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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Kazue Uyeda (KU)

June 25, 1993

Honolulu, O'ahu

BY: Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto (MK)

MK: This is an interview with Mrs. Kazue Uyeda at the Center for Oral History office at UH-Mānoa. The date is June 25, 1993, and the interviewer is Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto.

Okay, as I said earlier, what we're going to do is, we'll continue where we left off. Last time, we had talked about the Benson Smith drug store [Benson Smith and Co., Ltd.] and we went upwards towards 'A'ala Shoe Store, the one owned by the Nagasawa family. This time, what I wanted to do is go back onto King Street and we can talk about the Benson Smith drugstore and the businesses near that. So, I notice on your map you've got Benson Smith drugstore at the corner of 'A'ala Street and North King Street, and now we're going to head towards Downtown. So going to the chop suey house. Maybe we can start by talking about what you remember about that chop suey house.

KU: It was (a rather) big chop suey house at that time, you know. In fact, they had a dance hall upstairs extending way up to Benson Smith's second floor. And during the weekends, the band was there and it (used to turn out being a) really nice social (chuckles) dancing hall.

MK: You know that dance hall, what types of people went to the dance hall?

KU: (Oh my,) I cannot remember, but mostly (people) not that young. (Perhaps) in the twenties and some in the thirties and the forties. They (seemed) to enjoy dancing with their wives or their friends.

MK: And next to the chop suey house was a dry goods store.

KU: This store was run by a Chinese family. They carried mainly men's working clothes. I didn't see too many suits and things like that. Mainly for the working people (and) a lot of trousers, and shirts, and jackets. (Laughs)

MK: Would you remember who owned the chop suey store?

KU: I really have no idea. I was much too young (then). (Laughs)

MK: And then, right next door was the Dew Drop Inn. What do you remember about that business?
KU: Oh, this Chinese man sold a lot of magazines. He carried a lot of varieties of fruits and soft drinks (and) also had a fountain in the back where he served ice cream, and soft drinks, and the like. He also served beer, I think, to people around 'A'ala Park, (would come) to quench their thirst. He had quite a big selection of magazines and newspapers (so) it was a very busy store.

MK: You know, with magazines and newspapers there, did a lot of people kind of hang out over there?

KU: Yes, uh huh. They were very busy all the time.

MK: And then, in the back of the chop suey house, the dry goods store and Dew Drop Inn, you have the tofu [tofu] company.

KU: It was a small tofu shop. They manufactured tofu and they also retailed it. And so, once in a while, my mom (would) send me to buy tofu and, oh, it was a big hunk, you know, for only five cents. (Laughs)

MK: In those days, how did you folks pick up the tofu? Nowadays when we go it's all packaged and everything.

KU: (Yes.) You know, she would just wrap it in a clean white grocery-type of paper. Naturally, the water drips, but we just (carried) it home like that. (Laughs) There was no container. She would just wrap it in white paper.

And (upstairs) of Dew Drop Inn was Kanaguri Photo [Studio], he was a famous photographer. (The studio was in the back and) the front side was a dentist [Kazuma] Kaneo's office. I used to be his patient. (People) around there, I think, (went to) Dr. Kaneo.

MK: You know, besides Dr. Kaneo, the dentist, were there other medical people in the 'A'ala area in those days?

KU: There was another one, I think, (named) [James] Sakurai, a dentist who had his office upstairs of 'A'ala Shoe. That's about all, I think. Further down King Street near the old fish market, there were several dentists like Dr. [M.] Uyeda. He had another brother there, too. And there were some chiropractors. But I don't remember any medical doctors there.

MK: I know that in 'A'ala Rengo there was a well-known drugstore called Akahoshi Drug. What other drugstores were in the 'A'ala area at that time?

KU: Oh, there were quite a few. For instance, like Benson Smith (which) was the large one. And there was Seiseido (that) was a big drugstore (too). And also Tanseido Drug Store [owned by S. Ogawa] at the corner of River and Beretania. And another (one) was Oshima Drug Store (and also a Chinese) herb store.

MK: When you compare the Akahoshi drugstore [Akahoshi Drugs, Ltd.] of 'A'ala Rengo with the other drugstores, what was the same or what was different?

