as agricultural laborers to collect necessary money and start some business together. There are many Japanese in California and they need young hard workers. Boys, be ambitious! Our dream is right there. Work sincerely and healthily, and then no poverty will catch up with you. Also patience is the essential foundation to be successful. If you should continue working and making your efforts, you will surely be rewarded. Trust and work. Be patient and wait for your chance. The only way for the youth to succeed is to work." Because of this teaching and ideal, he was called down by some people as a traitor to Japan. In their opinion, Rev. Okumura tried creating agricultural slaves, instead of encouraging them to study, and training illiterate young people to be servants. In my opinion, he was right. There is no other choice but hard work for young people to be financially successful.

In my view, the allegations that appeared in Japanese language newspapers were totally personal accusations based on hatred towards him. In those days Japanese language newspapers took sides with non-Christians and obviously showed their personal hatred toward Christians. They judged social events and happenings from an emotional base. It seems to me it was also a religious conflict.

Nowadays, since people have more understanding about different ideologies and are rich in ideas, they don't fight over such small problems. Both the society and journalists are now fairer and have better understanding. In the old days, however, Japanese society had various problems which were hard to understand. We laborers were careful not to cause problems; we improved ourselves and cooperated with each other. Consequently, today's life is more efficient and comfortable. The memory of Rev. Okumura, who was often spoken ill of, tells me that he after all was a man of foresight. Looking at Makiki Seijō Kyōkai, towering like a castle by McKinley High School, I can see how carefully he planned, having looked far into the future.

There is one unforgettable thing about him. I was baptised by him at Wailuku Church on Maui about 1910. Even after I came back to Honolulu, I
still kept close contact with him and spent a good deal of time with other young people at Aiyu Club (Friendship Club). I learned a lot from them. Even after I had moved to Waipahu, he never forgot my birthday. He always sent me a letter and his calligraphy as a birthday present a few days before my birthday. I still keep them with me. Rev. Okumura was, among the Japanese in those days, a master of calligraphy. Mrs. Okumura managed Okumura Home, a boarding house for students from other islands. She took care of them very kindly. The Okumura Home was famous. Many students who stayed there became educators and politicians. Rev. Okumura invited students to his church and took care of them like a father. Their parents were also happy. He took care of not only students but also laborers. He devoted himself to social welfare. Consequently, the majority of church members were laborers. He took an electric train from Liliha to Kalihi to cover a larger area in his work. Rev. Okumura educated four or five students to be ministers. He enjoyed writing and sent his calligraphy for our birthdays. He was never late doing this for almost 300 members of his church. Since he loved us so much, even I who was not a very good church member was very much impressed. I never forgot the birthday donation to the church. The church was prosperous and at every service, we welcomed some new members.

A Friend Came from Afar

After retiring in 1968 I decided the best way to learn was by travelling so I visited Japan, Europe, and South America.

There were many Okinawan immigrants in Peru. Especially among the people from Kin-son were owners of large farms who invited young people from their hometowns to work on their farms.

I never imagined we would have a welcome party there. As I watched the street in front our hotel, a young woman asked me what part of Okinawa I was from. I told her that I was from Tomigusuku in Shimajiri. Then she said, "Oh my! Nobody came here to welcome you. I know some people from that village." As soon as she said this, she rushed out to tell the people about my coming. About 20 young men and women gave a welcome party. However, they all looked very tired and sleepy so I tried to make my stay short. I wanted them to go home early to get enough rest. A laborer's life is the same no matter where you go. I heartily thanked them for coming after their hard work. I said, "Please work in good health and take care of your health. The mission of our community association is cooperation and mutual assistance. It is to live in peace and comfort. Please work in harmony with the people from other villages. Thank you very much for coming in spite of your being very tired." I heard that the parties for the people from Kin-son and Gushikawa villages were also friendly and successful. It was as a famous old saying, "A friend came from afar, and we are very happy."

My niece and her family live in Saõ Paulo, Brazil. There are also some people from my hometown there. I felt very sorry for them, because, in spite of the fact that Brazil is as large as all the other countries in South America
combined, these people lived in a poor slum-like, overcrowded place. Laundry hung everywhere. They were living happily, but I wish they could live comfortably after their retirement. It would be nice to have a piece of farmland, even a small one.