KU: (Oh,) they carried about the same products, I think, although Akahoshi was a little more
organized. Everything was in order. Seiseido carried a lot of Japanese products, cosmetics, and they also (sold) a lot of Japanese magazines. Like _Shufu no Tomo_. And they carried a lot of records, Japanese records. My mother used to love collecting records. (So occasionally) she (would) go to Seiseido and listen to the records and would (purchase a few). We (had) quite a bit of selection.

**MK:** How about when you look at the medicines that Akahoshi Drugs, Seiseido, Tanseido, Oshima Drug Store, and Benson and Smith offered. What kind of medicines did they have?

**KU:** Well, Benson Smith was very modern in those days. They carried all sorts of American drugs (similar to what) Longs [Drug Stores] carries nowadays. And Seiseido, Tanseido, Oshima, you know, those Japanese drugstores carried a lot of Japanese medicine (and) drugs, aside from the American(-made) ones.

**MK:** But at Akahoshi, they sold American drugs . . .

**KU:** (Yes.) They had a fountain, also (and) used to sell a lot of ice cream. They sold good ice cream sundaes and (chuckles) ice cream sodas. Oh, (and) they used to make (real) nice banana splits, too. (Chuckles)

**MK:** So, Akahoshi Drug, what types of employees did they have then?

**KU:** They had all men. No women employees.

**MK:** So you had someone who took care of the fountain?

**KU:** (No.) There wasn't any special person who (took) care of the fountain. I guess they all knew how to manage.

**MK:** Someone told me about a Professor Ito or Ito-san. What do you remember about this Ito-san who was at Akahoshi Drug?

**KU:** You know, I was looking through some records and I found that he was a secretary there (at) first. And I guess (after) the real manager retired he kind of took over. But Professor Ito is just a nickname. Actually, he wasn't a professor.

(Laughter)

**KU:** I think I know his family background. He was married to one of the Kamaura girls. The Kamaura family had a butcher shop on Nuʻuanu Street.

**MK:** When I ask people about Akahoshi Drug, they think about Ito-san and Mac Hamada.

**KU:** Hamada, (yes). I think so. I kind of vaguely remember him because (I had met him at the ‘A’ala Rengō reunion) about three years ago. I saw him and his wife.

**MK:** It seems as though Ito-san and Hamada-san were both employees there. But have you heard anything about the owners of Akahoshi Drugs?
KU: (No,) I'm not sure. I guess later on, Mr. Ito must have bought them out as he was there for a long time. I'm really not sure who the real owner was.

MK: You were also saying that at Akahoshi Drug, they had a fountain. Now, in the ‘A’ala Rengō area, Aloha Curio . . .

KU: Had a fountain.

MK: . . . also had a fountain. Now, what did Aloha Curio had in their fountain?

KU: They had the same thing. I'm kind of amazed to recall (that) they all had stainless steel counters. (But) Kawano, I guess did away with (the fountain) after they specialized more in curios.

MK: So, in the old days, when you used to want to get ice cream, which ones did you go to?

KU: I went to Kawanos because it was nearer and we were really (good) family friends. And so, naturally, they would be very generous [with] the ice cream.

(Laughter)

MK: So, Aloha Curio was popular, then.

KU: Yes, uh huh. The kids around that area, most of them went to Kawano or Aloha Curio to buy the ice cream cone. They had good ice cream from Dairymen’s.

MK: So, in those days, for Akahoshi Drug and Aloha Curio when they had the fountain, what kind of customers did they attract?

KU: At the fountain?

MK: Mm hmm.

KU: Oh, a lot of neighbor kids. And (there) were lots of walk-in customers around that (area). You know, (‘A’ala Rengō) was considered a very busy shopping center in those days. (So) I guess when (people) felt like having a cone, they (would) just walk (in). (Laughs)

MK: These walk-in customers, were they from the neighborhood or were they the ones that came from the railroad station or the . . .

KU: Oh, (from) all over town. Because ‘A’ala Rengō was considered a shopping center, those days. Before Ala Moana Center came (into existence), this was one of the larger shopping areas (in town). (So) as you can see, we had all sorts of merchants carrying different types of merchandise.