**Land is a Treasure**

I am nobody but a retired old man in Hawaii, which is a small state, but I have fruit trees, such as orange, avocado, banana and fig, in my own yard. In mango season, my grandchildren come over and eat our mangoes, which is a great joy for me. Watering, picking up fallen leaves—such a daily routine is enjoyable. I am glad I can do it, because such yard work is ideal for keeping healthy. I have been in Hawaii for 72 years, and this year, for the first time, we were warned to save water. We did not have much rain this year. The sun was shining over us all year around. Still Hawaii is the most comfortable place to live and I am grateful I can live here. There are also many people from Okinawa here.

I really sympathize with the Okinawans in Brazil and feel sorry for them. If the Okinawans there could buy some land, at least 10 to 100 acres, their descendants would greatly benefit. I believe in any time land is a treasure. No matter how you use it, it will give you comfort. The land may be used as a farm, orchard, or to grow trees and flowers as a hobby. This is my concern about them. I do not think I understand what the Okinawans there have in mind. To me, they are extremely small-minded.

Even a person like me, who lives in such a small place as Hawaii, had bought and kept 2.5 acres of land and some residential quarters for future use. However, during World War II, our property was condemned by the U.S. Navy. Since they at least paid the original purchase price to me, I did not lose any money. I bought three acres of land on the island of Hawaii, but I gave it to my son.

**Helping the Homeland**

After the war, there was a group effort to send second-hand clothes to Okinawa. In Waipahu we collected old clothes and some English textbooks. A Japanese language school kindly let us use their classrooms for packing the clothes and textbooks into boxes. We also sent many of our own books.

Since there was no institute for higher education in Okinawa, we wanted to have a college there and appealed to the U.S. military offices concerning the matter. It took something like a war and a new administration to bring about the drastic change in thinking necessary to establish a college in Okinawa. Now we have a college because the military offices recognized the goodwill movement of the Okinawa Rescue-Welfare Committee in Hawaii.

We tried to encourage young Okinawans' enthusiasm for studying and learning. When the Okinawan Government selected five students to study at the University of Hawaii and other American universities, two or three members of our committee, including the chairman, took them around to
be introduced. They went to the other islands, too. Since I was one of the members, I got acquainted with these boys and continued corresponding until recently.

**A Visit Back Home**

My children want to go to Okinawa this summer, so I am thinking of going with them if I will not be a burden to them. My brother, my son, and some of my relatives and their families still live in my hometown. However, I understand that all my school friends have passed away. I feel very lonely just thinking about it, I am alone. Counting in the Japanese way, I have already reached my 88th year. If I count my age in the American way (since I am a naturalized American citizen), I must, with God's mercy, live until next year in order to celebrate my 88th birthday [an auspicious occasion in Japanese tradition].

One's hometown is a very dear place. Until the 39th year of Meiji, when I was 15 years old, I had been raised on potatoes and miso soup and had enjoyed the air and water of that place. I will never be able to forget my hometown. I played in the mountains and in the ocean there in my elementary school days. My hometown! I sincerely hope I can go and walk on the land once again while I am in good health. I have various hopes and wishes for Okinawa, this one island in the ocean. Many of the beaches in Okinawa are suitable as reclaimed lands. The population there is quickly increasing, and their land is limited. Therefore they should reclaim more lands, I think. Once, we Okinawans in Hawaii established a small company to reclaim some land in Awase. However, we failed in the middle because unfortunately, what we Okinawans in Hawaii thought and people in Okinawa thought were a little different, and we could not reach any agreement easily. I bought some stocks in that company and lost my money. However, I am still happy, because I did something good for Okinawa.

I think the Okinawan Government should seriously consider emigration as a way out. They must consider quickly sending out Okinawan people to larger countries such as Brazil, where the population is still small, before other countries send their people. Brazil is about 140 times larger than Japan. The best thing for the Okinawan Government to do is to make a plan to buy uncultivated and uncivilized lands in Brazil and send out our people there to settle. As people say, "First come, first choice." Don't you think so?

**American Citizenship**

My ancestors, grandparents, parents and sisters were all buried here in Hawaii—I took responsibility for their remains and had them brought to Hawaii. Of course my hometown is Okinawa, but my ancestors are here. For most people, the purpose of visiting their hometown is to visit their ancestors' graveyards. In my case, however, the purpose of visiting my hometown is merely to visit my relatives.
I became a naturalized citizen of the United States in 1953 and have a voting right. The year 1978 is the year to elect the governor, mayor, senators and house representatives. I am going to vote with my children. Everyone has his own choice. Since I am a member of Democratic Party, I am hoping for our party's victory. I don't have to worry about campaigning too much this time, because there is no candidate whom I associate with. When someone in our family or relatives becomes a candidate, we become very busy. For example, when my son-in-law (Robert Oshiro) became a candidate, we were terribly busy. Fortunately he won the race three times, so we can talk about it as a happy memory. Some candidates march through the streets with campaign flags and music. Others visit each house to ask people's support. When they are elected, the candidate invites the people who supported him and gives them a feast with nice music. There he can collect some money himself. He also becomes popular. He will represent the people of his district and present their requests to the legislature. If he should be successful, he will make some money again. Those who are called legislators seem to try their best to always make money. However, they are also very busy. If one should be elected as many as five times [serve ten years], there seems to be a pension after his retirement. Most candidates are attorneys or doctors, so to win the election is very profitable for them. In recent years, the number of women candidates has increased.