MK: I know last time, we had talked about Iwahara Shōten down the line all the way to Akahoshi Drugs. Now, I notice that we didn’t talk about this side . . .

KU: The Iwilei side.
MK: The Iwilei side. Why don't we spend some time talking about the Iwilei side starting from Okahiro Cyclery down towards Queen Street.

KU: Uh huh, okay. (Well,) Mr. [Kanji] Okahiro (was) from Yamaguchi-ken. They (quit and left for) Japan, I think, in the late [19]30s, (and) Haseyama Tailor (moved in). Mr. Okahiro was a very nice person but always black! You know why? Because he used to handle motorcycles. A lot of policemen used to come there because they used to (drive) Harley-Davidson motorcycles. And I remember this Mr. Morihara who used to be the mechanic there, oh, his hands were all black. Even his face was smeared with (chuckles) grease (due to) repairing those motorcycles.

MK: So, this Okahiro Cyclery, what kind of products did they sell?

KU: Oh, they carried (mainly) this Harley-Davidson motorcycle. (Even) to this day, when you say Harley-Davidson, it's (the) top of the line, you know. Mr. Okahiro was probably the first one to import this Harley-Davidson (and) all the police force was practically there day in and day out.

MK: And besides selling the motorcycles . . .

KU: He would service them. You know, make repairs. And he also had bicycles, naturally. People were riding a lot of bicycles those days.

MK: Was a two-man operation? Just Okahiro-san and Morihara?

KU: (No,) they had some other employees, too, but I just remember Mr. Morihara.

MK: And next to Okahiro Cyclery, you've indicated a restaurant.

KU: It was operated by a Chinese family. They sold the best custard pies, those days. Oh, they (were delicious) custard pies. So, once in a while, my mom (would) treat us. And the whole pie used to cost (only) forty cents. I still remember that. (Chuckles)

MK: You know, it's a restaurant, so in addition to custard pies, they had . . .

KU: Oh, naturally, they served meals, American-type of meals.

MK: Oh, not Chinese then?

KU: No, no. Not Chinese. Just regular American—Western meals. They had a counter there, I remember, (and) people would come in for a cup of coffee and a piece of pie or something. On the side (of the counter there) were lots of tables where they could eat regular meals.

MK: The people that came to that restaurant, were they shoppers?

KU: (Yes.)

MK: Neighborhood people or. . .
KU: A lot of working people, too. Because (it) was a waterfront area there were a lot of people working in that vicinity. Back of Queen Street was the pier (and) I guess there were (a lot of fishermen too) working in this area.

MK: So, it’d be like the (fishermen,) stevedores, people like that?

KU: Uh huh, that’s right. A lot of stevedores, I think.

MK: And then, next to that, you have Hawai‘i Woolen Company.

KU: (Yes.) Way back when I was a youngster, I remember Hawai‘i Woolen was in operation (there). They were run by the (Matsuuemon) Tanimuras. You know, Tanimuras who used to operate Fair Department Store? Later on, they moved (to) King Street, near Maunakea Street. (Then) from there, they moved to the new Fair Department Store at the corner of Fort and Beretania (sometime in July 1932, I think).

MK: And that Hawai‘i Woolen Company, . . .

KU: They carried wool(en materials). You know, (in) those days, until Sato Clothiers came into business, everybody had to have their suits made-to-order, (and) so, those days, there were a lot of tailors, Japanese tailors.

MK: So, Hawai‘i Woolen Company . . .

KU: I guess they sold the material, and at the same time, they took orders for their customers and had them made into suits. (In) those days, they all had trousers and a vest to match and a coat. Three-piece (suits). (Chuckles)

MK: And the material was actually . . .

KU: Wool(en).

MK: . . . for Hawai‘i?

KU: Oh, (yes). There (were) no such things as nylon or all (those) mixtures, you know. No, nothing of that sort, those days. Everything was strictly woolen. It was later on, maybe in the 1940s and the [19]50s, (that) all these synthetic fibers started coming out. But until then, everything was strictly woolen.

MK: And the clients or customers for Hawai‘i Woolen Company, were they mostly Japanese or. . .

KU: I think so. I really don’t know, I guess not only Japanese (but all other) nationalities must have patronized them (too).

MK: Were you familiar with the Tanimura family when they were here?

KU: (Chuckles) The only thing that (I could remember was riding a tricycle) and when (I went) into the store, (they would scold and say,) “Get the hell out.”
MK: So, you were really small, then, when you first knew them.

KU: (Yes.) I must have been about (five or six [years old] then). I still remember that. (Chuckles)

MK: Not too many people remember the Tanimuras and the Hawai‘i Woolen Company.

KU: (No,) maybe not.

MK: And then, next to the Hawai‘i Woolen Company, you have a barber.

KU: (Yes.) There was a barbershop. There must have been Filipino (barbers before), but the lady that I remember was Mrs. Honda who (was) the wife of (Ryokusen) Honda. (Mr. Honda) was a longtime (Hawai‘i Hochi newspaper) writer. The wife used to be the barber (and her) son was my classmate, (Takao Honda).

MK: And this Mrs. Honda, when was she operating this barbershop?

KU: (Probably from about 1926 when I was in elementary school.)

MK: So [19]20s or [19]30s used to have a barbershop there.

KU: Mm hmm, (yes).

MK: And then, next to it, you have a tattoo shop.

KU: This Filipino guy used to run that place. [He] had lots of samples, pictures that the customers could choose and he would use that pattern to (work on) the person. I think (tattoo seemed to be quite popular those days and a lot of sailors used to come around).

MK: Were there any others in this ‘A‘ala area, though?

KU: No, I don’t remember. Just that one.

MK: And that tattoo shop, how long do you think you remember it being there?

KU: (I really cannot remember how long they were there.)

MK: And then, of course, after the tattoo shop, you have Asahi Furniture, owned by the Komeiji family.

KU: That’s right.

MK: Now, how long have you known of the Asahi Furniture Company and that family?

KU: Oh, ever since I was a child. (The Komeiji family and our family were real good friends as we were neighbors for a great many years. The Komeijis (Risuke) had eight children and I used to see Mrs. Komeiji in the warehouse sewing draperies and couch covers. So I asked one
of the daughters how her mother ever found time to do all the laundry aside from raising the family. The answer was, “Oh, my mom used to wake up at three o’clock every single morning to do the washing until we grew up!”) Really, (yes)! They really worked so hard.

MK: So, at that Asahi Furniture Company, you had Mrs. Komeiji helping with doing the upholstery work?

KU: Yes, I think I remember her doing a lot of sewing. She had another helper, a lady called Mrs. Inouye (who) was there to help her.

MK: How about Mr. Komeiji? What was his work at the furniture store?

KU: Well, I guess he was busy ordering furniture. He had lots of employees (and so) the employees were doing the hard job (like) assembling, and then rearranging. It’s heavy stuff so (he) needed a lot of help.

MK: How much area did the Komeijis have if they were building and selling?

KU: Their store space was the largest in this area. I think at least two stores’ spaces. And they had (a) mezzanine, where they could store or display their furniture, too. And the family used to live upstairs.

MK: With eight children, how did they all manage to fit upstairs?

KU: Well, most families, they just (laid) blankets or mattresses, you know (and) somehow, (managed).

(Laughter)

MK: And then, the Komeijis were from what ken?

KU: They were from Yamanashi-ken. And they were very good friends with the Furuya family, you know, the ones that used to own (the) Nippon Gekijō. I still remember the Furuya boys were at Komeiji lots of times. And Mrs. Komeiji used to take real good care of them.

MK: So it was really like a nigiyakana tokoro.

KU: (Yes,) that’s right. Very, very nigiyakana tokoro is right. And Mrs. Komeiji was a very good cook, too. She made the best sekihan. We (asked) her for the recipe, but she never gave out (the secret) that recipe. (Laughs) (But) finally, the lady that was our cook, (somehow was able to scratch) it out of (chuckles) Mrs. Komeiji.

MK: Do you know now how to do it?

KU: Well, I followed her (instructions) and then tried a few times, and it (came) out very (nicely). (Laughs)

MK: You mentioned like at your family, you always had an oba-san, or a cook, that helped the family and the employees. How about at, say, the Asahi Furniture Company. Who took care
of the employees’ food needs and other needs?