There are several problems here. Our present governor, George Ariyoshi, is a Japanese-American. On the other hand, Mayor Fasi is an Italian-American. This mayor is quite a shrewd man. First of all, since both of them belong to Democratic Party, there will be a serious competition between them.

Hawaii is small, and yet there are too many people. Because of our nice climate and weather conditions, many people move here from the mainland. There are also refugees, and the number of unemployed people has also increased. Welfare problems become more and more serious. It is a governor's big task and burden to reduce the number of such welfare and unemployed people. I think the situation in Okinawa is probably the same.

Some of Life's Pleasures

In the garden at my house, there are many trees, such as mango, tangerine, orange, lychee, loquat, avocado, fig, mountain apple, banana and so on. The loquat is well known among Okinawans as a medicine for cystitis and diabetes, so many people come to our place to pick the leaves and branches. I am glad that I can offer this to them. People also come to pick mango and avocados. They look happy and so I too am happy. We have both Okinawan deigo and Hawaiian deigo trees. They bloom one after another with beautiful red flowers. I have a plant which is said to have been picked from a cliff near my hometown. It is nothing unusual, but I am growing it with pleasure, because when I look at it, I feel as if I were in my hometown.
When figs ripen and yellow, small birds such as sparrows and mejiro (white eyes) come to eat. Looking at the birds eating my fruits is also a happiness to me. In the old days, there were more forests and mountains and the birds didn’t come down to the residence areas. Now as a result of our population increase doves, cardinals and other wild birds come down to our yards more freely. The relationship between the birds and us human beings became closer.

**The White Cat**

There was a beautiful white cat, with black spots, lying by my front yard fence. The cat often came to our place. It was lying very quietly, so I went to see what happened to her, saying, “What’s wrong with you?” I found out that she was dead. While praying for her, I addressed the last words to the soul for guidance in passage to the other world: “I have to do something in a hurry, but wait for me. I’ll come back and bury you under my tangerine tree. You probably are a victim of traffic accident. Too bad! Please die in peace.” This was the second time I buried animals, victims of traffic accidents. I placed a red plumeria flower on her grave to remember her. We will see more such accidental deaths of animals in the future. The more convenient life becomes, the more we will have such by-products of civilization. If the world becomes more civilized, things will become more complicated. In the old days, we either walked or depended on horses. Now a car does everything. If we want to go to a far away place, we can go by airplane.

**Mother’s Day Lunch**

I have been living in Waipahu for 66 years and have been around Oahu several times. Last Mother’s Day, my daughter-in-law told me we were going to Waimea Restaurant. I asked her if it were the Waimea on Kauai and she answered me, laughing, that it was on Oahu. Everyone in our family, including our grandchildren, were in the car and my son was the driver. I remembered the road in Wahiawa well, because we used to pass there. The road sides were just like old days; the pineapple and sugar cane fields had not changed much. And yet, everything looked new and strange to me, because I had not visited that area since my retirement ten years ago. I saw Waianae Range far away, the town of Haleiwa below and also two bridges. They looked different. We went back to the main road and headed to the Waimea Restaurant. Many cars were parked as if it were a festival day. My grandchildren were happy and feeling merry. Since they had shoes on, they tried to go everywhere, even into a small pool of water, and their mother was busy chasing after them.

The restaurant was crowded with people celebrating Mother’s Day. About 13 members of our family, including my daughter-in-law’s parents and others, were there. Everybody chose their favorite food and enjoyed eating. For the first time, I saw the great waterfall, about 60 feet high, with
muddy water dashing down. It was a lovely sight. I have lived on this island since 1912 and went around the island many times. I had passed through Waimea before, but I never knew about the waterfall and restaurant. It was exactly as a proverb said, “Tōdai moto kurashi” (One must go around for news of home). It was a wonderful present for Mother’s Day from our daughter-in-law’s sisters to my wife. Thanks to them, I also discovered this wonderful place on our island. I think I am going out with young people to see as many places as possible.