KU: As far as I can remember, Mrs. Komeiji was the only one that took care of her family, but I don’t think she cooked for the employees. (The) employees always had to bring lunch or go out for lunch. (But with our family, it seemed that my parents kept up with their policy of feeding them three meals per day.)

MK: I know you mentioned that Asahi Furniture, Mr. Komeiji had workers helping to build the furniture. Were they like regular employees or were they like minarai?

KU: No. Regular employees. Not minarai. You know, (furniture) would come in carton boxes and they would have to (be) assembled. For instance, the table would come in slabs and (so) they would have to assemble (it, attach) the legs and whatnot. They weren’t carpenters or anything like that. Just (ordinary) employees. And they (had to) be salesmen as well.

MK: You know, these salesmen, were they salesmen that just stayed in the store or did they go out for orders?

KU: I think Asahi Furniture had enough business for the customers to come (to them). They didn’t go out and sell furniture.

MK: And then, in those days, the Asahi Furniture, were they American-style goods or Japanese-style?

KU: American-style, strictly. They carried beds, and couches, and dinner tables, and everything that you need to furnish a home. They had everything.

MK: So, in those days, say, the [19]20s when you were a small girl, if you went into any of the homes over here at ‘A’ala Rengō, was it American-style furnishings upstairs or Japanese-style?

KU: (Well, I thought that most families were equipped with just comfortable, ordinary type of furniture, couches, sofas and whatnot.)

MK: I was wondering, since you have all these different kind of businesses here, just based on your family’s experiences, was it a practice to just patronize, go to these businesses when you needed anything . . .

KU: Oh, naturally, we would patronize our neighbors. (Yes,) we all tried to patronize each other. (We didn’t have to go anywhere else because ‘A’ala Rengō was considered a shopping center and we could find practically everything in the best of quality within that building.)

MK: So you didn’t have to go, say, into the Ginza area or Chūō Rengō area that much . . .

KU: (No. In Chūō Rengō at the corner of Beretania and Nu’uanu, there was [Iida] Suisando, and then Fuji Furniture, and later on the Fair Department came in.) And across the street was [B.K.] Yamamoto Hardware Store.

MK: You had variety of goods here, yeah?
KU: (Yes,) that's right.

MK: Another area that I'm really interested in is this 'A'ala Market. Now, from your memory, what stalls or markets do you remember being back here when you were small?

KU: Oh, there were lots. As soon as we entered (there, here it) was this [I.] (Ishichi) Matsuda Grocery Store. Mr. Matsuda did a lot of business with the Japanese ships. He would supply the merchant marines, I mean, all the Japanese ships that came and went.

MK: The Nippon Yusen Kaisha.

KU: (Yes.) Nippon Yusen Kaisha.

And next to Matsuda was Fujimoto Grocery Store. (And the funniest thing is that most of the people) in this area used to patronize Fujimoto Store. I guess (it was because the Fujimotos had) more fresh vegetables (and) Matsuda used to patronize the ships, mostly. So, a lot of these—like my mother, and (Mrs.) Komeiji [of Asahi Furniture], Kawano [of Aloha Curio], and Awamura [of Heiwa-Do], (and Mrs.) Maeda [of Amaguri Taro], all of them used to come to Fujimoto Store.

MK: So it was a yaoya?

KU: (Yes.) Yaoya-san. And then, they had (some) can goods, but mainly it was yaoya-san.

And the next was a flower shop and that flower shop (was run by) Uyemura-san. After she got out of 'A'ala, she opened her shop in Mō'iliʻili. Mō'iliʻili Flower Exchange. She just retired (not long ago). And her son is the one that developed Ka Mōʻiliʻili [a shopping complex] (in Mōʻiliʻili where the) post office and (restaurant and flower shop are located).

And then the next was another Matsuda Grocery Store, (a relative of the first I. Matsuda Store).

Next to it was a Chinese grocery store (that) carried a lot of can goods. And then, next on this stall was a chicken shop (run by) Nagao (family). They were very busy, (selling) a lot of chicken. And Mrs. Nagao used to make a lot of salads (like), potato salad (and) macaroni salad. They (also) had kamaboko (and yōkan too).

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MK: Okay, we were just talking about the Nagao . . .

KU: Chicken shop.

MK: . . . Poultry Shop.
KU: Poultry Shop, (yes). You see, each stall was divided into four (sections and) one corner was Nagao's. And (the other side) was a meat market. A lot of Chinese people were operating the meat stalls. (And there were several other stalls that sold fish—like Tamura, U. Okada and Otani fish markets.) There was a bakery (and also) lots of small grocery stores. And one of them was Yoshida (Store). They used to make good takuan (and so) a lot of people used to go (there) to buy takuan. And there were (some stalls that sold pork, like Motosue Market). And some of them were selling Hawaiian food.

And at the end, over here, was this famous Isomura Market. And this Mr. [Takasuke] Isomura was a character (and) a good cook (as well). You know, (in) those days, they used to sell (live) chicken and turkey (in cages).

(When my mother needed a roast chicken she would go to Isomura Market and order one. They would dress and roast it, put some potatoes on the side and with a bottle of gravy it cost a total of five dollars at that time. Five dollars was a lot so we would have roast chicken only on special occasions. Isomura Market also sold kamaboko and their famous homemade awayuki kanten for only ten cents apiece.)

MK: I was wondering, how about the other families at ‘A’ala Rengō? Is that what they did, too? When it came to getting food, just go behind to ‘A’ala Market?

KU: Mm hmm, (yes). So, (I guess most of the marketing was done at ‘A’ala Market and) all the gossip was done at Fujimoto Store. (Laughs) The neighborhood gossip was all done at Fujimoto Grocery Store.

MK: Did they have a special time that they went? Like everybody went in the morning, or...

KU: No, I wouldn’t say so. I don’t think there was any set time. Otherwise, the Fujimotos would go crazy. (Laughs)

MK: I notice that you didn’t know the Chinese businesses names that much when you just described the ‘A’ala Market...

KU: (Yes,) I wouldn’t know, because I didn’t do much shopping. You know, I was just a kid then (and) just (ran) errands once in a while.

MK: So did your mom mostly go to the Japanese businesses in the back then?

KU: For groceries, (yes). She would go to Fujimoto. And I remember once in a great while, she (would) go to this King Street—you know, the present (King Street fish) market? There was a store called Ah Ki Grocery (that) carried all sorts of nice, good groceries. My mother would go perhaps once a month (and so) I would tag along. (They had cornflakes and peanut butter that Fujimoto Store didn’t have—so I would beg my mother for those special things.) So, I (really) used to enjoy tagging along with my mother going to Ah Ki Grocery Store. (Chuckles)

MK: So, like Fujimoto Store didn’t carry things like cornflakes or peanut butter?

KU: No, they didn’t. Mainly vegetables and rice, shoyu, and maybe mayonnaise. Just those things.
But I don’t remember them carrying cornflakes and things like that. (Chuckles)

MK: And then I notice, there’s like the Okada Fishing Company, and Tamura Fish Store, Otani Fish Store. Did your mom shop around and decide . . .

KU: (Oh, yes.)

MK: I remember your saying that like some of the places made their own *kamaboko*.

KU: No. I think there were (just) a few places that (manufactured *kamaboko*), like Otani. I remember there was a *kamaboko* factory way up on College Walk, Konishi *kamaboko-ya*. I guess (there) must have [been] a few places in town that made *kamaboko* specially. All (of the) other grocery stores would buy wholesale and retail them. They didn’t make their own *kamaboko*. But as (I’ve) told you, Fukuju-tei made the best *kamaboko*. It was so chewy and tasty. (Compared to the ordinary *kamaboko*, Fukuju-tei’s ones were almost double the size and it cost only twenty-five cents apiece.)

MK: That’s really special, then.

KU: (Yes,) very special.

MK: In the old days, what were the hours of this ‘A‘ala Market?

KU: Well, I think they started (real) early. Maybe about five o’clock. (You see, a lot of people like fish and vegetable peddlers had to come early to stock up their stuff. The fish auction started very early too.)

MK: Like you were saying, ‘A‘ala Rengō was really a shopping center in Honolulu. It attracted a lot of people with its variety of goods and everything. How about the market? Was it just a neighborhood kind of place? Or . . .

KU: No.

MK: . . . was it for people from all over.

KU: (Oh yes, people came from all over. Aside from ordinary people, retailers and peddlers came to this market and also to the other King Street market to purchase supplies and then do their business.)

MK: I know you were only a child back then, but you used to go with your mom to the King Street market, and then you knew the ‘A‘ala Market in the back, yeah? What differences did you notice between the two places—the King Street market and the ‘A‘ala one? Did you think anything was different between the two?

KU: (Oh,) I remember C.Q. Yee Hop (that) was another big market. They had good roast (pork and) *char siu* (so we) would go (to) that side to buy. And there was a nice bakery at C.Q. Yee Hop, you know. (A really) nice, big bakery.

MK: That’s two blocks away. I notice that there are quite a few hotels in this area. You’ve got the
Shinshuya Hotel. You have the Kobayashi...

KU: Kobayashi Hotel.

MK: ... Hotel. Nakamura Hotel...

KU: And Yamashiro, yeah.

MK: ... and Yamashiro Hotel. So, were these hotel owners clients of, say, the people in the market? The 'A'ala Market?

KU: Could be. I guess so. I know that Kobayashi...

MK: All very close.

KU: ... [Hotel's] Mrs. Nishi, who was the manager's wife, always used to come to 'A'ala Market to do her shopping. And I guess Yamashiro [Hotel] (people) must have been coming to pick up their provisions (too).

(Do) you know why there were so many hotels? Because in the olden days, a lot of people from the outer islands, would come out (to town) and they needed lodgings (and) so they would patronize these hotels like Komatsuya Hotel.

MK: You know, with the outside island people coming to stay at these hotels, were the outside island people important for the businesses over here? Would they come over here to 'A'ala Rengō and buy...

KU: I guess so. Well, they would come and look around (chuckles) and get whatever provisions (they needed) and then take it back home.

MK: I also notice, when looking at this map, you have lot of Japanese businesses, you have some Chinese businesses. There's that one Filipino tailor, but no other Filipino businesses when you were a small child?

KU: I think the pool halls were run by Filipino people. This, and there's another pool hall around here, yeah?

MK: Mm hmm, right here.

KU: (Yes,) around here, that's right. I'm not quite sure, but a lot of Filipinos used to hang around the pool halls. (And) further up this side (there was a big Filipino community living in this Iwilei area). And there was a cannery here, that famous Dole's pineapple cannery [Hawaiian Pineapple Company].

MK: So those Filipinos living in that Iwilei area, where did they work?

KU: Mostly (at) canneries, I think. And (probably) some were stevedores.

MK: When you mentioned pool halls, can I assume they're mostly just men then?
KU: (Oh yes,) men. (I've) never (seen) any women playing. (Laughs)

MK: So you saw mostly Filipino men, but you didn’t see Filipino women around the area?

KU: No, no, no. I didn’t see.

MK: And then, I notice you have one Korean hotel. What do you remember about this Korean hotel up here at ‘A’ala Street and Beretania?

KU: The only thing I (can) remember (is that) there were lots of fighting in (chuckles) there. I guess they must have had Koreans lodging in there, (but also) Portuguese and Hawaiian people hanging around (in) there (too).

MK: How about in this area, were there any other Korean hotels or Korean businesses?

KU: No.

MK: No Koreans.

KU: (Yes,) That’s the only one (that) I remember. (Maybe there may have been a few) Korean grocery stores (around this area). And there was Kato Jinja over here in Hall Street, soon after you turn right here, about half a block up.

MK: And by Kato Jinja, it was a Shinto . . .

KU: (Yes, similar to) Izumo Taisha or (Hawai‘i Daijingu,) and Kotohira Jinja.

MK: So, on special occasions like New Year’s . . .

KU: I guess people used to (go and pray). Of course, I never did go, (though). (Chuckles)

MK: Oh, you didn’t go?

KU: (Laughs) No, I didn’t go.

MK: I never heard much about Kato Jinja . . .

KU: Kato Jinja. (Yes,) it was Kato Jinja (there).

MK: I just noticed that it’s four o’clock. I’m going to stop here, okay?

KU: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW