STORIED IDENTITIES:
JAPANESE AMERICAN ELDERLY FROM A SUGAR PLANTATION COMMUNITY
IN HAWAI'I

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ABSTRACT

This is a study of the collective identities of Japanese American elderly in a former sugar plantation community in the rural town of Puna, Hawai‘i. Investigating their plantation stories in which they remember, evaluate, and represent their past lives on the plantation from the 1920s to the 1980s, I explore a process of which they collectively delineate their identities in terms of ethnicity, class, generation, and gender. My analysis focuses on the contents as well as the contexts of plantation stories that include their social and cultural circumstances in the past and the present, transitions in the socioeconomic environment in Hawai‘i, and historical events that they have gone through. The purpose of this study is to produce an ethnography of remembering that captures what Abu-Lughod (1986) calls ‘ethnographic voice—cultural testimony’ in which the Japanese American elderly narrate their plantation experience as both an internally-oriented emotional manifestation and an externally-based common understanding of their community. I demonstrate how the Japanese American elderly employ their memories to reconstruct plantation experience and define their peoplehood as the collective identities of plantation-raised Japanese Americans.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank people who participated in this dissertation project. Without their participation, I could not have achieved my goal. They are members of Kea'au Senior Citizen Club, Kurtistown Jodo Mission, Higashi Hongwanji Mission, Honoka'a Hongwanji, Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin, Homonu Hongwanji, Lahanina Hongwanji, Makawao Hongwanji, Nāʻālehu Hongwanji, Moʻiliʻili Hongwanji, Pāhala Hongwanji, Pāhoa Nikkeijinkai, Puna Hongwanji, Puna Congregational Church. They also include regular customers at local restaurants: Hiro's Place, Kau Kau Corner, and Miwa. For helping me establish relationships with these participants, I am also thankful to ministers and their spouses at each church as well as the owners and employees of each restaurant.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

A New Year’s party is a big event among Japanese American elderly in Hawai‘i. On January 1, 2000, I joined a party held by the Hiranos in the Puna district on the Big Island. Mr. Hirano, born in Puna in 1925, is a son of Japanese immigrants who came to Puna to raise sugarcane in 1917, and Mrs. Hirano, also born in Puna in 1932, is a granddaughter of sugar workers from Japan. They invited their children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, in-laws, siblings, relatives, longtime friends, and a Buddhist minister. I arrived at their house around two o’clock in the afternoon, while the rubbish from firecrackers burned the night before still littered the street. Taking my shoes off, I entered the house and exchanged New Year’s greetings with the Hiranos. There were already about twenty guests sitting on plastic garden chairs around a long table on the lānai (porch). The temperature was a little over seventy degrees, and the guests looked relaxed in light clothing of t-shirts and cotton pants. Their children watched movies on a large TV set in the living room. Most guests were of Japanese ancestry and already knew each other through longstanding relationships in neighborhood associations, senior citizen clubs, churches, or community activities. As the party went on, they mingled with different people. Although men and women formed separate groups, their conversations often and easily crossed these boundaries.

Many kinds of food covered the table. Boiled peanuts, dried fish, beef jerky, potato chips, fried noodles, lomi salmon (marinated diced salmon), kamaboko (fishcake), poke (marinated seafood salad) and ‘ opihi (shell fish) were served as pūpū (appetizers). Roast beef, steamed onaga (red snapper), ahi sashimi (fillet of tuna), crab, wrapped
sushi, kālua pig (roasted pork), and fried chicken were the main dishes. Each guest picked out whatever they liked, using chopsticks to place the food on paper plates. They never forgot to load on a scoop of macaroni salad and white or sticky rice with red beans. Some opened a soda, while others poured beer, wine, whiskey, or sake in a glass. No one told anyone what to eat or drink, although the Hiranos constantly urged their guests to eat more. There was a butsdan (a cabinet-like Buddhist altar) in the living room in which mortuary tablets and photographs of Mr. Hirano’s deceased parents were placed. A plate of food from the banquet and a glass of water were offered in front of the butsdan as if the deceased parents were joining this New Year’s party.

Throughout the party, the main entertainment was ‘talk’, although there were no formal speeches such as opening or closing remarks or even a toast. The guests talked about all their common interests: sports such as sumō, baseball, or football; hobbies like fishing, gardening, cooking, or handicrafts; their children and grandchildren; and current events in Puna, the state of Hawai‘i, the mainland U.S., or the rest of the world. They took turns ‘talking story’—the local phrase for speaking informally with each other—and often teased or laughed at each other. The talking and laughing never ceased throughout the party.

When topics turned to the past, the eyes of the guests brightened and their conversation became livelier. They enthusiastically told stories about their childhood, school days, adolescence, and working lives, conjuring up personal memories about the people they used to know—family members, friends, school teachers, church members, and neighbors—and places that they were familiar with—beaches, playgrounds, streets,

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1 For more on ‘talk story’, see Footnote 32 in Chapter Three.
theaters, and restaurants. The more they reminisced, the friendlier the atmosphere of the party became, and the more laughter and stories were brought forth by the guests.

I found their stories more interesting than any other cultural aspects of this New Year's party, even though I could hardly understand the significance of the stories. Each story sounded rather simple, a 'good old' tale told in plain English, but seemed to inspire people to remember their past lives and engage their emotions in special ways. By telling their individual stories to each other, these Japanese American elderly seemed to be telling the story of 'us', creating a sense of 'us' that extends backward and forward in time. It is the 'us' of these collective stories—individuated identities that gain collective status in the telling and retelling—that is the subject of this dissertation.

Outline of Research

This is a study of the collective identities of Japanese American elderly in a former sugar plantation community in the rural town of Puna, Hawai‘i in 2002 (see the Field Log in Appendix C). They lived through specific social, cultural, and economic circumstances during the prewar period that were conditioned by the culture of Japanese immigrants and by a plantation system based on capitalist principles and racial differentiation. Now living in contemporary American society and entering old age, Japanese American elderly in Puna talk about their plantation experiences as 'plantation stories'. By telling plantation stories, which I regard as artifacts of a cultural construction of the past, these Japanese American elderly collectively construct their identities as specifically ethnicized plantation people, geographically and historically juxtaposed against others.
Plantation stories are highly contextualized narratives in which these elderly define their identities relationally and situationally. While they relate themselves to others in different contexts such as nationality, ethnicity, class, generation, gender, localness, and specific ancestry, they at the same time situate their plantation experiences within their current living circumstances in various ways according to context. In short, their contextualization, which determines the identity they delineate in a story, is subject to their relational perspectives as well as their situational positioning within physical and social spaces.

More complicatedly, the contexts of their stories are never static but always in process. Transitions, which include physical transitions in the area, in Hawaii's politics, in people in the area, in material life, and in personal circumstances in work, family, and aging, have crucial impacts on the telling of plantation stories. These transitions directly or indirectly compel these Japanese American elderly to ponder over their lives and inspire them to assert their identities against newly emerging social relationships and physical spaces in the area.

Contextualization is problematic because Japanese American elderly in Puna do not tell their plantation stories arbitrarily. They are based on a shared understanding of their lives in the past and the present. They characterize their plantation experiences as a unique background that differentiates them as a group from others. Their stories may be personal anecdotes or self-characterizations, but they gather force as a powerful collective voice by which these Japanese American elderly assert the meaningfulness of their lives to others as well as to themselves.
The goals of this dissertation are twofold. First, I unfold the contexts of plantation stories by analyzing them in terms of ethnicity, class, generation, and gender, as detailed later in this chapter. Second, I explain the significance of the stories as discourse that shapes the collective identities of plantation-raised Japanese American elderly in Puna.

To clarify how I treat plantation stories as discourse, I turn to Cindy Kobayashi Mackey’s (1995) dissertation. As a Japanese American raised in Hawaiʻi, Mackey grew up, hearing stories told by her family members about the Japanese in Hawaiʻi. From these stories, she had held a certain view of her ethnic roots as a local Japanese before starting her dissertation project. As she began reading for her dissertation, she became confused by the various academic interpretations of past events and aware of the constructive nature of historical texts, seeing her family stories as mythical or “fishy” (1995:9). Examining contradictory representations of Japanese identities in such stories, she argues that the narrative of the Japanese in Hawaiʻi is an outcome of a constructive process in which Japanese Americans “fictionalize” stories but justify them as “real” by emphasizing the role of human agency in making the stories. She writes, “[the story] lost its status as creative act and became a literal description of reality” (ibid.:38).

I draw attention not to her argument but to her presupposition of the reality of the past in reading the narrative of Japanese Americans in Hawaiʻi. I find interesting her juxtaposing of fiction and construction, past and ‘reality’. She writes:

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2 In the text, I use the word ‘Japanese’ interchangeably with ‘Japanese Americans’ to refer to Americans of Japanese ancestry, including Japanese immigrants who came to Hawaiʻi before 1924. I use the words ‘Japanese nationals’ to refer to Japanese citizens living primarily in Japan. ‘The Japanese community’ refers to the community of Americans of Japanese ancestry in Hawaiʻi. See also Footnote 6 in this chapter and Footnote 19 in Chapter Three.
The more I read about the Japanese in Hawai‘i, the more puzzled and confused I became... because what I knew about the Japanese in Hawai‘i came solely from the life I had lived and the stories I was told... What I found as I read, was a great deal of contradictory stories, vast amounts of events and attitudes that did not seem to make any sense in the context of my experience... All my life I was taught, among other things, to be and live a certain way because it was part of my identity as a person of Japanese ancestry. But the more I read, the more I realized that the generations that had conveyed these messages were able to do so only by manipulating reality. It wasn’t as if the stories they told and the lessons they taught us were outright lies; I could see in their eyes and read in their words, that they truly believed what they were saying. There was in fact, something shielding them off from seeing that their lives were not shaped by an identity based on the past, but constructed and scripted as fiction (ibid: 9-10, italics added).

She “realized” that reality was “manipulated” in the stories; the stories are not based on “the past,” which I interpret as the reality of the past, but “constructed and scripted as fiction.” This manipulation, or “fictionalization” in her wording, is the problem that motivates Mackey to undertake a dissertation project in search of the nature of Japanese identity for Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i, presupposing the reality of the past.

My research agenda is different from Mackey’s, although I study the same subject—the narratives of Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i. I do not presuppose ‘reality’ in the stories; therefore, I do not see any problem in their construction, even if they are ‘fictions’ made up by storytellers. The issue that I see in plantation stories lies not so much in the veracity of the stories, but in the people who tell them. As Mackey observed above, “I could see in their eyes and read in their words, that they truly believed what they were saying.” The questions for me are: Why do ‘they’ believe and keep telling their stories? What is the significance of the stories for them? What do the stories as discourse do to and for them?
Historical Background

The passage from memory to history has required every social group to redefine its identity through the revitalization of its own history. The task of remembering makes everyone his own historian. The demand for history has thus largely overflowed the circle of professional historians. Those who have long been marginalized in traditional history are not the only ones haunted by the need to recover their buried pasts. Following the example of ethnic groups and social minorities, every established group, intellectual or not, learned or not, has felt the need to go in search of its own origins and identity (Nora 1989:15).

Japanese American elderly in Puna shape their collective memory of plantation days from their personal memories. Remembering the past and (re)telling plantation stories to each other is a revitalization of their plantation experience. In doing this, they inevitably redefine their identities, situating themselves within ongoing social and cultural transitions. It is an effort to re-create a sense of the past so that they, as well as others, will acknowledge their origins and identities as plantation-raised Japanese Americans. History, collective memory, local knowledge, or a plantation story—no matter what it is called—is a significant cultural representation by which these Japanese American elderly define themselves through a reconstruction of the past against others.

It is probably commonplace in the U.S. that elderly collectively look back on their past community life and evoke a sense of belonging through recalling their family lives, school days, neighborhoods, work places, and religious activities. In brief, every community wishes to recognize a unique past and tell a story that distinguishes it from others. The Japanese community in Puna, Hawai‘i is one of these rural communities, and as people in other communities do, the elderly assert their distinctiveness. In this section I summarize historical events to which they relate the distinctiveness of the Japanese community in Puna.
The people who I refer to as ‘Japanese American elderly in Puna’ are all descendent of Japanese immigrants who came to work in Hawaii’s sugar industry.\(^3\) They spent their lives during the pre- and postwar periods on the Puna Sugar plantation. The Puna Sugar Company, Ltd., hereafter Puna Sugar, was established by an American sugar oligarchy on the Big Island of Hawai‘i in 1899.\(^4\) Japanese immigrants made up 81.9 percent of Puna Sugar’s workforce in 1901 (HSPA Archives). Puna Sugar held 19,500 acres of plantation in three areas in the Puna district: the Pāhoa area, the Kapoho area, and the Kea‘au area that covers ten miles along both sides of Volcano Road from a nine-mile signpost to the Volcano National Park (see Figure 1 and 2, HSPA archives). Sugar workers and their families lived in the so-called ‘plantation camps’ that consisted of clusters of houses in these three areas. Camps had different names and houses were numbered. For example, camps located along the Volcano Highway were named according to their distance from Hilo: ‘8 Mile Camp’, ‘8 1/2 Mile Camp’, ‘9 Mile Camp’, and so forth. Some other camps were named after prominent contractors: ‘Iwasaki Camp’ in Kurtistown and ‘Kiyabu Camp’ in Mountain View.

As Japanese immigrants held a satisfactory male-female ratio enabled by the so-called ‘picture bride’ as well as by the influx of married couples from Japan from the

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\(^3\) Japanese immigrants were employees of Puna Sugar, independent sugarcane growers (contractors), or business owners who dealt with people on the plantation.

\(^4\) The Puna Sugar Company, Ltd. was originally the ‘Ōla‘a Sugar Company, Ltd. I use ‘Puna Sugar’ to refer to this company throughout the dissertation. In June 1960, Herbert Shipman, who was director of the company as well as the largest landowner in the plantation area, proposed changing the name from ‘Ōla‘a to Puna, hoping to "turn the tide of bad luck that had plagued the company since its inception" (Campbell and Ogburn 1992:3). Shipman’s proposal was accepted and the company was officially renamed the Puna Sugar Company, Ltd.
Figure 1
Puna Sugar Plantation as of 1954
(Source: 'Ola'a Sugar Annual Report 1954)
Figure 2

2000 CENSUS
DESIGNATED
PLACES
HAWAII
COUNTY

(Source: Hawaii State Planning Office, 2000)
1920s, they took root on the plantation and started having families (see Table 1, Moriyama 1982:44-45).5

TABLE 1
Population of Japanese in Hawai‘i by Sex 1900-1930

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>47,508</td>
<td>13,603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>54,784</td>
<td>24,891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>62,644</td>
<td>46,630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>75,008</td>
<td>64,623</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Sources: Yamato Ichihashi 1969:31-32)

Japanese immigrants formed an ethnic community by building commercial centers and founding social and cultural institutions such as Buddhist and Christian churches and Japanese language schools. Japanese American elderly in Puna, many of whom were the children and grandchildren of these Japanese immigrants, developed their worldview through their families, the Japanese community, Japanese language schools, American public schools, and interactions with people from other ethnic groups, such as Caucasian, Chinese, Filipino, Native Hawaiian, Korean, Portuguese, and Puerto Rican groups. In other words, their familiarity of Issei culture,6 acquisition of American education, and interactions with other immigrants and Hawaiian families have all had a critical impact on delineating their identities as ‘Japanese’, ‘American’, ‘Hawai‘i-born’, and ‘local’.

Puna Sugar was controlled by white entrepreneurs/administrators in Honolulu who maintained a management policy based on ethnic separatism and plantation paternalism

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5 Moriyama (1983) explains about the uneven numbers of male and female Japanese immigrants: “the Hawaiian government had insisted that women make up no more than twenty-five percent of the total” (44). Also, “the Hawaiian sugar planters felt that women were necessary for only a limited number of jobs on the plantation” (44-45).

6 ‘Issei’ refers to Japanese immigrants who came to Hawai‘i before the 1924 Immigration Act ended Japanese immigration to the U.S. Issei were considered Japanese nationals until 1952 when the Walter-McCarran Act allowed them to naturalize in US citizens and have the right to vote. See also Footnote 19 in Chapter Three.
to ensure work efficiency and prevent labor resistance. This policy was followed from
the beginning in 1899 until 1946, when the International Longshoremen’s and
Warehousemen’s Union (ILWU) won a territory-wide sugar strike. Takaki (1983)
characterizes plantation life as one of deprivation in this period. In addition, the
Depression in the 1930s seriously affected everyday life on the plantation. Issei reacted
to these circumstances by emphasizing the importance of education to their children and
encouraging their upward mobility.

For Japanese American elderly in Puna, the experience of inequality between white
and non-white workers, the struggles to survive economic deprivation, and the efforts to
become upwardly mobile are significant aspects of their plantation background. By
relating these experiences, they illustrate their lives as plantation children and explain
how they developed a sense of unity within their families, the Japanese community, and
non-white workforce. They connect this sense of unity to their identities as ‘family

The terms ‘Japanese’ and ‘locals’ need careful consideration. They should not be
taken to refer to a homogenous group that glosses over internal complexity. As I point
out in the following chapters, Japanese American elderly in Puna categorize themselves
relationally. ‘Japanese’ is a categorical concept opposed to ‘non-Japanese’ but includes
subcategories based on ancestral prefectures in Japan or birthplace in Hawai’i. The
concept of ‘local’ is based on a presupposition that members of different ethnic groups
shared the same kinds of interactions at schools, work places, and residential areas,
although their actual interethnic experiences of communal plantation life differed. For
example, some lived with people from other ethnic groups closely in plantation camps;
others did not. Some had close interpersonal relationships with other ethnic people in attending one another's parties and family celebrations; others did not. Some played together with other ethnic children after school; others did not. Thus, identifying as 'local' is not necessarily based on the same experience of active interethnic mingling; this complicates 'local' as a categorical term.

Japanese American elderly in Puna generally understand the terms 'local' and 'Japanese' not as two independent categories, but as intertwined with each other because they were members of the largest ethnic group throughout the plantation era from the 1920s to the 1980s, as I will detail in Chapter Three. Their phrase 'local Japanese' thus implies a distinctive position with respect to other ethnic locals as well as to Japanese Americans on the U.S. continent.

As the Japanese community in Hawai'i has developed since the end of the nineteenth century, it has been subject to various political movements: labor movements from the Japanese sugar strike on the island of O'ahu in 1909 to territory-wide strikes led by the ILWU in the postwar period, anti-Japanese legislation before and during World War II, and the advance of the Democratic Party with numerous Japanese Americans in the postwar period. Although the Japanese community in Hawai'i has never been in a numerically disadvantaged position, it has gone through a number of political conflicts with U.S. authorities as well as other ethnic groups. Labeled as a "problem" or "menace" in the 1920-40s (Okihiro 1991:110-101), as 'enemy aliens' during World War II, as

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7 Hawai'i was U.S. territory until 1959.
8 As of the year 2000, Japanese population (201,764) made up 16.7 percent of the total population, the lowest percentage for the past 100 years. However, the Japanese were still the second largest ethnic group in Hawai'i, following White (24.3 percent, 294,102) and followed by Filipinos (14.1 percent, 170,635) (US Census Bureau 2002). See also Table 2.
members of a “Japanese backlash” in the sociopolitical arena of the 1960-70s (Kotani 1985:160), and as a socio-economically “privileged” ethnic group in the 1980-90s (Okamura 1982, 1990, 1998a), the Japanese community of Hawai‘i has undergone many political transitions.

Japanese American elderly in Puna, having shifted in sociopolitical positions from being discriminated against to being ordinary American citizens, hold certain views on their current political standpoints. It is undoubtedly related to the way they represent their identities as ‘Japanese’ as well as ‘local’ on an individual level. However, on a collective level, it is difficult to find shared political interests rooted in ethnicity. This is probably because they have relatively few ethnic conflicts in Puna, or because their careers have diversified. They no longer connect Japanese ethnicity to political interests as they did when they were struggling against racial inequality.

Since Puna Sugar ceased operation in 1984, the Japanese community in Puna has languished because there are no alternative economic resources to keep people in the area. Japanese American elderly in Puna, who once enjoyed a lively community life as the largest ethnic group on the plantation, have lost their sense of centrality in the community. They no longer see busy streets filled with Japanese sugar workers and their families coming to Japanese shops and stores in towns. Issei have all passed away, while the younger generation of Japanese Americans have left Puna for jobs in urban areas. All the Japanese language schools were shut down by the 1970s and Buddhist churches, pivotal Japanese American institutions, are downsizing their religious and social activities such as Sunday services and annual festivals.
As I will describe in Chapter Five, Japanese American elderly in Puna have undergone a decline, but have also experienced an influx of new populations to subdivisions that began developing from the 1970s. Newcomers include a contentious group of young people from other areas of Hawai‘i and the U.S. continent, some of whom were once somewhat controversially called ‘hippies’ or ‘marijuana growers’ by older residents of Puna. Other newcomers are Japanese nationals who have purchased properties in new subdivisions for leisure purposes. They are a small group, but highly visible when they come to local churches in search of relationships with local Japanese Americans who speak Japanese. The demographic shift that has been occurring over the past three decades threatens how Japanese American elderly in Puna delineate their identities as ‘locals’ vis-à-vis the contentious outsiders and as ‘Americans’ vis-à-vis these Japanese nationals.

The total population of Japanese in the old plantation residential areas, not including new subdivisions, was 1,282 in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2002).9 Hilo had a Japanese population 000,863 in 2000, including many of the Japanese families who had left Puna. The exact number of Japanese American elderly who have lived in Puna cannot be determined because of the extreme mobility of the population. However, considering that Puna Hongwanji Buddhist Church, the largest Japanese institution in Puna, had 385 memberships in 2001,10 most of whom are original residents in Puna, I estimate that the number ranges from 1,000 to 2,000, including those who live outside Puna and Hilo.

The profiles of Japanese American elderly in Puna vary, as follows:

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9 These areas are Kea‘au, Kurtistown, Mountain View, Pāhoa, and Volcano (Figure 2).
10 A membership is given to a household. Thus, the actual number of members is more than 385.
(1) Japanese American elderly in Puna were either born in Puna or in other places in Hawai‘i. Those who are not Puna natives came to Puna mostly because of marriage and family relocation. The Fujinkai Survey Q1 (Appendix B) indicates that among fifty-one Puna Hongwanji *fujinkai* (wives’ association) members, twenty-nine originated from Puna, eleven were from other places on the Big Island, and four were from other islands of Hawai‘i.\(^\text{11}\)

(2) Employees of Puna Sugar, including manager, superintendent, supervisor, office clerk, accountant, mechanic, machine operator, chemist, civil engineer, carpenter, welder, and factory engineer.

(3) Public servants such as postal workers, school teachers, and governmental personnel.

(4) Business owners in towns who managed their own shops and stores.

(5) Independent sugarcane growers who contracted with Puna Sugar to raise sugarcane on leased land. Many employees of Puna Sugar and private business owners were also independent growers on weekends.

(6) Returnees after having worked outside Puna, including those who worked for private companies or had governmental jobs after military service.

One invisible but important fact about Japanese American elderly in Puna is that a number of plantation-raised Japanese Americans have left Puna and are uninterested in talking about their past plantation experiences. This indicates that the significance of the plantation days differs from one individual to another. In other words, the eagerness to

\(^{11}\) There are a few Japanese American elderly who came from urban areas (e.g., Hilo, Honolulu) to join a spouse in Puna. They were not exactly ‘plantation-raised’, but have spent most of their adulthood in Puna. I include these people among Japanese American elderly in Puna.
tell plantation stories among most Japanese American elderly who remain in Puna and Hilo may not be shared by those who have left the area.

The remaining Japanese American elderly, knowing that their memories of the plantation may be headed to oblivion, remember and talk about the plantation experience whenever they find an opportunity at church activities, senior citizen clubs, funerals, community festivals, family reunions, school reunions, or plantation camp reunions. They also consent to interviews conducted by researchers from high schools and universities. Their incentives for telling about their plantation experience vary one to another. Some just wish to feel nostalgic, while others seriously seek to leave a history to their offspring as proof of their existence, and still others tell their stories as part of socializing with friends and acquaintances who share similar experiences.

No matter what motivations they embrace, I argue that the underlying force that drives their storytelling is the desire to collectively perform and embrace the meaningfulness of their lives. Telling plantation stories to each other is mutual-applause, a way of patting each other on the back, 'We made it, we made it good'. It is a desire to acknowledge a feeling of mutual achievement that they assume only plantation-raised Japanese Americans can appreciate.

Plantation camp reunions are evidence of this. In the name of commemoration of ancestors, Japanese American elderly in Puna actively plan and participate in reunions to which they exclusively invite the former camp residents living not only in Puna and Hilo but also on other islands and the U.S. continent. They attempt to bridge spatiotemporal distances in order to reestablish the togetherness of the plantation community. In February 1994, the first reunion was held with 142 participants ('Ola'a Kuri
Oldtimers Reunion 1996:2), and on July 14 and 15, 1996, approximately 900 of the former residents of the Puna Sugar plantation gathered at ‘Ōla’a Kurtistown Oldtimers Reunion, “bringing back the memories with all the old chums” (Hawai‘i Tribune Herald 1996:July 14). In July 1999 only the former 9 Mile Camp residents again organized ‘Ōla’a 9 Mile Camp Reunion with about 150 participants. Although plantation camp reunions are sporadic, these are significant sites for these elderly in remembering their past lives on the plantation.

I regard these reunions as events by which they assert themselves as a distinctive plantation community. Reunion organizers publicly express that the success of their reunions is due to the strong ties of former plantation residents. They explain that while retirement affords them time to ponder over their past and discuss it with other elderly, they invest time and energy in holding plantation camp reunions because of their mutual feelings for interpersonal relationships and their own sense of aging. I consider these feelings to be the driving force behind the telling of plantation stories and further connect this collective revitalization of the plantation experience to a demonstration of the meaningfulness of their own past.

Ethnicity, Class, Generation, and Gender

Japanese American elderly in Puna delineate their identities in complicated ways in telling plantation stories. As I mentioned earlier, the contexts of these stories are critical in defining identity because their identities are expressed in connection to people, time, and space in situational, relational, and processual ways. In other words, they characterize themselves by reflecting on relationships with various kinds of people in the

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12 ‘Ōla’a was a place name for the Puna and Kea‘au areas before 1960.
past and the present, but this characterization changes fluidly according to current contexts as well as physical transitions where they live. In order to explore their collective identities, I organize this complexity by focusing on their plantation experiences in terms of ethnicity, class, generation, and gender. In this way, I believe I can analyze their plantation stories without either simplifying their complicated identity formation or reducing the complexities of their reconstructions of the past to mere retrospective narratives.

Japanese American elderly in Puna regard interaction with Issei culture as the source of their ethnic identity. As I reviewed previously, they grew up as children or grandchildren of Japanese immigrants in the Japanese community. Thus, their collective memory is based on personal memories of direct interaction with Issei culture brought by those who were born in Japan. Whether they consider the cultural influences of Issei positively or negatively depends on the individual and the context. However, their Issei experience has indisputably affected their understanding of themselves.

Their class experience is rooted in the hierarchically structured socioeconomic plantation system of the prewar period, a system in which every family on the plantation was directly or indirectly dependent upon the sugar industry. Japanese American elderly in Puna commonly relate their plantation background as an experience of poverty, racial inequality, and a desire for upward mobility. Through this sort of collective memory they create a shared image of themselves as plantation children who learned the value of work and of solidarity with family members and other immigrant families. Along with a shared ethnic experience, this class experience has had a grave impact upon their identity formation.
In separating ethnicity from class, I intend to demonstrate two different yet
interrelated collective identities. I consider ethnicity and class not to be objectively
defined categories determined by ancestral origins or by the distribution of economic
resources and opportunities, but as culturally and historically defined processes for
grouping people. I will detail my theoretical standpoint toward ethnicity and class
respectively in Chapter Three and Chapter Four.

I use the term ‘generational experience’ to refer to generationally specific
knowledge that differentiates Japanese American elderly in Puna from younger Japanese
Americans. In considering Japanese American elderly in Puna as an age cohort, I focus
on two points. One is a distinctive cultural perspective developed from experiencing
Issei culture along with an American education and life style. The other is their memory
of the closeness of the old Japanese community that is rendered as nostalgia for lost
‘community spirit’. Highlighting these two points, I analyze their generational
experience, characterized by their phrase, ‘our days’.

Finally, I delve into their gendered identity by examining the plantation stories told
by Japanese American elderly women in Puna. I analyze their stories about
daughterhood and motherhood in which they describe their lives in relation to influences
from Issei men and women as well as from contemporary American society. I also
explore the significance of silence in their sense of themselves as plantation-raised
Japanese American women.

By investigating plantation stories in which Japanese American elderly in Puna
remember, evaluate, and represent their past lives on the plantation from the 1920s to the
1980s, I discuss a process by which they collectively delineate their identities in terms of
ethnicity, class, generation, and gender. My analysis focuses on the contents as well as
the contexts of plantation stories, including social and cultural circumstances in the past
and the present, transitions in the socioeconomic environment of Hawai‘i, and historical
events. I aim to produce an ethnography of remembering that captures what Lila Abu-
Lughod (1986) calls ‘ethnographic voice–cultural testimony’ in that Japanese American
elderly in Puna narrate their plantation experience as both an internally-oriented
emotional manifestation and an externally-based common understanding of community.
This ethnography describes how they employ their memories to reconstruct the plantation
experience and define their **peoplehood** as the collective identities of plantation-raised
Japanese Americans.\(^\text{13}\)

**Theoretical Discussion**

Plantation stories are remembrances told by individual Japanese American
elderly.\(^\text{14}\) At the same time, these stories are cultural and historical products that reflect
their common understanding of who they are. This premise is hinted at in the following
ethnographies: Vincent Crapanzano’s *Tuhami* (1980), in which Moroccan men’s lives are
unfolded from the biography of Tuhami; Oscar Lewis’ *The Children of Sanchez* (1961),
that reveals the lives of Mexican underclass families from their personal stories; Barbara
Myerhoff’s *Number Our Days* (1980), that describes the world of Jewish elderly at a life

\(^{13}\) I use the term ‘peoplehood’ in Richard Schermerhorn’s sense: a “collectivity within a larger society
having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one
or more symbolic elements defined as the epitome of their peoplehood” (1970:12).

\(^{14}\) I use the term ‘story(ies)’ because it “captures my interest in a specific variety of talk better than the
more analytic term ‘narrative’ in that it narrows the focus to a discourse type in which one or more
speakers, with the collaboration of audience, have the floor to tell about a temporary ordered sequence of
events” (White 1989:1). Also, I prefer ‘story(ies)’ to ‘discourse’ because ‘story(ies)’ is freer from the
shackles of analytical imperative than ‘discourse’. ‘Discourse’ is subject to thorough deconstruction until
institutional power and ideology are made visible to the analyst (i.e., discourse analysis). ‘Story(ies)’, on
the other hand, contains factors that cannot be analyzed (i.e., artistry as I discuss in Chapter Two).
care center in southern California; and C. W. Mills’ *Sociological Imagination* (1969),
that connects biography to history and individuals to society. Although their theoretical
foundations differ, these works all investigate the cultural or social characteristics of
community through analyzing personal stories.

Inspired by the idea of relating personal stories to certain aspects of community, I
explore plantation stories from three theoretical standpoints. First, following Maurice
Halbwachs, I see plantation stories as a representation of “collective memory” and use his
other key concepts such as “a frame of thoughts,” “localization of memories,” and “social
milieu” (1992). Second, I take into account a psychological analytical framework in
considering telling stories a constructive process of the self that takes place in individual
minds under cultural influences. I rely on Jerome Bruner (1990) and Donald
Polkinghorne (1991) to explain the significance of the creativity of individual minds.

Third, from an interactionist perspective, I view telling stories as an externalizing process
in which personal stories turn into shared stories that represent a common understanding
of peoplehood. The notion of “narrativizing practices” discussed by Geoffrey White
(2001) provides insight into this externalizing process. Also, John Gillis’ (1994) idea
about “commemorative activity” is relevant to my analysis of this process.

I employ these ideas concurrently in reviewing and discussing plantation stories.
Telling plantation stories is a complicated cultural remembering activity that involves not
only choosing, interpreting, and representing memories associated with the storyteller’s
social and cultural life, but also listening to other people’s stories so as to mutually
acknowledge the peoplehood of plantation-raised Japanese Americans. It is my strategy
to first polarize the ‘collective/cultural’ versus the ‘individual/psychological’ and then
relate them through an interactionist theoretical application. In the rest of this section, I detail each theoretical approach to analyzing plantation stories.

Halbwachs describes "collective memory" from a sociological viewpoint based on Emile Durkheim's idea of collective consciousness:

What makes recent memories hang together is not that they are contiguous in time: it is rather that they are part of a totality of thoughts common to a group, the group of people with whom we have a relation at this moment, or with whom we have had a relation on the preceding day or days. To recall them it is hence sufficient that we place ourselves in the perspective of this group, that we adopt its interests and follow the slant of its reflections (1992:52, italics added).

Halbwachs, calling this process "the localization of memories," argues that people of the same group share collective memory because they project the past within a common framework of thoughts, not because common memories continuously abide within every group member's mind. He further explains:

Everyone has a capacity for memory that is unlike that of anyone else, given the variety of temperaments and life circumstances. But individual memory is nevertheless a part or an aspect of group memory, since each impression and each fact leaves a lasting memory only to the extent that one has thought it over—to the extent that it is connected with the thoughts that come to us from the social milieu (ibid.:53).

Even what one thinks of as a personal memory is inescapably connected to the "social milieu," in which it isrecollected. In other words, people remember 'impressions' or 'facts' from their past not in an arbitrary way, but according to a common frame of thoughts that is bound to what Durkheim (1933) calls "collective consciousness."15

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15 Some psychologists do not accept this explanation of collective memories. Instead of seeing the past as a resource, they regard it as a source. Instead of considering collectivity in individual memories as the outcome of cultural construction, they argue that it is a commonality of individual remembrance. From Freud's study of trauma, psychologists stress the enduring consequences of memory (e.g., Caruth 1996; Friendlander 1991). For instance, Holocaust studies indicate that the trauma of terror and oppression haunts the survivors as if it were the present. Some scholars argue that collective memories are not the construction of an abstract past, but a consequence of a persistence of original memory (e.g., Langer 1991).
My approach is hinted at in the juxtaposition of Halbwachs' "collective memories" with Durkheim's "collective consciousness." In overlapping the collective memories with the plantation stories, and the 'collective consciousness' with identities of Japanese American elderly in Puna, I explore the 'framework of thoughts' these elderly use in remembering the past. While Halbwachs theorizes collective memory as a totality of thoughts derived from a constructivist application of the collective consciousness, I aim to display the concrete aspects of the collective identities of these elderly by analyzing plantation stories, making use of Halbwachs’ theory of the reconstruction of the past. Presupposing that plantation stories are not just personal anecdotes but also social and cultural products, I connect the collectivity of their remembrance to collectivity in their identities.

By 'collectivity' in plantation stories I mean commonalities of topics, emotional attachments to experiences, expressions of local words and phrases, recollections of key persons such as family members, community leaders, and school teachers, and the settings of stories in homes, schools, and the community. I also look into commonalities in narrative structure as storytellers' abstract, orient, complicate, evaluate, resolve, and review their stories (Labov 1972, 1982; Riessman 1993:18) and the grammatical organization of stories according to what was done (act), when or where it was done (scene), who did it (agent), how one did it (agency), and why (purpose) (Burke 1945; Riessman 1993:19). In analyzing these commonalities, I intend not to create a meta-story by reducing stories to simple plots but to detect the multi-layered 'frame of thoughts' of Japanese American elderly in Puna that results in a multiplicity of their collective identities.
While employing Halbwachs’s notion of collective memory presupposes a ‘frame of thoughts’ outside the individual mind, I also take into account a psychological approach in examining plantation stories as representations of selves. Polkinghorne discusses the relationship between the self and stories:

It is the narratively structured unity of my life as a whole that provides me with a personal identity and displays the answer to “who am I?” My self-story gives a unified context in which it becomes clear how I am living in life and what is the nature of my individual existence, character, and identity. Within the life narrative, episodes of practical activity are integrated with moral and ethical motives (1991:143).

This idea is based on the existential concept of the self in which the self is understood as becoming, rather than as a substance or a thing. The “becoming” self is mirrored in a “self-story.” From a psychoanalytical viewpoint, Polkinghorne sees both the self and the retrospective narrative as a consequence of the same internal constructive process. Quoting Stephen Crites, “the self is a kind of aesthetic construct, recollected in and with the life of experience in narrative fashion,” (1986:162), Polkinghorne further explains relationships among the self, stories, identity, and the past:

The more complete the story, the more integrated the self. Self-knowledge is an appropriation of the past. Disconnectedness with the past results in the loss of identity, with experience becoming no more than the mere sequence of events passing one after the other, a bare chronicle. Identity, recollected out of the past, is the depth dimension of the self that contains a person’s character (1991:144).

With this explanation, I regard plantation stories as the “self-knowledge” of Japanese American elderly in Puna that is thus connected to their collective identity. Although Polkinghorne’s focus is not on group identity but purely on the psychoanalysis of individual anxiety and depression, his idea offers a theoretical basis for the analysis of identity formation.
Polkinghorne’s idea of the “becoming self” is more applicable when its constructive aspects are related to social and cultural influences. Jerome Bruner theorizes this point by seeing autobiographical narratives as “the act of constructing a longitudinal version of Self” (1990:35). He emphasizes cultural influences upon individual modes of thought or cognitive plans by which one organizes experience in, knowledge of, and transaction with the social world (Bruner 1990:35, 120; Edwards 1997:269). Bruner develops his idea by considering how a culture’s symbolic system enables interpersonal distribution of selves. According to him, in telling self-reflective stories people undergo a “meaning-making” process by which they ‘frame’ experience into a narrative; at the same time, they also undertake the “meaning-using” process to communicate the experience (Bruner 1990:12). He writes:

It is culture, not biology, that shapes human life and the human mind, that gives meaning to action by situating its underlying intentional states in an interpretive system. It does this by imposing the patterns inherent in the culture’s symbolic systems—its language and discourse modes, the form of logical and narrative explication, and the patterns of mutually dependent communal life (ibid.:34). A cultural psychology, almost by definition, will not be preoccupied with “behavior” but with “action,” its intentionally based counterpart, and more specifically, with situated action—action situated in a cultural setting, and the mutually interacting intentional states of the participants (ibid.:19).

Culture plays a critical role in “meaning-making” in that action that follows an intentional state is given a meaning and “meaning-using” in that the same construction of the self is rendered in more than two individuals, resulting in shared meanings. This idea is applicable to exploring what meanings Japanese American elderly in Puna give to their plantation experience under the influence of their own culture’s symbolic system. It is also useful to analyze how they in turn incorporate those meanings into their shared
knowledge so that they can collectively acknowledge and appreciate their plantation experiences.

In addition to ‘meaning-making/using’, Bruner suggests the importance of cultural psychology in reading self-reflective narratives. He explains that if a “cultural setting” rules “mutually interacting intentional states,” the process of meaning-making/meaning-using differs from one cultural setting to another. In other words, if the cultural setting of Japanese American elderly in Puna is distinctive in comparison to other groups, their meaning-making/using processes are also distinctive. If this is the case, their concept of peoplehood, which is based on the process of meaning-making/meaning-using, is culturally specific. This is an ethnographically significant insight.  

A psychologically-based approach to plantation stories is effective in investigating how “culture’s symbolic systems” have an impact upon the reconstruction of plantation experience among Japanese American elderly in Puna. However, a psychological approach falls short in its capacity to analyze the process by which personal anecdotes become shared plantation stories. Bruner’s “meaning-making, meaning-using” strategy may explicate how culture affects Japanese American elderly in Puna in creating and communicating new meanings in/among their individual minds, but may not answer the question of how the new meanings become part of culture. Considered that telling

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Concerning the culturally specific concept of peoplehood, White’s (1991a) discussion of the cultural distinctiveness of the self is informative. White, taking an ethnopsychological perspective, reviews how social scientists theorize the self as cultural and social constructions, and points out the differences “in the emphasis they place on symbolic and sociological ingredients in the constructive process” (ibid.: 34). For example, “White Hallowell delivers a more cognitive directive to attend to interior forms of self-understanding, and Geertz opts for the more sociological notion of ‘person’ constituted in public signs and activities, both look for the self in idealized understandings, especially those enshrined in institutionalized forms of self-representation” (ibid.). White, stressing the importance of focusing on the process of construction, criticizes their approaches as referential accounting of essences distilled in collective symbols.
plantation stories is a relatively recent phenomenon, occurring the closing of Puna Sugar in 1984, the formation of plantation stories is a significant point to explore their collective identities.

White (1989, 1991a, 1991b, 1992, 2000a, 2001), noting the technical terms of a symbolic interactionist theory (e.g., Berger and Luckmann 1966), suggests an approach to local stories based on an examination of the dialectic process of ‘internalization’ and ‘externalization’. I take this interactional approach, the idea of externalizing in particular, into my theoretical basis for the analysis of plantation stories. White explains that internalization is a process whereby collective forms or cultural values are incorporated into individuals, while externalization is a process through which personal experience and understanding are culturally constituted into interactive arenas that shape identity, evoke feelings, and move people to action (1989:3; 1992:37). Noting the concept of ‘entextualizing’, which Michael Silverstein and Greg Urban (1996) define as the institutionalization of discourse, White elaborates on externalization as “narrativizing practices”:

Narrativizing practices here are the discursive strategies that use narrative to render past events both comprehensive and persuasive. In producing, enacting, circulating, (or simply consuming) stories of the past, social actors create and objectify the realities in which they live. The cultural status or significance of historical narrative is established by a variety of pragmatic means used to index its value for a given speech community... As they are externalized or enacted, then, they enter into dialogic relations with reigning discourses of history and identity (2001:197).

Telling stories about plantation life produces a number of personal retrospections. Some of these stories are repeatedly told and retold among Japanese American elderly in Puna until they become shared plantation stories. In such externalized stories, past events

17 I discuss plantation stories as a recent phenomenon in Chapter Two.
seem "comprehensive and persuasive" and are believed to be reality. Simultaneously, these stories are turned into a 'history' recognized by them as a genuine representation of their collective identity.

To demonstrate this process, I examined the "pragmatic means used to index" values, focusing on several key words and phrases. For example, I sought locally specific common meanings of 'we' because the word 'we' contains intersubjective meanings that complicate the individual and the collective in plantation stories. 'We' does not merely refer to certain individuals, but also specifies meanings by which Japanese American elderly in Puna express their own social and cultural characteristics as distinctive from others.

These sorts of pragmatic meanings created upon certain words and phrases are implicitly understood by individuals, yet are not explicitly acknowledged as cultural property. They are cultural phenomenon, yet not valorized or symbolized. In terms of their transitional state, or what Victor Turner (1974) might call a "liminal" state, they are keys to how individual creativity gives new rise to culture.18 Searching for a 'pragmatic means' for indexing values, I explore the process of externalization in plantation stories.

In observing the process of externalization in the telling of stories, I focus on the commemorative aspects of plantation stories. Gillis explains commemorative activity:

Commemorative activity is by definition social and political, for it involves the coordination of individual and group memories, whose results may appear consensual when they are in fact the product of processes of intense contest, struggle, and, in some instances, annihilation (1994:5).

From this insight I regard commemoration as not mere preservation of memories in honor of certain persons but also as a collective effort to acknowledge the meaningfulness of

18 "[Liminality] is a threshold between more or less stable phases of the social process" (Turner 1974:39).
certain memories for the group identity for the future. Gillis, assuming that “memories and identities are not fixed things, but representations or constructions of reality,” and that “we are constantly revising our memories to suit our current identities,” points out the significance of commemorative activity as a social process in which identity and memory are juxtaposed and situated in social interaction, resulting in a collective understanding of the past and identity (ibid.:1). In terms that social actors create and objectify the past with a symbolic apparatus, I consider commemorative activity as a sort of externalization, and commemorative speeches in telling stories as “narrativizing practices” that “render past events both comprehensive and persuasive” (White 2001:197).

Observing the commemorative aspects of telling plantation stories, I explore how historical knowledge is constituted and penetrates both individual minds and collective consciousness, linking a collective identity as peoplehood in the present with memory as personal reflection on the past. A key to analyzing this linkage is to regard telling stories as knowledge production in which history and memory, although they are seemingly discrete, are juxtaposed to render a common understanding of plantation experience with a sort of ‘authenticity’. Assmann, examining the polarization of history and memory suggested by Nietzsche, Halbwachs, and Nora, summarizes their contrasts:

19 Schwartz’s discussion on history and commemoration is informative in understanding a commemorative activity: “Two paths lead to two different notions of the past. History disenchants the past; commemoration and its sites sanctify it. History makes the past an object of analysis; commemoration makes it an object of commitment. History is a system of ‘referential symbols’ representing known facts about past events and their sequence; commemoration is a system of ‘condensation symbol’ (Sapir 1930:492-3) expressing the moral sentiments these events inspire. History, like science, investigates the world by producing models of its permanence and change. Commemoration, like ideology, promotes commitment to the world by producing symbols of its values and aspirations (Geertz 1973:193-233). The contrast between history and commemoration is not entirely clear cut. History always reflects the ideals and sentiments that commemoration expresses; commemoration is always rooted in historical knowledge. Analytic history and commemorative symbolism are interdependent constituent of collective memory” (Schwartz 2001:2269).
memory "is highly selective, including forgetting" and "creates a profile of values supporting an identity and providing orientation for action," while history "is a disembodied form of memory" and "is disengaged from specific carriers" (2001:6822-6829). This conceptual difference makes it difficult to reconcile memory and history in both personal retrospective storytelling and institutional historical description. A commemorative activity further complicates memory and history by situating memory in a collective effort to acknowledge its meaningfulness. A commemorative activity ‘disembodies’ memories and ‘disengages’ them from specific carriers to establish ‘authentic historical’ knowledge. In this case, it may be ‘authentic’ plantation experience. While rendering authenticity, a commemorative activity also maintains the creative characteristics of memory so that people can still generate a profile of values supporting an identity and providing an orientation for action. In other words, Japanese American elderly in Puna, by telling and listening to plantation stories, shape a master narrative as historical knowledge by incorporating personal memories into it; at the same time, they creatively delineate their group identity and define the values of their peoplehood.20

I regard every retrospective talk about the plantation days that takes place in ordinary conversations among Japanese American elderly in Puna as a form of commemorative activity in addition to the conventional means of commemoration such as eulogies, reunions, anniversaries, festivals, and memorial services. In other words, telling plantation stories is seen as commemorative activity in most cases.

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20 I do not argue that commemorative activity necessarily renders a history. See Footnote 19 for the difference between history and commemoration.
Methodological Discussion

This research consists of archival review, fieldwork, analysis of plantation stories, and an overall discussion that includes the interpretation of plantation stories and theoretical review. In this part I explain the methodology of each research procedure.

The purpose of archival research was to build background knowledge on: (1) Japanese American elderly in Puna; (2) the sugar plantation culture and communities in Hawai‘i; (3) Puna Sugar; (4) the sugar industry in Hawai‘i; (5) the labor history of sugar plantation workers; (6) the political history of Hawai‘i; (7) ethnic relations; and (8) the Japanese American community in Hawai‘i. From archival research I drew statistical profiles as well as established the contexts of plantation stories. Archival information that does not appear in this text but plays an important part in my analysis includes Francis Nagasawa’s (2000) exhibition of artifacts and memoirs of the plantation village of Kukuihaele originally gathered by the Kukuihaele Club from 1958 and Michi Kodama-Nishimoto’s (1984) compilation of oral histories of sugar workers. Other than these works, the Hawai‘i Tribune Herald, a local newspaper in Hilo that occasionally features plantation stories, and the Hawai‘i Herald, “a semi monthly community journal that focuses on and services the state’s large population of Japanese Americans” (Hawai‘i Hochi 2003), were important information sources for building background knowledge.

I undertook fieldwork and analysis of plantation stories concurrently in the field. Fieldwork methods included participant observation, a survey by questionnaire, and life story interviews.21 As the Field Log (Appendix C) shows, participating in activities held by Japanese American elderly in Puna was the largest part of my fieldwork. I listened to

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21 I use the term ‘life story’ rather than ‘life history’ or ‘oral history’ because the word ‘story’ frees storytellers and their audience from any spatiotemporal confinement.
their stories at various occasions that included funerals, religious services, the annual bon dance festival, volunteer projects, parties, outdoor excursions for fishing and picnics, and luncheons at local restaurants. By participating in these kinds of gatherings, I became familiar with local ways of interweaving plantation experiences into stories.

I conducted life story interviews to produce transcriptions of plantation stories for analysis. A number of scholars have discussed the use of the life story for social scientific investigation (e.g., Fischer 1991; Langness and Frank 1981; Peacock and Holland 1993; Personal Narrative Group 1989) and have produced influential work (e.g., Myerhoff 1980; Shostak 1981; Willis 1981). The life story methodology is relevant and appropriate to this study because it addresses the question of knowledge-making in the retrospective mode of storytelling. It is through self-reflective stories that people create knowledge about themselves and others. Daniel Bertaux, taking the same premise, provides instruction on how to read life stories: "We must discover the forms of discourse through which elements of knowledge about sociohistorical processes will find their way into living cultures and thus, coming to public life, become at last common knowledge" (1981:44).

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22 The Japanese American National Museum describes the bon dance festival: "For Japanese Americans, an annual summer tradition includes the Obon Festival. An integral holiday in the Buddhist calendar, Obon is an important connection to Japanese heritage and to the Japanese American culture. It is a time of reflection and remembrance, appreciating life and all those close to you, and to honor those who have passed on, as well as those who are still with you. The highlight of each Obon Festival is the 'Bon Odori [bon dance]', an outdoor folk dancing performance around a 'yagura' (raised platform or tower), which is seen as an expression of joy in the Buddhist teachings. The yagura is set up in the middle of the dance grounds and the Obon taiko (drum) is placed on it. Dancers then dance in a circle around the yagura to the beat of the taiko. Bon Odori dances are simple and repetitive, inviting the participation of everyone from men, women, and children. In recent years, generations of Japanese Americans have joined Obon celebrations, enhancing the spirited atmosphere of Bon Odori. Obon festivities are not only integral to the Obon observance held at the temple, but also reinforces cultural heritage among the community" (2003).
In search of 'common knowledge', I focused on the *meanings* in stories, as I discussed previously: J. Bruner's meaning-making and meaning-using and White's pragmatic meanings. Charlotte Linde (1993, 1997) discusses the significance of transformational or constructive aspects of life stories. According to her, life stories are not "memorized and replayed like a recorded tape," but exhibit ways in which storytellers "find and then partially stabilize effective ways of describing events and evaluating their meaning, which they change somewhat to suit a particular audience, or more rarely, radically alter as their understanding of events and meanings changes" (1997:238). Linde, pointing to the importance of an audience, offers a critical perspective for examining the creative aspects of telling plantation stories.

During interviews, I also took into consideration James Spradley's (1979) technique for conducting an 'ethnographic interview' by building rapport and rolling communication, as well as Langness and Frank's nondirective/open-ended interviewing methods for producing storytelling:

[Nondirective/open-ended interviewing] enables you to learn what the subjects themselves regard as important—or at least what they think it is important to tell the interviewer. Spontaneity, moreover, enables you to learn how the informants conceptualize and think about their own lives (1981:48).

I also employed H. R. Bernard’s "probing" technique for unstructured interviewing that stimulates "an informant to produce more information, without injecting yourself so much into the interaction that you only get a reflection of yourself in data" (1988:215-217). Bernard introduces several techniques for probing such as the silent probe (nodding, mumbling), the echo probe (repeating), and the 'Uh-huh' probe. Bernard’s probing technique is effective in preventing the "communicative hegemony" that Briggs
describes as "researchers' efforts to impose their own communicative strategies on their subjects" (1986:90). It also prompts interviewees to produce "a story that tells a sequence of events that are significant for the narrator and his or her audience" with minimum influence from the interviewer (Denzin 1989:37). I conducted interviews not to create an inventory of discrete episodes from interviewees' lives, but to capture the memories that storytellers associate with the plantation experience, the feelings or attitudes that they express in stories, and how they explain the significance of remembered memories.²³

To locate narrative units from transcripts, I referred to David Mandelbaum (1973) and Norman Denzin (1989). Mandelbaum focuses on different periods in a life course such as childhood, adolescence, adulthood, married life, and retirement, while Denzin stresses the turning points in a life, or the "epiphanies" that he regards as "moment[s] of problematic experience" (1989:141). I combined both ideas to extract relevant narrative units from the entire transcripts.

In reading each narrative unit, I followed Amia Leiblich's (1998) holistic and categorical reading methods. A holistic reading is an examination of the entire life story by paying attention to storytellers' actions and psychological aspects of their childhood to the present, along with transformations in their cultural, social, and political environments. It is a means of analyzing "individuals' personal construction of his or her evolving life experience" (ibid.:88) that explicates how storytellers draw their identity

²³ Concerning communicative hegemony in interviewing, White's (2000b) critique on the life-history method is suggestive. If interviewers take the life-history method as a "singular, consistent set of practices, such as simply interviewing people about their personal past," their interviews fall into "the juke box model of elicitation"—"Put in the coin (ask the right questions) and the same song can be played anytime" (184). Although it is important to know what songs are in the jukebox, it is more important to let it play by itself and observe the order of songs and the feelings accompanying the songs.
and values from stories. In looking at stories backwards from the present viewpoint, a holistic reading offers an analytical perspective for seeing how storytellers evaluate the past.

A categorical reading, on the other hand, focuses on certain topics or structures of stories, aiming to study the cognitive aspects of stories with linguistic and psychological theoretical support. For example, Naomi Quinn (1985) investigates the stories of married life as told by American women by scrutinizing metaphors so as to locate a cultural model of an American understanding of marriage. She concludes that storytellers' ways of thinking are culturally determined by schemas: the ways people unconsciously and collectively understand phenomena and organize knowledge and experience (D'Andrade 1995; Holland and Quinn 1987; Strauss and Quinn 1997). I applied a categorical reading to elicit pragmatic meanings of certain words such as 'Japanese', 'work', 'those days', and 'gaman (to endure)' in plantation stories to demonstrate the meaning-making process by which Japanese American elderly in Puna creatively reconstruct their plantation experience.

In presenting and discussing plantation stories, I have placed excerpts of the transcripts in Appendix A and quote only key phrases and sentences in the text as pointers to the stories being discussed. This is to avoid quoting the same stories more than twice in different chapters. Also, by presenting plantation stories in an appendix without an analytical voice, I intend to increase the readability of the transcripts. The complexity of plantation stories lies in multiple perspectives from which Japanese American elderly in Puna often express plural identities. As they tell a story they shift their viewpoints from now to then, from 'I' to 'we', from 'Japanese' to 'Hawai'i-born',
and from ‘us’ to ‘wahine’ (‘women’ in Hawaiian) or ‘us, guys’. Dorinne Kondo (1990) observes Japanese female part-time workers at a confectionary in Tokyo ‘craft’ multiple selves as strong mothers, diligent workers, receptive women, and persons of a specific local area. Japanese American elderly in Puna also interweave multiple identities into plantation stories in a complicated fashion. To unravel their multiple identities, I focus on the same stories in different chapters and discuss them from different perspectives.

Other Considerations

My personal profile as a Japanese male, forty-two years old of age, having grown up in urban Japan, and from the working class affected my interactions in the field. The greatest vantage point was my Japanese background. While I only spoke English during fieldwork, including interviews, Japanese American elderly in Puna, once they became acquainted with me, started to insert a myriad of Japanese words and phrases into their speech, just as when talking to other Japanese American elderly. Transcripts exhibit how they interweave Japanese language in their speech.24 I believe my identity as a native Japanese-speaker had a positive effect by allowing me to enter part of their speech community.25

24 Characteristically, many Japanese American elderly in Puna deny that they can speak Japanese, or say that their Japanese is very rudimentary and/or old-fashioned when they are asked about their Japanese by outsiders, especially by Japanese nationals. Behind their attitudes, some of them seem to presuppose a hierarchy that places them in an ambiguous position vis-à-vis Japanese nationals: in one sense inferior as poor cousins to an original home culture; in another sense superior as members of a nation with greater global power and influence.

25 I am not saying that they talked to me in the local style of speech, Hawai‘i Creole English or Pidgin. While some Japanese American elderly talked to me in Pidgin, most of them tried to speak ‘standard English’ in interviews and ordinary conversation. In this way, I was subject to their code switching, as are other outsiders. The degree of their code switching is uncertain because the frequency of Pidgin in use among Japanese American elderly in Puna differs widely. Generally, women do not speak Pidgin as much as men do, and even among men there is a difference in use of Pidgin. Some Japanese American elderly
I start each chapter with a vignette, except for Chapter Two and Chapter Seven. Every vignette is based on my fieldnotes and is meant to convey some of the atmosphere of my interactions with Japanese American elderly in Puna. By doing this, I stress my authorship as well as my presence within these settings. These vignettes should remind readers that I am the author of this text and that these interactions are seen through analytical eyes rooted in my academic as well as cultural background. I, as an ethnographer, take all responsibility for the interpretation and description of the collective identities of Japanese American elderly in Puna. These vignettes should also tell readers that I have been a participant in the plantation stories and have taken specific positions at some sites of storytelling. Readers will confirm that I am part of the context of the plantation stories, thus of this study.26

I also intend each vignette to vividly describe scenes in which the elderly contest their identities against mine. Their ways of expressing their identities are subtle, indirect, or poetic. Sometimes they themselves do not even know that they are expressing their own identities when talking about my identities. Their definitions of my identities reflect their self-understandings. Ethnographic portrayals of these interactions exhibit their tones of voice and reveal their tacit expressions of their own identities.

My presence as a researcher had an effect on Japanese American elderly in Puna. Knowing that I was a student studying people from the sugar plantation, they often addressed me directly and gave me more detailed descriptions about the old times in Puna.

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26 All names throughout these vignettes, in the rest of the text, and the transcripts in Appendix A are pseudonyms or appear only as initials, except for the names of public figures or of individuals who produced public documents.
than they would with each other. Mostly, they provided general information about the sugar industry and plantation life. Topics included raising sugarcane, factory operations, the first Japanese manager from Pāhoa, the closing of Puna Sugar in 1984, family and community life, the bon dance, and changes in Puna after World War II. Whenever someone started describing such historical events to me, it was likely to develop into reminiscence among them; they would then leave me out and begin to tell each other stories about specific individuals and past events. In this way, my presence often triggered a collective remembering of the plantation days.

My presence as an interviewer was also a stimulus for them to tell stories. During open-ended interviews, which usually lasted from two to four hours per session, interviewees usually relaxed and shifted their storytelling from flat descriptions of life events to reflections upon their lives as a whole. They seemed to be trying to discover the meaningfulness of their plantation experiences. Instead of passively transmitting information by answering my questions about past events, they treated me as an audience to whom they tell their thoughts and emotions as they remembered and reconstructed their plantation experiences. In many cases interviews turned into monologues. Some interviewees, remembering personal life events, re-experienced their past feelings and expressed sorrow, anger, excitement, or delight while telling stories. Others, reminiscing about their close-knit family and community relationships, explained their beliefs in the importance of interpersonal networks and showed their pride in having maintained social ties. By prompting interviewees to freely express their thoughts and emotions as well as by attentively listening and responding to their stories, I certainly played a participatory role in shaping the plantation stories told by Japanese American elderly in Puna.
Changing the subject from interactive factors to geographical ones, I emphasize the significance of the difference between Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i and on the U.S. continent in understanding the context of plantation stories. This is particularly important in reviewing literature. I thus take into account primarily studies of Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i for my discussion in each chapter.

The most salient difference is their political ascendancy in the postwar period. Hawaii’s Japanese Americans advanced substantially in politics from the 1950s through the 1980s. Several factors contributed to their advancement. First, the percentage of Japanese American adult citizens out of the total adult citizens in Hawai‘i increased from 12 percent in 1930 to 40 percent in 1950 (Kotani 1985:140) as the Nisei (second generation) came of age. Second, the Walter-McCarran Act of 1952 allowed Issei to become naturalized citizens thereby gaining the right to vote. Third, Japanese American World War II veterans, such as those from the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, were able to enter politics after acquiring higher education. Finally, the International Longshoremen’s and Warehousemen’s Union (ILWU) actively supported the Democratic Party for which many Japanese Americans ran for office and won elections.

Kotani (1985) summarizes Hawaii’s Japanese American advance into politics:

Twenty-five years after the celebration of statehood, Hawaii’s Japanese continued to play a prominent role in local politics. In 1985, 21 of 51 state representatives and 10 of 25 state senators were of Japanese ancestry. Two of Hawaii’s four members of Congress—U.S. Senators Daniel Inouye and Sparky Matsunaga—were Nisei. At Washington Place, Governor George Ariyoshi, the first governor of Asian ancestry in the United States, was serving his third term as the state’s chief executive. Americans of Japanese ancestry were well-represented at all levels of

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27 As of 1952, 31,118 of the total 188,872 Japanese in Hawai‘i remained non-citizens (Okahata 1971:113).
local government. In 1985, eight of 17 state department heads were Japanese Americans (163).

This remarkable postwar political achievement took place only in Hawai‘i. It resulted from the distinctive political experience of Hawaii’s Japanese Americans in struggling against racial inequality. Their political accomplishment is characterized in the phrase “We all Haoles,” meaning “We’re all Caucasians” to express the idea that they were no longer second-class citizens (ibid.:136).28

Aside from their postwar political experiences, Hawaii’s Japanese Americans differ from those on the U.S. continent in terms of not having experienced mass internment during World War II. While 3,341 of about 160,000 Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i were interned, approximately 120,000 on the U.S. continent were sent to concentration camps (Okamura 2000:117). The main reason Hawaii’s Japanese Americans were not interned was that it would have resulted in a labor shortage in key sectors of the local economy (e.g., Okamura 2000). For many Japanese Americans on the U.S. continent, incarceration by Executive Order 9066 in 1942 meant the loss of their rights as U.S. citizens as well as of their properties. This damage later led them to organize the redress movement in the 1970s (e.g., Takezawa 1995). During fieldwork, however, I never met any Japanese American elderly in Puna who had been interned or participated in the redress movement. Although these elderly in Puna share the same experience of America’s racist wartime policies with Japanese Americans on the U.S. continent, their non-internment resulted in different wartime experiences, and thus different wartime stories.

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28 For the meaning of Haole, see Footnote 2 in Chapter Four.
For a better understanding of general differences between Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i and on the U.S. continent, demographic profiles should be kept in mind. Table 2 shows racial profiles in Hawai‘i, the Western region of the U.S., and the entire United States in 1930, 1950, and 1970. In 1930 and 1950 in Hawai‘i, Japanese outnumbered whites, and in 1970 Japanese still constituted 28.3 percent of the total population. On the U.S. continent Japanese were always a minority, along with other Asians and Pacific Islanders, among the white majority. The difference is striking. The numerical advantage of Hawai‘i’s Japanese undoubtedly contributed to their political advances. Table 2 suggests the distinctiveness of Hawaii’s Japanese American social and political experiences in comparison with those of Japanese Americans on the U.S. continent.

**TABLE 2**

**Racial Profiles: Hawai‘i, the Western Region, and the entire United States 1930-1970**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Hawai‘i</th>
<th>The West Region</th>
<th>The United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Asian and Pacific Islander</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>80,373 (21.8%)</td>
<td>139,631 (37.9%)</td>
<td>110,286,046 (89.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(including Puerto Ricans, Portuguese, and Spaniards)</td>
<td></td>
<td>264,766 (0.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>124,344 (24.9%)</td>
<td>184,598 (36.9%)</td>
<td>134,942,028 (89.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>301,429 (39.2%)</td>
<td>217,669 (28.3%)</td>
<td>177,748,975 (87.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 2003 and Norydke 1989)
These distinctive aspects have been the focus of much scholarship (see bibliographies compiled by Hori 1988; Kurokawa 1977; Matsuda 1975; Okamura 2002; and Strona 1993). My primary information comes from these studies: for example, Adams (1933); Embree (1941); Grant and Ogawa (1993); Hormann and Lind (1996); Kotani (1985); Lind (1984); Odo (1984, 1985, 1988); Odo and Yim (1992); Ogawa (1981); Okamura (1982, 1994, 1998a, 1998b, 2000); Okihiro (1991); Takaki (1983); Tamura (1994, 2000). Only when I discuss Issei women and Issei cultural traits and influences upon their descendants, do I refer to studies that include Japanese Americans on the U.S. continent (i.e., Fugita and O'Brien 1991; Kitano 1993; Maykovich 1972; Miyamoto 1939; Nakano 1990; Takahashi 1997; Yamamoto 1999; Yanagisako 1977, 1985; and Yoo 2000).

**Organization of Dissertation**

This dissertation consists of seven chapters. In this first chapter, I have defined my research setting and subject, my theoretical framework, and methodologies. Chapter Two details the background of the plantation stories. I explain who produce the stories, with what themes, for what purposes by reviewing various kinds of reconstruction of plantation experiences. The next four chapters give the ethnographic contexts in which Japanese American elderly in Puna delineate their collective identities in telling plantation stories. Chapter Three examines ethnic identity, Chapter Four focuses on class identity, Chapter Five delves into generational identity, and Chapter Six concentrates on gendered identity among Japanese American elderly women in Puna. In Chapter Seven, I present an overall discussion about how Japanese American elderly in Puna reconstruct their plantation experiences, by treating their storytelling as a significant performance of
"Re-membering" (Myerhoff 1982; see *Discussion* in Chapter Five) to demonstrate their values and qualities as plantation-raised Japanese Americans.
CHAPTER TWO
PLANTATION STORIES AND COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES

In this chapter I review various kinds of reconstructions of the plantation experience among Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i and provide background information for reading plantation stories. Covering texts produced not only by Japanese American elderly in Puna but also by Japanese Americans in other areas of Hawai‘i, including professional writers, I demonstrate the elements of ‘good’ plantation stories that inspire Japanese American elderly in Puna to collectively ponder over their past lives and develop their plantation stories. I argue that these elements, which I regard as a kind of artistry, are not defined by fixed criteria, but are subject to the present circumstances in which Japanese Americans live their everyday lives. Storytellers as well as their audiences appreciate ‘good’ plantation stories because the stories articulate the meaningfulness of the plantation experience within current social and cultural contexts.

By 2002 there were only three sugar plantations still operating in Hawai‘i: Hawaiian Commercial & Sugar on Maui, the Lihue Plantation, and Gay and Robertson on Kaua‘i. On the Big Island, nineteen sugar plantations and mills have been shut down.¹ Hawaii’s sugar plantation communities are fading away due to population outflow and the aging of the original residents.

¹ In 1956, sugar plantations and mills on the Big Island included: Hakalau Plantation Co., Ltd. in Hakalau; Halawa Plantation Co., Ltd. in Halawa; Hamakua Mill Co., Ltd. in Pa‘auilo; Hawaiian Agricultural Co., Ltd. in Pāhala; Hilo Sugar Co., Ltd. in Wainaku; Honokaa Sugar Co., Ltd. in Haina; Honomu Sugar Co., Ltd. in Honomu; Hutchinson Sugar Plantation in Honu‘apo; Kauki Sugar Co., Ltd. in ‘O‘okala; Kohala Sugar Co., Ltd. in Hala‘ula; Laupāhoehoe Sugar Co., Ltd. in Papa‘aloa; Niulii Mill & Plantation in Niulii; ‘Ōla‘a/Puna Sugar Co., Ltd. in ‘Ohia (Kea‘au); Onomea Sugar Co., Ltd. in Pāpa‘ikou; Pa‘auhau Sugar Plantation Co., Ltd. in Pa‘auhau; Pepe‘ekeo Sugar Co., Ltd. in Pepe‘ekeo; Waiakea Mill Co., Ltd. at 1 1/4 Mile S.E. of Hilo; and Wailea Milling Co., Ltd. in Wailea (Hawai‘i Sugar Mills 2001).
The sugar industry, called ‘King Sugar’, once dominated Hawai‘i (Takaki 1983:16-21). In 1833, William Hooper of Boston started the first sugar plantation in Kōloa, Kauai, hiring twenty-five Native Hawaiians, and by 1910, fifty-two sugar plantations spread throughout the islands of Hawai‘i (ibid.:4-6, 22-56). Between 1852 and 1905, Hawaii’s agricultural industry imported contract laborers from China (45,064), Portugal (14,670), Norway (615), Japan (140,457), Korea (6,925), and Puerto Rico (5,200) (Nordyke 1989:249). Between 1909 and 1934, 118,555 immigrants from the Philippines came to work on the plantations (ibid.:250-251). Immigrants coming from Japan between 1868 and 1924 numbered 159,288 men, 49,612 women, and 4,852 children (ibid.:65).

Having experienced the prosperity and decline of the sugar industry, the descendents of these immigrants have written about their lives on the plantations. They use a variety of textual forms, including autobiography, personal essay, reportage, chronology, creative writing, and academic papers. These texts are produced personally or institutionally by either professionals, such as journalists, scholars, and novelists/poets, or amateurs, including local historians, church members, and school teachers. In the next section, starting with texts produced by Japanese American elderly in Puna, I review what I call ‘plantation stories’.

**Texts**

Japanese American elderly in Puna produce both personal and institutional texts. The personal text includes autobiographical writings and research papers. One former labor union organizer has kept a detailed record of his life and presents stories from it whenever the opportunity arises, such as in high school history classes, for special
museum exhibitions, or to assist research projects conducted by professionals. His story touches upon his Issei parents, family, religious beliefs, and political interests, but centers on his career and involvement in the labor union movement. Although his written text resembles a resume, his public speeches creatively express his plantation experience; he becomes a compelling storyteller. Story #0201 is the beginning of the presentation he gave at the exhibition of *From Bento to Mixed Plate* at Lyman House Museum in Hilo on April 4, 2000. He dwells on specific aspects of his plantation background such as his parents’ Okinawan origins, growing up in a ‘big family’, and living in a plantation camp and comically describes himself as a sugar worker who has the ‘birthmark’ of the sugar plantation.

This autobiographical story is based on personal experience, yet it evokes concrete images of plantation life for Japanese American elderly in Puna by linking their own plantation experiences to specific traits in the story. His manuscript, originally prepared for a general audience, thus not only provides information about his personal life as a sugar worker, but also embodies memories for the elderly who share the plantation background. His comments on aging also draw sympathy from the elderly and contribute to their collective remembering.

The other former Puna resident has also written about his plantation experiences in an autobiographical form. Story #0203 is an excerpt from *Plantation Towns Left Some Sweet Memories*, an article that he contributed to the local *Hawai‘i Tribune Herald* in 1996 (Yokoyama 1995: D-1, 10). Remembering that “in fact all the things there were the

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2 Beechert (1985) and Kotani (1985) acknowledge his name in their work.

3 I have heard him tell the birthmark story more than three times, including in an one-to-one interview. Every time the story is told almost identically. From this, I argue that his story is not just a remembrance but the embodiment of his identity. His plantation experiences mark his identity bodily with a birthmark.
best,” he depicts a life in ‘Öla’a Town and stresses the pronoun, ‘we’: “We used kerosene lamps”; “We had no concrete sidewalks and the road was unpaved”; “We never wore shoes”; and “We did not have any water pipe system.” While the writer uses the pronoun ‘we’ to refer to his siblings, family members, neighbors, or other community members, Japanese American in Puna may take ‘we’ as including them because of shared experience of plantation life. ‘We’ thus complicates the boundaries between the story and the elderly; this rhetorical device is a feature not only of this particular story, but of plantation stories in general.

When these Japanese American elderly hear memories about the town streets, close-knit neighborhoods, kerosene lamps, unpaved roads, dependence upon the sugar industry, lack of shoes, lack of running water, stables and mules, flumes, icemakers, and military service, they find them easy to associate the story with their own plantation origins. These are not just recollections of facts but a way of making their collective remembering concrete. For example, the shape of a kerosene lamp, pebbles on unpaved roads, callused feet, and drinking rainwater may conjure up their childhood homes seen by the light of kerosene lamps, the familiar faces of their neighbors and sugar workers who once walked on unpaved roads, the playgrounds where they went barefoot, and the taste of tepid water from the roof tank. These kinds of experiences form the core of their collective memory by which they acknowledge their plantation origins, although the details of remembrance may vary from one person to another according to household, town, or camp they were raised on.

When the writer presents these memories in the mode of ‘we’-remembering, the story becomes more than a personal remembrance; it becomes our story, representing the
collective identities of Japanese American elderly in Puna. This story was written to evoke this linkage, not merely out of personal nostalgia. The writer's comment, "in fact all the things there were the best," means 'the best to remember now'. This interpretation is supported by the fact that Japanese American elderly in Puna introduce his story as our story in their camp reunion booklet.

Some longtime Puna residents have conducted historical research on their residential areas. For example, a Japanese American man in Pāhoa is planning to privately publish a research paper he has been writing about past events in Pāhoa up to World War II. His paper describes Puna Sugar, the process of raising sugarcane, the train system that was dismantled by 1947, camps and towns in Pāhoa and Kapoho, and people such as Native Hawaiians, Caucasian missionaries, and labor immigrants, Japanese in particular. His writing style is to list past events factually in terms of who, what, when, and where. For instance, he details the Japanese community, listing when each Japanese organization was established, who was in charge in every term, what activities were held, and where its office was located. He says that he is compiling an inventory of facts because somebody has to keep track of the records of Pāhoa before

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4 For another example, a woman in Mountain View produced a research paper titled Historical/Cultural Essay Report on Mountain View, 'ōla'a (Takemoto 1976).
5 According to him, Issei leaders organized the Pāhoa Japanese Community Association (Pāhoa Nihonjin Kai) in the 1900s, and both Pāhoa Buddhist Women's Association and the Young Buddhist Association (YBA) in the 1910s to improve community life. They are still maintained by Japanese American elderly in Puna. YBA leased land from Puna Sugar (3,635 sq. ft for five dollars per year) in 1920 and built a community hall, called the 'YBA Hall', to meet the needs of religious, business, cultural, educational, and social activities for Japanese residents in Pāhoa. He explains that since most Japanese residents in Pāhoa were Buddhists, the YBA Hall was used by virtually all the Japanese residents in the area. The Pāhoa Cane Planters' Association (Pāhoa Kōsaku Dōmeikai) was founded in 1913 to serve Issei who contracted independently with Puna Sugar to raise sugarcane. Their children also organized the Young Farmers Association in 1953. Issei leaders also started kumiai (neighborhood associations) in 1916 so that members could receive assistance to hold funerals. By 1930, there were eight kumiai in Pāhoa: Kyū-Pāhoa kumiai consisting of twenty-eight households, Nishimachi (22), Machi (30), Yokomachi (13), Houselots (18), Higashimachi (30), Camp (22), and Pāhoa mauka (mountain side) (8). Currently, these have merged into Kyū-Pāhoa and Higashimachi kumiai with approximately 130 households in total.
people who remember the plantation days all pass away. He concentrates on
presenting facts about Pāhoa and rarely provides discussions or opinions about the events
listed in his texts.

His primary purpose is preservation of the past. For a local newspaper, he writes:

This building [the Young Buddhist Association’s Hall] symbolizes the
cooperative spirit of the Japanese people of Pāhoa, and also serves as a legacy to
the future generations—where the many cultural activities that the early
immigrants brought with them can be held and perpetuated in this lovely land of
aloha—the paradise of the Pacific (Sato 2001:A-6).

By listing facts, he inscribes meaningfulness in the past in his text for future generations.

He is also actively involved in preserving the Japanese cemetery in Pāhoa by
producing a catalog of family names carved on the tombstones. He comments, “Well,
people say, ‘History repeats itself’. So that [the cemetery] was the forest. So, it might
repeat and become a forest, yah. But I hope not” (Story #0202 Line 6). He makes an
effort to preserve the Japanese cemetery because he does not want to see it return to
forest; likewise, he writes records of Pāhoa because he does not want to see the past of
Pāhoa lost to oblivion.6

His metaphorical expression of his effort to preserve the past parallels a sense of
the aggressiveness of nature on the Big Island. From lava flows that cover paved roads to
verdant growth that enshrouds objects such as abandoned vehicles, nature easily takes the
lead on this tropical island. Nature’s inevitability, then, becomes an apt metaphor for the
obliteration of memories that are left untended. In this schema, people must consciously

6 The way Japanese American elderly in Pāhoa participate in commemorative projects such as cemetery
preservation and YBA Hall renovation varies. First, there are people who are not involved in this sort of
community activity at all. These are mostly siblings who have left the area, although many of them do send
financial aid. Second, people in the area make contributions either by monetary donations or by physical
labor (or both). From my observation, most Japanese American elderly in Pāhoa are involved in this
because most of them belong to the Pāhoa Japanese American Association that plans these renovations.
intervene to stop the natural erosion of memory and encroachment of forgetting. In the case of the Japanese cemetery, some Japanese American elderly actively stem the threat of nature/wildness, thus keeping deceased persons culturally and socially alive. Should they not do so, the past associated with these persons will be buried, forgotten, or lost in the wild bush, along with the graveyard.

Japanese American elderly in Puna also produce institutional texts about their plantation experiences. There are three commemorative booklets. *Maps of Early Mt. View* (1992) was distributed to the former and current residents of Mountain View. ‘Ōla’a/Kurtistown Oldtimers Reunion (1996) and ‘Ōla’a 9 Mile Camp Reunion (1999) were given out to reunion participants. *Maps of Early Mt. View* includes eight maps that indicate houses and stores in Mountain View before 1941 with residents’ names and two paragraphs of historical description. ‘Ōla’a/Kurtistown Oldtimers Reunion consists of sixty-eight pages of text, photographs, and maps. The text, produced by seventeen former camp residents, is about Puna Sugar,\(^7\) the labor movement, ‘Ōla’a Town, various sports clubs,\(^8\) and nicknames of former residents. Each text accompanies photographs of people, buildings, and streets. Seventeen hand drawn maps display houses and stores with occupants’ names (see Figures 3 and 4). ‘Ōla’a 9 Mile Camp Reunion is a fifteen-page booklet that describes plantation life at ‘Ōla’a 9 Mile Camp. The 9 Mile Camp, which has been razed by the landowner, was simultaneously occupied by Japanese, Puerto Ricans, and Portuguese during the plantation period (Figure 4). Accordingly, the text of this booklet was written by former residents from different ethnic backgrounds.

\(^7\) It describes the factory, transportation, working conditions, and workers’ ethnic profile.

\(^8\) Sports clubs included baseball, basketball, and football leagues.
Figure 3
Lower 'Ola'a Town
(Source: 'Ola'a/Kurtistown Oldtimers Reunion 1996:56)
Each booklet states its purpose:

This booklet was printed to credit all the immigrant pioneers who braved unknown hardships to make a better life for themselves (Maps of Early Mt. View 1992:1).

With narratives, photographs, and maps, we have tried to capture memories of days gone by of our old 'Ola'a and Kurtistown communities. Included here are only a small part of the many stories of our people and their history that date back to the turn of the 20th century. Our ancestors, who settled here to work in the sugar plantation, brought from their native lands many diverse cultures and traditions which are still continued today (‘Ola’a/Kurtistown Oldtimers Reunion 1996:3).

This reunion was organized to bring us together to our “roots,” to renew acquaintances, to reminisce about our childhood days in this then rural plantation community. Although our parents and grandparents are gone, nonetheless, let us not forget this significant event—the first ‘Ola’a 9 Mile Camp reunion—as our forefathers laid the cornerstones of this community under difficult circumstances. Let us cherish their memories with gratitude (‘Ola’a 9 Mile Camp Reunion 1999:1).

“Immigrant pioneers,” “Our ancestors,” and “Our forefathers”: with these different expressions Japanese American elderly in Puna commemorate their “parents and grandparents” who struggled to develop the “communities” in which they grew up. This is the purpose of these texts. It is a collective effort to reconstruct their plantation communities by assembling their memories in the form of texts, photographs, and maps. These images of the past enable them to remember and venerate their ancestors, simultaneously embodying their shared plantation background.

Aside from reading texts produced themselves, Japanese American elderly in Puna also read texts written by Japanese Americans from other areas in Hawai‘i. Among the books recommended by the elderly in Puna, I will discuss two contrasting personal stories: Sugar Town by Yasushi Scotch Kurisu (1995), which emphasizes the ‘good old’ plantation memories, and All I Asking for is My Body by Milton Murayama (1988[1959]), which reveals the oppressiveness of plantation life.
“This book is dedicated to the men and women of Hawaii’s sugar industry—the founders and pioneers, merchants and union people, plantation employees and independent growers,” begins Kurisu (1995:i). The writer then tells of his life as a sugar worker. He was born in 1924 in Wailea on the Big Island and worked for three plantations over forty-five years. Chapter One gives an overview of plantations that the writer worked for. Chapter Two describes the writer’s family life as a son of an Issei father and a Hawaii-born Japanese mother. Chapter Three focuses on his childhood, naming his playmates and teachers and describing after-school activities such as swimming, fishing, and picking fruits, and experience at the Boy Scouts. He writes, “Maybe this was the best time of all to live the plantation life. No cane to cut, no boilers to tend—just warm Hawaiian sun, deep swimming holes and the green camp ground leading us into long afternoons” (ibid.:19).

He then begins Chapter Four with the comment, “The community was the lifeblood of the sugar plantation. It provides a sense of place for immigrant laborers, a tight bond for families, and common ground for diverse ethnic groups” (ibid.:31). He goes on to community life on the plantation and explains how he interacted with people at stores and shops in town, his Filipino neighbors, and the Japanese camp residents who gathered at New Year celebrations, tanomoshi (financial assistance groups), community baths, camp organizations, Buddhist churches, and movie theaters. He also describes the Japanese community under martial law during World War II.

Chapter Five is about the writer’s career as a sugar worker. He started working in the canefield at the age of twelve as a part-time student laborer and went through various kinds of jobs from cutting cane to working in the factory.
This is how the plantations were built: by hardy men and women pulling tough duty day after day. In the mills they raced against the ceaseless conveyor belt, shielded their bodies against the blistering steam, and grunted and shouted over the rumbling, gnashing din of the grinding wheels. Out in the fields, they did daily battle with the sun and the rain and the cane itself (ibid.:61).

He was an independent grower from 1972 to 1994, although for him “it was more a hobby than anything else—good thing, since I never made any real money at it” (ibid.:80).

The writer also highlights his involvement in the labor union and politics, including the 1958 strike and support of the ILWU’s Political Action Committees for the Democratic Party.

In the final chapter, he wraps up his story by noting:

This pocket of plantation culture has always been constant: the good hearts of the people who built it. Plantation folk were raised with values that form the backbone of today’s Hawai‘i: close family ties, community cooperation, trust and respect and honesty and just plain hard work (ibid.:94-95).

“Plantation culture” has continued in the community of “plantation folk” who share the same values of family, community, and hard work. This is the theme that the writer aims to transmit to readers with the title Sugar Town. His rhetoric plays a significant role in this transmission, including ubiquitous ‘we’-remembering, insertion of dialogues and monologues told by his family members, friends, and acquaintances, a plethora of individual names, and very few first-person singular sentences unlike conventional autobiographies. Considering the content of each chapter and the writer’s rhetoric, I regard this story as not just an autobiography but as a sort of master-plantation trope that leads plantation-raised Japanese Americans to collectively remember their plantation lives. The writer expresses this himself:

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9 Kurisu’s work may be contrasted with Akamine (1998), Ariyoshi (2000), and Yamanaka (1990). These autobiographies consist mostly of first-person singular sentences and rarely exhibit ‘we’-remembering or the voices of others.
This is the story of the sugar towns, a bittersweet look at a beautiful era. It’s a familiar tale throughout the state of Hawai‘i, where historic plantations have closed one by one. For those of us who lived it— but especially for whose [sic] who never will—it is a story worth remembering (ibid.:xi).

All I Asking for Is My Body (Murayama 1988 [1959]) is a novel based on the plantation experiences of the author who was born and raised in Lahaina, Maui. Although fiction, the book provides insight into plantation life. Kiyoshi Oyama, the protagonist, and his older brother Toshio undergo emotional conflict while growing up on a plantation in the decades before World War II. Unlike other plantation stories, the writer does not express any nostalgia or sentimentalism, but reveals the oppressiveness of plantation life. Kiyoshi describes the plantation structure:

It was set up like a pyramid. At the tip was Mr. Nelson, then the Portuguese, Spanish, and nisei lunas [luna: supervisor] in their nicer looking homes, then the identical wooden frame houses of Japanese Camp, then the more run-down Filipino Camp (ibid.:28).

Shit too was organized according to the plantation pyramid. Mr. Nelson was top shit on the highest slope, then there were the Portuguese, Spanish, and nisei lunas with their indoor toilets which flushed into the same ditches, then Japanese Camp, and Filipino Camp (ibid.:96).

By comparing the plantation hierarchy to the sewage system, Kiyoshi expresses his feeling about being near the bottom of the social system. He is inspired to escape his subordinate position by a teacher from the U.S. continent:

Snooky [the teacher] gave me a glimpse of what it could be. I would have to get out and be on my own even if the old man [Kiyoshi’s father] was successful and he was doing me the favors, even if the plantation made me its highest luna [supervisor]. Freedom was freedom from other people’s shit, and shit was shit no matter how lovingly it was dished, how high or low it came from. Shit was the glue which held a group together, and I was going to have no part of any shit or any group (ibid.:96).

10 The book introduces the author, “Milton Atsushi Murayama was born in Lahaina, Maui, and grew up in Lahaina and on “Pig Pen Avenue” in Puukolii. The plantation camp, once home to over six hundred, no longer exists. He attended Lahainaluna High School. Murayama received a B.A. in English from the University of Hawai‘i, and an M.A. in Chinese and Japanese from Columbia University” (111).
Despite his desire for freedom, Kiyoshi agonizes over the inescapable ties with his Japanese family. He must play the role of dutiful Japanese son, just as he remains a cog in the plantation system regardless of job rank. Freedom from plantation life must have been a strong desire among many young people on the plantation. Kiyoshi comments, “Everybody in Kahana was dying to get out of this icky shit-hole, and here was his chance delivered on a silver platter” (ibid.:98). He decides to volunteer for military duty, promising his mother to come back to help the family. Throughout the story, Kiyoshi and Toshio question, “How long must one work to repay one’s obligation [to one’s parents]?” (ibid.:67). On the one hand, they are willing to help their family escape poverty; on the other hand, they are uneasy about being burdened by indefinite commitments and giving up their own opportunities. They are also anxious because of what they perceive as excessive binds between Issei parents and their children. Kiyoshi observes this in his friend’s family:

Tubby’s father was real proud that he had seven healthy sons. He’d more than paid his family debt to his ancestors with seven boys to carry on the family line. On top of that he made all his sons promise they’d never leave Kahana even after he died because he would feel lonely if they left (ibid.:33).

The theme of *All I Asking for Is My Body* is the experiences of being torn between a sense of responsibility to the family and a desire to escape from indefinite obligations toward Issei parents and from the plantation system. The writer draws an image of the oppressiveness of plantation life through Kiyoshi’s eyes as he feels helpless, frustrated, angry, and sorrowful. This story suggests that growing up on a sugar plantation was never a simple happy life, but rather an anguished and uncertain period. Plantation-born Japanese children unavoidably confronted issues in the Japanese family system and the
plantation hierarchy. These experiences may contribute to plantation-raised Japanese American elderly emphasizing the values of family ties and of working toward economic success when telling plantation stories. In other words, they stress these values not only out of a moral sense and work ethic but also because they have experienced these circumstances specific to plantation-raised Japanese Americans. Even though they do not today overtly talk about the oppressiveness of plantation life and tend to focus on their innocent childhood experiences, they must have memories of this uncertain period. In terms of revealing the internal conflict of plantation-born Japanese children, All I Asking for Is My Body gives insight into plantation stories.

At a New Year’s party held by the Hilo Japanese American Association in 2001, organizers distributed The Japanese in Hawai‘i: A Century of Struggle (Kotani 1985). This book was originally written as the official program booklet of the O‘ahu Kanyaku Imin Centennial Committee, whose purpose was to celebrate the centennial anniversary of Japanese immigration to Hawai‘i. The author, Roland Kotani, was born and raised in Hawai‘i and served as an instructor in the Ethnic Studies Program at the University of Hawai‘i. According to Japanese American elderly in Puna, many of whom possess this book, this is a ‘good’ book for learning about their history of the past 100 years.

In the first four chapters the author explains the political and bureaucratic background behind Japanese immigration, the economic adversity Issei went through, and the sugar strikes organized by Issei leaders. From Chapter Five, the writer turns to the Nisei: Nisei soldiers’ contributions to the U.S. in World War II, Nisei labor union

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11 The book, edited by Franklin Odo (University of Hawai‘i, Ethnic Studies Program) and Arnold Hiura (The Hawai‘i Herald), acknowledges the Bishop Museum Photo Collection, International Longshoremen’s and Warehousemen’s Union Local 142, University of Hawai‘i Oral History Project, and the United Japanese Society of Hawai‘i.
leaders’ successful management of the labor movement, and Nisei veterans’ political advances. Throughout the text, Kotani draws on information from academic and journalistic works, only rarely introducing the ‘memories’ or ‘voices’ of ordinary people, with two exceptions in Chapter Eight. The strategy of this book is to present the comments of well-known individuals, including Japanese and non-Japanese politicians, government personnel, and business leaders, as well as official statements from institutions such as the U.S. military, the U.S. government, the Hawai‘i State government, and the ILWU. The author intended this book to be:

[a] history of the Japanese in Hawai‘i—the Issei, their Nisei children and Sansei and Yonsei—[that] is really the story of human struggles up from the harsh life of the immigrants who planted their roots here. It is this particular type of history which gives people dignity, and recognition of their positive role in bettering their lot and society, that needs to be written” (from the preface by Koji Ariyoshi, italics added).

Situating Hawaii’s Japanese Americans as an integral part of American society through the labor movement and political advancement, the author seeks to objectively reconstruct the Japanese ethnic experience in Hawai‘i so that both Japanese Americans and other Americans acknowledge the importance of the history of Hawaii’s Japanese Americans.

In 2000, the Lyman House Museum in Hilo exhibited From Bento to Mixed Plate, an exhibition originally organized by the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) in Los Angeles. I observed that many Japanese American elderly on the Big Island supported this exhibition as either volunteers or visitors. They told me that it was a memorable exhibition for Japanese Americans who were born and raised on the sugar plantations in Hawai‘i. The catalogue, published by the JANM, states that “From Bento
to Mixed Plate is a story about Americans of Japanese ancestry (AJAs) in Hawai‘i, and how we have grown to become a part of Hawaii’s rich, multi-ethnic society” (1997:4). It describes the experience of Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i with an emphasis on how they become ‘local’, defined as a lifestyle that is “a reflection of Hawaiian and American values—colored by the many different ethnic groups who share this Island home” (ibid.). While Kotani (1985) articulates an ethnic boundary between Japanese Americans and others and underlines their advances in American society, the JANM stresses how Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i have become part of Hawaii’s people.

The catalogue explains the internal maturation of the Japanese community through their struggles at home, school, and work (24-25, 36), participation in Buddhist and Christian churches (26-29), moral education at Japanese language schools (30), and participation in social activities (39-43). Externally, the Japanese community became ‘local’ through interacting with people from other ethnic groups and respecting common experiences: facing “the rule of the ‘Big Five’,” (20-21),12 sharing ethnic foods (22, 94-96); speaking Hawai‘i Creole English (23, 44); and getting involved in a multi-ethnic labor union (73-74). JANM’s strategy is to insert a number of narratives told by Japanese Americans and Issei in the text along with information from academic, journalistic, and governmental materials. These individual voices are included on more than twenty pages (24, 25, 31, 33, 36, 41, 47, 60, 71-72, 75-77, 80-86, 83, 86-87, 91, 94-96). Juxtaposition of objective reports and subjective remembrance results in an explication of Japanese American experience in terms of exhibiting not only the events happened to them and

12 See Footnote 16 in Chapter Four for the ‘Big Five’.
their reactions, but also their intentions and thoughts as they confronted the realities of life.

**Discussion**

These writers focus on different aspects of plantation life and employ a variety of writing styles or strategies. Some individuals write about their personal experiences in the mode of 'we'-remembering. Others present an inventory of facts specifying years and names of persons, organizations, and places in order to capture the history of the past plantation community. Still others reveal internal conflict and the unease felt by plantation children. Institutional texts draw maps, present information from academic and journalistic works, and introduce voices of people in order to demonstrate the development of the Japanese American community, ranging from plantation camps to the whole Japanese American population in Hawai'i.

The writers use anything they can associate with the past: memories, records, academic and journalistic works, and voices. These are resources from which the writers employ 'bricolage' to embody the past into a text. Claude Levi-Strauss explains that the rule of the bricolage is "always to make do with 'whatever is at hand'" (1966:17).

Describing bricolage in relation to myth-making among 'primitive' people, he writes:

> His first practical step is retrospective. He has to turn back to an already existent set made up of tools and materials, to consider and reconsider what it contains and, finally and above all, to engage in a sort of dialogue with it and, before choosing between them, to index the possible answers which the whole set can offer to his problem. He interrogates all the heterogeneous objects of which his treasury is composed to discover what each of them could 'signify' and so contribute to the definition (ibid.:18).

Bricolage thus transforms abstract thoughts or concepts into concrete expressions by choosing, indexing, and discovering meanings from whatever intellectual 'tools and
materials' are available. In the case of Japanese Americans, their 'tool and materials' include memories, records, academic and journalistic works, and people's voices. From this premise, I suggest that the point of reading plantation stories is not to question the factual accuracy of the texts, but to grasp the process by which the writers select and interpret 'whatever is at hand' in reconstructing the plantation experience so that readers can project their identities onto the text.  

Benedict Anderson (1991) studies the process of constructing a national identity, questioning how people who are not related to each other come to have an identity as members of a national community. The process he outlines can be applied to understanding how the collective identities of Japanese Americans are associated with institutional texts. Institutional texts are produced explicitly to establish a 'master narrative', in this case the text of the plantation experience of Japanese Americans in Hawai'i. Thus, the writers target the entire group of Japanese Americans in Hawai'i or the former plantation camp and town residents. They reconstruct the past with comprehensive coverage of significant 'historical' events such as the subordination of sugar workers, World War II, the labor movement, and advancement in politics in postwar Hawai'i. They maintain an 'impartial' viewpoint so that everyone can find a way their experience is connected to these events, leading to a feeling of oneness or wholeness.

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13 To expand this perspective, plantation stories are not only for Japanese Americans in Hawai'i, but also for other ethnic groups in Hawai'i who produce their versions of the reconstructed past. Furthermore, there are versions of plantation experience written by sugar companies through the eye of entrepreneurs (e.g., Alexander & Baldwin, Inc 1990; Simpich 1974).

14 In the case of reunion booklets, it is limited to the former plantation camp/town residents.
While institutional texts concentrate on neutral description of the plantation experience, the texts themselves are never neutral. Reunion booklets are written from a male-centered perspective. Descriptions of work, strikes, community life, religious activities, and sports activities are mostly about men, except for one description of ‘Ōla‘a Town written by a woman. Only men are acknowledged as contributors to the development of the community; there are no references to women’s contributions other than a short introduction of a female teacher at a Japanese language school. In these booklets, plantation women’s experiences remain largely untouched.

Kotani describes the Japanese American experience in Hawai‘i from a political viewpoint. Throughout the text, the Japanese American experience is traced along with descriptions of politicians, bureaucrats, business elites, journalists, community leaders, military personnel, and union leaders. In the end, successful Japanese American politicians are introduced as a token of the Japanese American advance into American society. With this reconstruction of the Japanese American political experience, Kotani stresses ethnic pride. A shortcoming of Kotani’s text is that it lacks descriptions of ordinary Japanese Americans, their families, and community lives. This results in the absence of the vast majority of Japanese Americans who contributed to the development of the community by supporting community leaders, union organizers, and politicians.

JANM’s text takes a more comprehensive approach, covering historical events, family, community and cultural experiences, and political advances. However, it reveals a weakness in its construction when it associates the Hawai‘i-born Japanese American ethnic experience with the “mixed plate of cultures” in Hawai‘i (1997:4). The JANM as a museum in Los Angeles attempts to establish the collective identity of Japanese
Americans in Hawai‘i as culturally ‘mixed’ with other ethnic groups for its national audience. In other words, the JANM tries to exhibit an image of harmonious ethnic relations in Hawai‘i by emphasizing amiable interpersonal relationships among local residents and by de-emphasizing negative statistics and opinions concerning ethnic relations.

Statistics show a clear socioeconomic hierarchy among Chinese, Filipinos, Native Hawaiians, Japanese, Koreans, and Caucasians (Okamura 1982, 1990, 1998, 2000). The so-called ‘mixed plate’ lunch is only one choice from many kinds of food such as Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Mexican, Vietnamese, and American cuisines; it is not necessarily preferred by all locals. Hawai‘i Creole English is “hardly the result of a blending of the languages or even individual words of the various local groups” but “basically English with numerous Hawaiian loanwords” (Okamura 1998a:273). The ILWU is a multiethnic labor union that consists of workers who share the same interest in improving their working conditions, but has little to do with cultural activities. These statistics and opinions refute the vague notion of cultural mixed-ness.

Many Japanese American elderly in Puna regard these institutional reconstructions of the past as ‘good’ plantation stories, even though the texts are written for different purposes. This is because these texts draw concrete images of the plantation experience and articulate its meaningfulness by delineating specific identities such as those of former plantation residents, ethnic constituents in the political arena, cultural participants in Hawaii’s society, plantation grown-ups, and sugar workers. When they sympathize with these groups, they feel pride in their plantation origins and praise the qualities of
plantation-raised Japanese Americans. This shared emotional association drives their collective identity.

'Good' plantation stories therefore lead to an 'imagined community' whose constructive features are dependent upon what kind of identities Japanese American elderly in Puna associate with the text. It is 'imagined' because they collectively re-experience their plantation community only through these stories. As I critiqued, institutional texts leave out certain aspects of reality, as do personal texts. Nevertheless, their reconstructions of plantation experiences are powerful enough to inspire them to collectively recall their plantation background. Reunion booklets hold them together by reconstructing a local experience that includes a plethora of familiar names, organizations, maps, and photographs. Kotani's text on the Japanese American political experience is informative and convinces them of the sociopolitical achievements of Japanese Americans in Hawai'i. JANM's text about the Hawai'i-born Japanese American experience also inspires them with its novel way of exhibiting plantation artifacts along with the voices of people who lived through the plantation days.

Considering the above, I argue that neutrality, transparency, objectivity, or totality are not critical components of 'good' plantation stories. Rather, 'good' lies in the artistry that conjures sympathy or a feeling of oneness or we-ness from Japanese American elderly in Puna. Also, credibility is not a primary factor in distinguishing 'good' stories from others. While they expect writers to have a certain background, such as be 'Hawai'i-born' or a former plantation resident, they do not necessarily weigh the credibility of a story in an academic or journalistic sense. Again, Japanese American elderly in Puna, having their own knowledge of what happened in the past, expect greater
artistry in the selection and interpretation of 'whatever is at hand' in order to embody the abstract past. A 'good' story enables them to see concrete images of their own past and find words that articulate the meaningfulness of their experience.

Their collective identities result from their active participation in making 'good' stories; the stories themselves are a sort of catalyst leading them to collectively reflect upon the past and seek its meaningfulness. Making 'good' stories hinges not upon a set of fixed criteria but upon the current sociopolitical and economic circumstances of Hawaii’s society as well as the Japanese American community. For example, Kotani’s text intended to be published in 1985 as part of the centennial celebration of Japanese immigration. JANM’s From Bento to Mixed Plate gained popularity right after academics and the mass media started to use the phrase ‘multicultural Hawai‘i’ in the 1990s. Retired life and aging are important personal contexts in terms of affording Japanese American elderly in Puna time to ponder their plantation experiences and organize reunions to revitalize ‘good old’ memories. Thus, the collective identities of these elderly, which coincide with ‘good’ stories, are always subject to new stories being produced by different selection and interpretation of “whatever is at hand.” In other words, the formation of collective identities is always in process.

In the following chapters, I review and discuss the ‘good’ plantation stories told by Japanese American elderly in Puna. These stories, unlike the stories that I have examined in this chapter, are all produced in verbal form as personal reminiscences of the

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15The mass media has produced plantation stories since the 1980s. On TV, Rice and Roses Production broadcasted Puunene Revisited in 1983, Plantation Days in 1984, Issai Legacy Children of the Kanyaku Imin in 1985, Plantation Memories in 1986, Wedding Days the Plantation Way in 1987, and 1946 the Great Hawai‘i Sugar Strike in 1996. These programs are housed in Sinclair Library at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.
plantation experience. For them, "whatever is at hand" is limited mostly to individual memories. Under these conditions, their plantation stories are categorized as a particular genre. Nonetheless, they still share the same artistry of other 'good' stories, leading the elderly to participate in the stories and establish their collective identities. By textualizing and contextualizing their stories, I capture the artistry of the stories and demonstrate how they reconstruct their plantation experience as well as what kinds of collective identities they shape from the stories.
CHAPTER THREE
ETHNIC IDENTITY

It was a Wednesday morning in May, 2002 in a multipurpose room of the Kea‘au Community Center where the forty female and five male members of the Kea‘au Senior Citizen Club met weekly. More than thirty of the women were Japanese American, while there were only a few Japanese American men. On this day I met Mrs. Kanazawa for the first time; she had just returned after a long absence. When I said hello to her, she gave me a curious look and asked, “Are you a Hilo boy?” I answered jokingly, “No, I’m not. I am a Japan boy.” Other women, overhearing this conversation, chuckled and said to her, “This guy looks like a local boy, yah?” Mrs. Kaneshiro stared at me for a second and raised her voice, “Eh, you look like local! What are you doing here, anyway?” I replied, “I’m writing a paper about old plantation stories,” and asked her, “How come you thought I was a Hilo boy?” She thought it over for a moment and answered, “You looked Hawai‘i-born Japanese, but if you were from here, I would know. So, I took a guess, you were a Hilo boy.” Intrigued by her comment, I further asked, “Why did you think I was a Hawai‘i-born Japanese? You could’ve said I was Japanese national, right?” She laughed it off, “You don’t act like Japan people, and besides, you are too tanned for a Japan boy.” I followed her, “What do you mean, I don’t act like a Japanese national?” Pausing for a few seconds, she replied, “Well, somehow I can tell the difference between the Hawai‘i-born and the Japan-born from the way they behave, and usually I’m right about it.” Other women who were listening nodded, as if they were also able to tell the difference.
One Tuesday afternoon the same month I went to a barbershop on the way back home from Pāhoa. When I walked in, I saw a Japanese American woman in her 60s sweeping the floor. There were no other customers. Without a word she pointed to one of two empty chairs and hung the broom on the wall. I sat down in the chair, and she promptly draped me with a large white cloth. At this moment she spoke to me flatly, "You are from Japan, aren't you?" To this surprising icebreaker, I looked back at her and said, "How do you know that?" She smirked and replied, "I can tell." I replied to her, "What's the difference?" "Well, I can smell it," she answered. I could not help starting to laugh, but said, "Are you saying that you can sense the difference between local and non-local as well as one's nationality by smelling?" "Yes, I think I can," she affirmed. According to her, locals and non-locals smell differently, and at the same time, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean nationals have distinctive smells. Later I found out that she meant 'smell' both literally and figuratively referring to ethnically and nationally characteristic patterns in action and demeanor.

During fieldwork, I often had this sort of experience. Sometimes Japanese American elderly in Puna prejudged me as a local Japanese, other times as a Japanese national. What I look like to them is less interesting to me than the fact that many Japanese American elderly are inquisitive about other people's ethnic and national backgrounds. In other words, they are conscious of their own ethnicity and nationality as it relates to interactions with others. In such inquisitiveness or consciousness of identity, their identity as Hawai‘i-born Japanese Americans is a critical standpoint from which they determine other people's backgrounds.
The terms ‘ethnicity’ and ‘nationality’ need to be clarified before I continue this discussion. Japanese American elderly in Puna rarely use the word ‘ethnicity’ in their storytelling. It is a term I use to categorize groups of people in Hawai‘i. For a local categorical concept, or the ‘experience-near concept’, they often use the term ‘nationality’ to distinguish themselves from others according to ancestral nationality, even when the others are American citizens. The meaning of ‘nationality’ becomes more complicated when they talk about citizens of other countries. As the stories above show, the context determines whether ‘nationality’ means citizenship or ethnicity in any given instance.

In this chapter, I explore what they talk about their Japanese experience and how they collectively shape a Japanese identity. First, I review the issues of local identity and ethnic relations in Hawai‘i in the past and the present. Next I contextualize their stories about the plantation experience and point out how the stories are constructed by selecting certain memories for storytelling. I discuss this selectivity in terms of its emphasis on memories of Issei and de-emphasis on wartime experiences and politics. I argue that primordial sentiment is a critical factor in this selectivity, resulting in a distinctive reconstruction of the Japanese experience that reflects their collective ethnic identity.

Context

Today, living as American citizens along with other Japanese and non-Japanese residents, the Japanese American elderly in Puna are retirees whose everyday world

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1 Geertz explains an ‘experience-near concept’: “People use experience near concepts, unself-consciously, as it were colloquially; they do not, except fleetingly and on occasion, recognize that there are any ‘concepts’ involved at all. . . . The ethnographer does not, and, in my opinion, largely cannot, perceive what his informants perceive. What he perceives, and that uncertainly enough, is what they perceive ‘with’—or ‘by means of’, or ‘through’ . . . or whatever the word should be” (1983:58). Following Geertz’s approach to local knowledge, I demonstrate the meaning of ‘Japanese’ by analyzing stories.
revolves around households and neighborhoods where there is no numerical majority ethnic group (see Table 3).

**TABLE 3**

**Ethnic Distribution of Puna District and Puna Sugar**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Puna District</th>
<th></th>
<th>Puna Sugar</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>2,551</td>
<td>2,099</td>
<td>3,019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
<td>53.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>3,127</td>
<td>1,152</td>
<td>1,787</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>included in Caucasian</td>
<td>included in Caucasian</td>
<td>401</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>included in other</td>
<td>included in other</td>
<td>149</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian</td>
<td>3,953</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>113</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>9,515</td>
<td>1,237</td>
<td>108</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45.8%</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1,273</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
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</tbody>
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(Sources: Hawai‘i County Databook 1978, 1995, and ‘Ola‘a Sugar Annual Report 1900-1903, HSPA Archives)

They mainly socialize with relatives and friends and participate in local institutions such as religious groups, neighborhood associations, and senior citizen clubs along with other familiar local residents of various ethnicities. Personal attributes such as sex and
age and interpersonal interactions in their neighborhoods, volunteer activities, recreational activities, market places, and churches are more important factors in establishing and maintaining social relationships than ethnicity, or ‘nationality’ to use their term.

When I ask Japanese American elderly in Puna about the relative absence of ethnic conflict among the former plantation residents, they invariably express their respect for local identity, often labeled as ‘Hawai‘i-born’. Their local identity originated in the shared plantation experience of mingling at school and work: “That’s why we became very close among different nationality. Because of school” (Story #0301). One man explains how sugar workers became familiar with each other:

Well, what we usually do is we take this (lunch box) in the field you work, yah. Then, interesting thing, yah, we are all different nationalities, yah. The Portuguese get own food, yah. We get our own food. Filipino get own food. So, everybody put all their food in the center. Everybody go help each other. It’s picnic everyday. Filipino and other nationality, they like Japanese food, they grab all the Japanese food, we go grab the Portuguese food. Just like picnic everyday. See, like us, we don’t know how to make bread, and Portuguese all get bread, yah. So, we grab the bread. And they take the rice, yah. But no more this kind can... this kind (Story #0302).

The storyteller recreates the oft-heard trope of rainbow multiculturalism through the “picnic” image of Japanese, Portuguese, and Filipinos together enjoying their breaks from harsh physical labor in the cane field. He implies that sugar workers from different ethnic groups developed friendships and bonds in the prewar plantation world.

Local identity is maintained through ongoing interpersonal relationships and the intermarriage of their children and grandchildren. ‘Local’ is a folk concept that represents “the common identity of the people who are of Hawai‘i and their appreciation

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2 Sometimes they specify local identity by pointing to birthplace; they may identify a local as a ‘Hilo-boy’, an ‘‘Ola‘a-girl’, or a ‘Pāhoa-boy’.
of the inherent value of the land, peoples, and cultures of the island” (Okamura 1982:232). For Hawai‘i-born people in Puna, expressing local identity is a moment in which they relate to each other by finding common friends or acquaintances from school, relatives, and work places and expect to be treated and treat others in a ‘local’ way that includes use of Hawai‘i Creole English and what locals call a ‘low-key attitude’ characterized as deliberate non-aggressiveness or a relaxed demeanor. At senior citizen clubs and school reunions, Japanese American elderly in Puna and other non-Japanese elderly acknowledge their local identity by singing Hawai‘i Aloha at the start of any program.

As I pointed out, Japanese American elderly in Puna neither experience overt ethnic conflict nor talk about ethnic issues. This does not mean, however, that they do not recognize an ethnicity-based stratification system in Hawai‘i that constitutes a socioeconomic hierarchy among ethnic groups. Reflecting on their current living standards as well as a plethora of Japanese names among politicians, governmental personnel, and professionals (e.g., doctors, lawyers, teachers) in Hawai‘i, they are aware of the favorable socioeconomic position of Japanese as an ethnic group. While Japanese

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3 According to Okamura (1994), local identity has increased its significance since the 1980s. The “ongoing internalization of the islands through their further incorporation into the global capitalist economy” has contributed to the “increasing marginalization of Hawaii’s people to external sources of power and control” (ibid.:174). As a result, local identity “has been maintained as an expression of resistance and opposition,” and “the designation Local continues to represent the shared identity of people of Hawai‘i who have an appreciation of and a commitment to the islands and their peoples, cultures, and ways of life, which are perceived as being threatened by external forces of development and change, e.g., tourism and foreign investment” (ibid.).

4 While ‘aloha spirit’ is a key phrase locals use to express their tolerance and acceptance of others as a reflection of Hawaiian hospitality, Odo and Yim (1992) point out that the concept is problematic. Refuting the comment, “[Hawai‘i is] the best place where they can interact and ethnically mix together in a spirit of Aloha... They are ‘locals’, possessed with an entirely unique blend of island attitudes and spirit” (Ogawa 1981:7), Odo argues that “it’s a kind of mythology that allows us to cover up bad interethnic, interracial relations” (quoted in Yim 1992:B2). The phrase ‘aloha spirit’ prevails in personal and public speeches among Japanese American elderly in Puna. Nevertheless, it does not prove that they tolerate and accept everyone, even all other Hawai‘i-born Japanese.
American elderly in Puna respect local identity and advocate the image of harmonious ethnic relations for the younger generation, they recognize that different ethnic groups have made various levels of educational and economic achievements in the postwar period. They consider that Japanese Americans are more successful, if not the most successful, than some other ethnic groups in becoming upwardly mobile. To understand how they simultaneously uphold the image of harmonious ethnic relations and assume a socioeconomic hierarchy, it is critical to examine the ethnic context of their plantation stories. A review of academic works on the subject helps to elaborate these two points.

The image of harmonious ethnic relations in Hawai‘i originated in the works of Romanzo Adams (1933) and Andrew Lind (1955). They argued that there were six factors contributing to harmonious ethnic relations: (1) urbanization/industrialization in commercial areas; (2) public education systems; (3) political participation; (4) plane of living; (5) trends in marriage and family; and (6) interracial marriage.

Lind later claimed that “a fusion of racial types and a blending of cultures within what was popularly, although inappropriately, called ‘the Hawaiian melting pot’ had become increasingly apparent” (1980:19). Currently, the harmonious image of Hawai‘i has shifted from a ‘melting pot’ theory to ‘multicultural Hawai‘i (cultural pluralism)’ whose most articulate proponents are Glen Grant and Dennis Ogawa (1993) and Michael Haas (1998). Grant and Ogawa argue that “multiculturalism can be a viable social reality that enhances interethnic cooperation instead of internecine rivalry” (1993:139) and

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5 Local identity and the image of harmonious ethnic relations must be considered separately because local identity is based on a grass-root concept about ‘local culture’, while the image of harmonious ethnic relations lumps together differences among individual ideas about ‘ethnicity’.
6 Adams (1933) observes the continued absence of open violence and explains as an “unorthodox race doctrine” in which “the general acceptance of racial tolerance, friendliness, mutual cooperation, and intermingling as a ‘principle’ transforms it into a continuous force in the direction of further unification” (quoted in Hormann 1952:142).
"multiculturalism is not an intellectual ambiguity in Hawai‘i but a living reality where, within a single individual, it is not uncommon to find eight distinct ethnic heritages" (ibid.:151, italics added). Haas also characterizes ethnic relations in Hawai‘i as "a multiethnic reality" (1998:5). While Grand and Ogawa’s argument is based on the historical processes of cultural and social conditions and statistics that show the absence of a majority group in the population, Haas examines the political balance among the ethnic groups and advocates multicultural Hawai‘i.

Okamura (1982, 1990, 1998, 2000), observing a socioeconomic hierarchy among Chinese, Filipinos, Native Hawaiians, Japanese, Koreans and Caucasians, refutes the image of harmonious ethnic relations. He analyzes occupational status, educational attainment, and individual and family income levels, along with patterns of occupational mobility, and concludes that ethnicity is the primary organizing principle of a stratification order that limits access to socioeconomic benefits and privileges. If access were based only on individual competitive achievement, there would be an equitable or random distribution of educational, income, and occupational status among the ethnic groups. The data indicate no such equality or randomness, but confirm an ethnically biased distribution of socioeconomic benefits and privileges. Okamura writes that the ethnic socioeconomic hierarchy is "increasingly becoming structured by the power and privilege held by Chinese Americans, haole [Caucasians] and Japanese Americans over Native Hawaiians, Filipino Americans, Samoans and other numerically small groups".

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7 Grant and Ogawa, commenting on "the island slogan, ‘Lucky You Live in Hawai‘i’" (1993:140), discuss the historical processes of intermarriage, the emergence of a multicultural lifestyle, the new white population brought by World War II, and the advent of the multiethnic labor union (the International Longshoremen’s and Warehousemen's Union), and conclude that these processes resulted in the breaking down of the ethnic hierarchy and the maturation of an equitable multiethnic society.
(2000:125). He argues that the image of harmonious ethnic relations promoted by academics and the mass media is "a racial project that serves to maintain the status and power of the more privileged and dominant groups by obscuring their subordination and marginalization of minority groups" (ibid.).

As Okamura's longitudinal study shows, the Japanese as an ethnic group occupy a 'privileged' socioeconomic position in Hawai‘i.\(^8\) Japanese American elderly in Puna, who are unlikely to read such scholarly studies, ascertain their progress as a group by hearing the 'success stories' of their relatives, friends, and acquaintances and by measuring the material comfort of their present living standards against memories of past deprivation. In this self-image based on their socioeconomic 'success', they view their ethnic status as distinctive to that of underprivileged groups that they often associate with several negative images such as poor health, little education, a low income, a high crime rate, and unstable family relations.\(^9\)

While Japanese American elderly in Puna recognize their distinctive position within the ethnic hierarchy, they advocate the image of harmonious ethnic relations for the younger generation. This is because many Japanese American elderly have 'interethnic' children and grandchildren, called 'hapas'.\(^10\) Story #0603 shows how they...

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\(^8\) Also see Kotani's (1985:153-163) discussion of the over-representation of Japanese Americans in governmental jobs and specialized professional jobs.

\(^9\) Other ethnic groups may view the Japanese success story negatively. Okamura points to a "cleavage among ethnic groups" that includes Japanese, Filipinos, Haole, and Native Hawaiians. Hiring imbalances in governmental positions led non-Japanese to assume that Japanese dominated the politics and economy of Hawai‘i and discriminated against non-Japanese in occupational opportunities in the 1970s (1994:171). Kotani also recognizes this ethnic cleavage and describes antagonism or hostility to Japanese as an "anti-Japanese sentiment" and "anti-Japanese backlash" (1985:160). Kent (1989:114), Kotani (1985:153-162), Odo (1984), and Okamura (1994:171-174) have, however, all argued that the assumption of Japanese clout is fallacious because Japanese Americans have never become as politically and economically powerful as the former Big Five companies, multinational corporations based on the U.S. mainland, or developers/investors from Japan.

\(^10\) Hapa is a local term referring to children of 'interethnic' couples.
foresee changes in the future ethnic profile of Hawai‘i, and Story #0604 indicates that
their extended family includes plural ethnic ancestries. Statistics also demonstrate the
prevalence of intermarriage: in 1985, 41.0 percent of Japanese marrying men and 50.0
percent of Japanese marrying women wed people from another ethnic group (Nordyke

Another context for understanding the plantation stories is that Japanese as an
ethnic group have never been a minority in Puna, nor has there ever been any ethnic
group in the majority. As their stories indicate (Story #0307 Line 2-4; Story #0311 Line
4-8; and Story #0318 Line 2), Japanese American elderly in Puna recognize that Japanese
and Filipino together constituted ethnic plurality throughout the plantation years (up to
the 1970s), and that the prosperity of the Japanese community is inseparable from its
plurality.

Table 3 shows that before the 1980s, when Puna Sugar was still in operation, the
population was mostly composed of seven ethnic groups: Chinese, Portuguese, Japanese,
Puerto Ricans, Filipinos, Hawaiians, and Caucasians. The Japanese group was always
the largest, although it declined proportionally over time. After Puna Sugar started
operating in 1899, the population of Puna increased from 834 in 1890 to 5,128 by 1900
(Hawai‘i County Databook 1980). By 1901, 81.9 percent of the workforce were Japanese
immigrants (HSPA Archives).\textsuperscript{11} In 1906, Filipinos arrived at Puna Sugar for the first
time.\textsuperscript{12} By 1936, 53.9 percent of the workforce were Japanese and 31.9 percent were

\textsuperscript{11} Less than five percent of managerial/supervisory employees were categorized as Caucasian at that time
(HSPA Archives).
\textsuperscript{12} In 1906, Honolulu attorney Albert F. Judd went to Manila as an agent of the Hawaiian Sugar Planters’
Association (HSPA) and returned with fifteen male Filipinos. Next year 150 Filipinos were recruited, and
by 1909 large scale importation of Filipino had started (Nordyke 1989:76). Receiving the first group of
Filipinos. In 1970, Japanese made up the largest proportion of the population (2,077, 40.7 percent), followed by Caucasians (1,237, 24.0 percent), Filipinos (1,152, 22.4 percent), Hawaiians (452, 8.8 percent), and Chinese (85, 1.6 percent) (see Table 3). Japanese became the most influential ethnic group in Puna, except for Caucasians who dominated the plantation as landowners and company executives. This demographic aspect resulted in their distinctive ethnic experience compared to Japanese Americans on the U.S. continent.

Although these numbers show an overwhelming non-white population in the prewar period, Hawaii’s society was dominated by a group of whites that Fuchs characterized as an “amalgam of a tropical European colony and a New England settlement” (1961:21-24). Even though Caucasians in Hawai‘i not including Puerto Ricans and Portuguese constituted only 7.8 percent of the population in 1910, 7.7 percent in 1920, and 12.2 percent in 1930 (Nordyke 1989:178), until the 1940s they dominated Hawai‘i politically by ruling the Republican party and economically by controlling the sugar industry, “pineapple production, the retail merchandise business, electric power, telephone communication, railroad transportation, steamship lines, banking and later the tourist industry” (Takaki 1983:20). Caucasian-run companies once accounted for over 90 percent of the total value of Hawai‘i products (Japanese American National Museum 1997:20).

Filipino immigrants, the Puna Sugar manager was “pleased with the newcomers and recommended that more Filipinos be added to the Plantation’s labor force” (Takaki 1983:27).

13Regarding ethnic classification, Hawai‘i County Databook 1978 notes, “No provision was made for those persons with mixed races. People were asked to classify themselves according to the race with which they felt most identified. Persons of mixed parentage were classified by the race of the father” (15).

14Regarding the distinctiveness of Hawai‘i’s Japanese Americans, see my discussion on literature review in Other considerations in Chapter One.
Gary Okihiro (1991) contends that from the time Issei first arrived in 1865 to the end of World War II, Japanese were victims of an overlapping racist-capitalist-class-bureaucratic exploitation. The white American sugar oligarchy, in order to control Japanese as cheap and docile labor force for a permanent underclass on the plantations, institutionally oppressed them by concocting the "Japanese problem" and forming the "anti-Japanese movement" (ibid.:xiii). Okihiro characterizes the anti-Japanese movement as "racism and racialist meanings given to patriotism" as well as Americanization that aimed to subvert Japanese identity, language, culture, and religion (ibid.). For Japanese American elderly in Puna, the anti-Japanese movement was made tangible in the criticism of Buddhism and Japanese language schools.

Although racial discrimination is inevitably connected to ethnic issues, I discuss it in the next chapter in terms of class. This is because the racial hierarchy on the plantation in the prewar period is congruent with a class hierarchy. Eileen Tamura writes:

Below the haole elite was an undersized middle class, also largely Caucasian, especially during the early years of the territory, of crafts-persons and small-business people. At the bottom of the socioeconomic scale were the vast majority of Islanders, mostly Asians, who provided the territory with unskilled and semiskilled labor, most of it in arduous plantation fieldwork (1994:4).

It was race that stratified people in Hawai‘i into a class hierarchy. Therefore, I look into the experience of racial discrimination in the context of class.

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15 Okihiro explains that the "Japanese problem" was triggered by the 1920 sugar strike led by the Federation of Japanese Labor. The white sugar oligarchy regarded Japanese labor resistance as a menace to the U.S. and attacked Japanese, claiming that the "Japanese problem" was not simply a labor problem, but a military problem (1991:100-101).

16 See Footnote 10 in Chapter Five.

17 Gordon (1964) connects ethnicity and social class and coins the word, "ethclass." He observes ethclass in "the upper-class white Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP), or the lower-class white Irish Catholic, or the middle-class Negro Protestant" (quoted in Kitano 1969:4).
To shift a focus from a racial issue to intraethnic one, discrimination against Okinawans among Issei should be kept in mind in reading plantation stories. Yukiko Kimura describes the ‘lower’ or ‘disadvantaged’ collective status of Okinawan immigrants in the Issei community in Hawai‘i:

Those from Okinawa Prefecture were not only newcomers but, because of their very different dialect and customs, due to isolation from the main stream of life of Japan, referred to as Naichi, they were looked down upon as a strange and inferior group of people and treated as if they were foreigners or outcasts by the people from the other Kens or prefectures (1981:52).

According to Kimura, Naichi, or Issei from mainland Japan, discriminated against Okinawans because of their status as newcomers and their different language and customs. In addition, Okinawans were at a numerical disadvantage. After World War II, prejudice and alienation against Okinawans disappeared as Okinawans and Naichi, including their descendents, accepted intermarriage and business cooperation (e.g., Higa 1981). Many Japanese American elderly in Puna talk about discrimination against Okinawans as having happened in the distant past; they de-emphasize the difference between Okinawan Americans and other Japanese Americans. Nevertheless, Okinawan distinctiveness is still maintained in institutional associations and kinship relations by people with Okinawan ancestry.

\footnote{Okinawa (The Ryukyu islands) is a prefecture located on the southwestern-most tip of Japan and consists of 160 islands surrounded by the East China Sea and the Pacific Ocean. Its geographical, socio-cultural, and historical backgrounds are different from those of other prefectures on the mainland Japan. “While the people of Okinawa are of the same ethnic strain as those of mainland Japan, they have developed outside the framework of the Japanese state for much of their history” (Kodansha 1993:1142). In the fifteenth century Okinawa independently developed into a united kingdom whose ruler paid tribute to the Chinese emperor. In 1609, the kingdom was conquered by the Shimazu family on the mainland Japan. In 1879, the Japanese government forcibly established Okinawa Prefecture. This historical background resulted in the social and cultural distinctiveness of Okinawa.}
Stories

Looking back on their childhood and adolescence in their families and the Japanese community, Japanese American elderly in Puna talk about experiences they regard as uniquely Japanese. Memories of their ‘Japanese’ experiences are placed within seven different settings: at home, in neighborhoods, at Japanese language school, in local Japanese institutions, within interethnic and intraethnic relationships, and during wartime. These memories, collectively held by siblings, relatives, friends, and community members link them together. In these stories, they refer to themselves as ‘Japanese’ and acknowledge their Japanese origin. It is a communicative marker that transmits specific aspects of their ethnic experiences, according to the context of the story. By telling stories, Japanese American elderly in Puna define themselves as ‘Japanese’ by reflexively characterizing themselves now as well as by retrospectively objectifying themselves then. Reading their stories within these seven different contexts, I outline their perspectives toward the Japanese experience and how they project their experiences onto their Japanese origin and identity.

At Home

Many Japanese American elderly in Puna were born in Japanese households with the assistance of Japanese midwives and registered as U.S. citizens by a doctor at the plantation hospital. These were Japanese households because they were managed by Issei parents or grandparents who maintained Japanese customs and practices.\(^{19}\) Growing

\(^{19}\) I use the term ‘Issei’ to distinguish Japanese immigrants who came to Hawai‘i before 1924 from Japanese nationals who came to the U.S. afterwards. The term ‘Issei’ refers to a majority of Japanese immigrants who came out of specific socioeconomic conditions in Japan in the late nineteenth century. Japanese American elderly in Puna are well aware of decisive differences between the Issei and the
up in such Japanese households, the elderly were imbued with Issei culture. They describe how they acquired Japanese things and thoughts at home and present their understanding of Japanese culture by using a myriad of Japanese words.

A point of their experience at home is that Japanese American elderly in Puna became familiar with Issei culture through the Japanese language. Their knowledge of Japanese things and thoughts, including a sense of morality, social obligations, and ways of conducting social relationships, were instilled through interacting with Issei in the Japanese language. Their stories indicate how they were exposed to the Japanese language in childhood. A ninety-four-year old former Puna Sugar employee states:

But those days, [at] English school, we couldn’t speak English, we spoke only Pidgin English, and when we are out in the yard, we speak only Japanese to our friends. And Portuguese are speaking Portuguese. And only in the classroom we spoke English, whatever English means (Story #0305).

Not only Japanese, but also Portuguese spoke their language. This story well describes children’s school life from the 1910 to the early 1920s, although the storyteller also points out that after the 1920s, students gradually spoke more English at school and

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Japanese in current Japan’s society. When they mention Japanese culture, in many cases it means Issei culture, not contemporary Japanese culture.

20 During my fieldwork in Puna, I met more than a few Japanese American elderly who could carry on a conversation in Japanese without inserting English. However, these individuals were either those who had willingly attended Japanese language school, or who have studied Japanese for pleasure. The majority of them only use Japanese by inserting Japanese words in English sentences. Valerie Matsumoto writes that “their [Nisei] skill in English quickly outstripped their knowledge of Japanese. The language they spoke with their parents was an elementary form of Japanese, mixed liberally with English words. Because of the patterns and exigencies of everyday life, they seldom developed a deeper understanding” (1993:70). However, their stories show that Japanese American elderly in Puna were able to communicate in Japanese in childhood. Tamura (1994) points out that bilingualism and trilingualism are common among the Nisei in Hawaii (Japanese, English, and Hawaii Creole English). This contrasts with Kitano’s description of the Nisei on the U.S. continent; most Nisei are “unable to speak Japanese with any degree of fluency” (1969:25). Considering the above, I argue that the proficiency of Japanese American elderly in speaking Japanese is dependent upon geographical background (i.e., the island they grew up on, Hawaii or the U.S. continent, rural or urban areas) as well as family circumstances (i.e., older siblings are likely to speak Japanese better because of more interaction with Issei). Furthermore, there are a variety of other possible factors such as Issei interest in Japanese education and the years of attending Japanese language school (The Fujinkai Survey indicates that the years of attending depends on the individual, ranging one to twelve years)(Appendix B).
home. Speaking Japanese was a common childhood experience among Japanese American elderly in Puna: “We spoke nothing but Japanese those days” (Story #0306 Line 3); “No one speak English. I didn’t speak English, also. When I came to Pāhoa, it’s mostly Japanese people. I didn’t speak English” (Story #0307 Line 2); “No sense speak English. My parents don’t understand English” (Story #0307 Line 5); and “Yeah, because we understand, we’re Nisei. We speak Japanese at home” (Story #0308 Line 8).

Story #0310 in particular tells how important the Japanese language was for making a living in ‘Ola’a Town. The storyteller emphasizes that even though her parents were from Okinawa, her father told her to learn ‘standard Japanese’ for conducting business: “You cannot do business with Okinawan language. That’s the main, you cannot do business. That’s true. And we started only Japanese, we did everything in Japanese” (Line 8).

Throughout their stories, language is depicted as a vital part of the Japanese environment, but the significance of these collective memories is that today they talk about their language experience in English. They only insert Japanese words to signify culturally specific objects, thoughts, and social norms. For example, they use words such as enryo—modesty in the presence of one’s superiors, oyakōkō—filial piety, on—ascribed obligations, girī—contractual obligations, and ninjō—humane sensibility (Kitano 1969:102). Nevertheless, one man who speaks Japanese fluently comments, “At home we speak [spoke] only Japanese. Now is opposite. My first language is English, period. Japanese, not so much, a little” (Story #0316 Line 14-16).

Issei culture told in English is a reconstruction of the Japanese experience. Showing their familiarity with Japanese food, daily necessities, and furniture, Japanese
American elderly in Puna describe the Issei influences upon their material life now and then. They also stress the impact of Issei culture on their daily lives when they continue to follow domestic customs such as taking shoes off in the house, using chopsticks, and praying at meals. Finally, they introduce a Japanese sense of morality and social obligation when they describe how their relationships with Issei parents still influence the way they handle relationships with their spouses, siblings, relatives, and other Japanese and non-Japanese friends and neighbors. The ethnic roots that Japanese American elderly in Puna express in their stories lie not only in the cultural attributes described in these texts, but also in the Japanese language through which they understood these attributes in childhood (I will discuss contextual interpretation in Chapter Five).

**Neighborhoods**

Japanese American elderly in Puna describe detailed pictures of vanished Japanese neighborhoods, whenever they reminisce about their plantation lives. Story #0311 Line 4-8, Story #0312 Line 1-19, and Story #0313 Line 3-7 are descriptions of Pāhoa and ʻŌlaʻa Towns. The storytellers mention twenty-one names of Japanese stores and shops in Story #0311, sixteen in Story #0312, and four in Story #0313. Naming stores and shops is a salient feature of stories about Japanese neighborhoods. Renato Rosaldo (1986), analyzing Ilongot hunting stories, observes that recollecting the physical traits of one’s living area is not just a description of what one saw, but an evocation of specific information associated with these traits. In this case, Japanese names of stores and shops are connected to memories associated with the interpersonal relationships with the owners, employees, and customers who were also members of the Japanese community. In stories, they relate all these names to memories of interacting with community.
members and recall the closeness and liveliness of the Japanese community. Naming
names is, therefore, an expression of how they grew up in a close-knit Japanese
community on the plantation.

By naming Japanese names, Japanese American elderly in Puna also represent their
roots in terms of the Issei cultural influence on their social relationships. Joe Yamamoto
and Hiroshi Wagatsuma (1980) characterize the Japanese American community as
"stable social networks of named people," rather than as an impersonal social
environment where people are substitutable (quoted in Fugita and O'Brien 1991:79,
italics added). They attribute this to Nisei awareness and likeliness of keeping "track of
the reputation and successes of a fairly wide range of blood and quasi-kin relatives"
(ibid.). These awareness and likeliness originated in the experience of living in an Issei
social system where the family was regarded as the basic institution that makes up the
community as an extended kinship group acting as a set of interdependent families
(Kitano 1969:66-67; Levine and Rhodes 1981:9-10; Miyamoto 1939:82-88).

In Issei society, the individual is subordinate to the family. A family name, thus,
has significant meanings for individuals in recognizing and being recognized their
familial reputation and interdependence in the Japanese community. While Japanese
American elderly in Puna grew up in a 'big family' (Story #0406 Line 1; Story #0407
Line 1; Story #0408 Line 8) and developed extensive kinship networks within and
outside their family, they also brought in interdependent social networks among other
family units, or 'named families', that solidified the whole Japanese community on the
plantation. Thus, for Japanese American elderly in Puna, naming Japanese names is not
just making reference to specific households, but indicating their distinctive perspectives
toward their relationships with Japanese families in the community. This was learned from an Issei sense of peoplehood, collective orientation, and cultural emphasis on maintaining harmony within the group. For Issei, "the maintenance of interpersonal relations within the community [was] a central goal of ethnic community life" (Fugita and O'Brien 1991:93).

**Issei Discipline at Japanese Language School and Home**

During my fieldwork, I never met any Japanese American elderly who had not attended Japanese language schools where teachers from Japan taught Japanese language as well as shūshin (Japanese moral training) (see the Fujinkai Survey Q7 in Appendix B). Stories #0314 through #0317 tell how Japanese language school teachers and Issei parents were strict about student behavior according to guidelines based on a Japanese moral code. This 'strictness' is key to reading these stories: "Takeshima okusan [Mrs. Takeshima], strict, really disciplinarian" (Story #0314 Line 1); "Very strict. I don't believe" (Story #0315 Line 8); and "Miya sensei [teacher Miya]. Yeah, he was strict" (Story #0317 Line 4). Japanese American elderly in Puna see strictness as an Issei cultural value as well as a reflection of Issei concern about delinquency.

In other words, they became familiar with Japanese moral standards through encountering Issei beliefs in strict discipline. Story #0315 Line 8 shows Issei teachings:

"The Japanese are the Japanese, completely different from Portuguese and Filipino. The Japanese must be maningen [real human-beings]." Maningen, she used to tell us. And then, "If we had even only one bad student in this 'Ola'a Japanese school, even only one bad student, it is shame. It is shame to the whole Japanese."

Similarly, Story #0322 Line 4 indicates, "If you are Japanese, you shouldn't do it because otherwise it will be shame to the Japanese. Only Japanese think that way, I think. The
old ones. The first generation of Japanese.” Being exposed to this sort of teaching, the elderly assume that Japanese language school teachers and Issei parents were strict because of Japanese pride and of anticipation of ‘shame’ caused by students’ wrongdoing.

On the one hand, Issei teachers and parents taught that being a ‘good Japanese’ meant bringing pride and honor to the ‘Japanese race’ and inspired their children with an ideal of personal excellence. This also created an impetus for children to overcome the unfavorable socioeconomic status of plantation-raised Japanese Americans. On the other hand, Issei called forth a specter of shame by telling children that misconducts would bring shame not only to the wrongdoers but also to their parents, the family, the community, and finally, by extension, on the entire Japanese ‘race’ (Nakano 1990:105). Issei, saying, ‘Don’t bring shame to the family and community’, instructed children to behave properly for Japanese pride and not to jeopardize the Japanese community.

Connecting both sides of Issei disciplinary teachings to strictness, Japanese American elderly in Puna express their collective memories of Japanese language school and define their Japanese background, although they do not accept the Issei concept of shame and racial pride unconditionally, acknowledging that these ideas were based on Issei values brought from a different country. This is indicated in Story #0322 Line 4 (see above) and Story #0315 Line 9, “I didn’t agree too much, though.”
Stories about Issei discipline also describe experiences of *batsu* (punishment) in the classroom and at home (Story #0315 Line 4; Story #0316 Line 1-5). An eighty-six-year-old former Puna Sugar employee remembers:

I was the king of the *batsu*. Well, I'm hardhead, hardhead, you know. Not conforming, you know. They tell me what to do, but all I opposed, you know. I was not conformist. I'm a *batsu* king. Everyday I used to get it after school because of that strict teacher... She was strict, oh... *Aidagui* [eating snacks between regular meals], [she would give] *batsu*, *yoasobi* [playing at night], (she would give) *batsu*. Then, when you're walking on the street and if there're old people, if they across you, you go on the side and let them past. And when the teacher find you're not the way, disciplined, you get *batsu*... Me, I get *batsu* everyday. When I go home late [after having been punished at school], my father's waiting [to give me more *batsu*]. So I was disciplined from that young boy, you know. But that kind of discipline, they don't have in English school. I get it only in the Japanese school. What I became I am today is because [of this discipline] (Story #0316).

The storyteller, proclaiming himself a ‘*batsu* king’, describes the significance of having *batsu* in building a moral sense. Although many Japanese American elderly may not appreciate *batsu* as much as this storyteller does, most of them recollect *batsu* as a concrete experience of Issei discipline. In other words, they remember *batsu* as a distinctive Japanese style of communication common in the senior-junior relationship and the parent-child relationship that they were exposed to at Japanese language school and home. It is a fundamentally Japanese experience by which they define their ethnic identity.

Issei Leadership

Most Japanese in the prewar period were members of Buddhist churches, a Christian church, *nihonjinkai* (Japanese associations), *kenjinkai* (prefectural associations),

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21 While *batsu* might include spanking at home, it did not include corporal punishment at Japanese language schools in Puna; it would more likely standing against the wall at the back of classroom, detention, or pulling up weeds in the playground.
kumiai (neighborhood associations), and ethnically organized plantation camp associations.\(^{22}\) Japanese American elderly in Puna believe that these institutions contributed to the establishment of ties in the Japanese community. In turn, these institutions were founded on donations of money and labor from the community. Issei played the role of organizers and carried on projects such as the construction of churches, Japanese language schools, and cemeteries as well as the bon dance and entertainment including sports leagues and picnics. Remembering how Issei organizers managed these institutional projects with a Japanese style of leadership, the elderly recognize their Japanese origin in the institutions that they have taken over today.

Story #0318 tells the strategies of Issei organizers in managing the Puna Hongwanji Buddhist Church. It describes how they derived support from the Japanese community to rebuild the church in 1937 and maintain church activities. Knowing how Japanese social life is structured, Issei organizers “would find out who’s the leader of the community and they would go to them and sort of get the commitment donating money” (Line 4). Each sub-community of Puna, including ‘Ola’a, Pāhoa, Kapoho, Mountain View, Kurtistown, and Volcano, had a community leader, the so-called ‘big shot’. In order to effectively collect donations from the community leaders and their constituents, the organizers ‘publicized’ how much each individual donated, expecting others to contribute more out of the their desire for personal honor, saving face, or a sense of group conformity. In consequence, “Most of them, even if they had a hard time, would give

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\(^{22}\) Other than these local institutions, Issei formed ‘tanomoshi’ in which members circulated money with interest for the purpose of mutual financing. It was held by Japanese who were familiar with each other such as those who were from the same kenjinkai and camp, or close friends. Some tanomoshi were held regularly, others occasionally, and the number of members and the amount of money varied case by case. Japanese American elderly in Puna remember Issei holding tanomoshi, but only a few have participated in it.
something, depending on what they publicize to the community” (Line 4). The storyteller, commenting “I think people who started the system were really smart” (Line 4), shows admiration for the Issei organizers’ astuteness in dealing with the Japanese community and their knowledge of Japanese feelings and social behaviors (Line 5, 6), although he considers these tactics unsuitable for his own generation (Line 6).

Japanese American elderly in Puna praise the Issei leaders for having established Japanese institutions that benefited members of the Japanese community by fulfilling religious needs with Buddhist and Christian churches, financial needs with tanomoshi, ceremonial needs with kumiai, needs for mutual help with camp associations, and needs for socializing with kenjinkai. No matter which institution they talk about, the wisdom and astuteness of Issei leadership in organizing and maintaining these institutions is mentioned. In other words, according to their collective memory, the Issei leaders solidified the institutional bonds of the Japanese community with which they associate their Japanese identity.23

Interethnic Relationships

Gaijin (foreigner) is a Japanese word that Japanese American elderly in Puna learned from Issei to distinguish Japanese from non-Japanese. They specify gaijin according to ancestral nationality such as Chinese, Portuguese, Puerto Rican, Filipino, Korean, or Haole, although they are well aware that most non-Japanese in Puna are American citizens and nationality is an out-dated criterion for categorizing people except

23 Kitano writes, “A better model for leadership among the Japanese is a man who knows the various organizations within the community, who can work together with them, and who possesses a thorough knowledge of how and when to act and yet avoids the spotlight” (1969:96). This characterization fits the style of Issei leadership that Japanese American elderly in Puna describe in their stories.
for recent immigrants from the Philippines, Pacific Islands, and Asian countries. While they characterize non-Japanese according to firsthand experiences of interpersonal relationships and the ethnic stereotypes told by family members, friends, and the mass media, images of non-Japanese in stories are sketchy. This is because they as a group did not have many close relationships with non-Japanese when they were children due to their living situations, different social and cultural customs, and the language barrier, even though they attended public schools with non-Japanese children. “All the kids like me, we got to go English school” (Story #0320 Line 1).

While some plantation camps were co-occupied by more than two ethnic groups—“9 1/2 mile camp, over here, people were very, very close. Japanese live in this house, Okinawan live in that house, Filipino live that house... mixed up” (Story #0325 Line 1)—other camps were occupied by a single ethnic group—“We got Puerto Rican camp, Japanese camp, Filipino camp, Portuguese camp, all different camp” (Story #0320). Stories #0324 and #0326 also indicate Japanese American elderly in Puna had ethnically separate residential patterns in camps and areas. In addition to their living situations, different social and cultural customs and the language barrier further hindered mingling with non-Japanese children. A seventy-six-year old woman who was born and raised in

24 The distinctions between gaijin and non-Japanese and between local and non-local should be considered separately. I witnessed some Japanese American elderly calling local Portuguese and Filipinos gaijin, whereas I have never observed them refer to Japanese nationals as gaijin. For Japanese American elderly in Puna, gaijin versus ‘Japanese’ is a different categorical notion than local versus non-local.

25 As Okamura (1982) points out, stereotypic images of each ethnic group in Hawai‘i are based on prejudice, and they are often incoherent or even contradictory. For example, some are disparaging, such as those that depict Hawaiians as lazy and irresponsible, Filipinos as uneducated and flashy, Japanese as grasping and proud, Chinese as stingy, Caucasians as arrogant and condescending, Portuguese as overly loquacious, and Samoans as ignorant and given to physical violence. At the same time, other images are complimentary. For instance, Hawaiians are described as generous and good-natured, Filipinos as hardworking and thrifty, Japanese as industrious, Chinese as good at conducting businessmen, Caucasians as outgoing, and Samoans as having close-knit families. This inconsistency is a feature of ethnic stereotypes in Hawai‘i. These positive and negative stereotypes may be taken as two sides of the same coin, for example Chinese are simultaneously stingy and good businessmen.
1/2 Mile Camp talks about her experience of inactive relationships with other ethnic groups:

Yeah, you know, time changed. Not like old days. I thought it was scary. I didn't want to go to Filipino camp, Puerto Rican camp. But the world changed, we grew up. So now, we talk story, you know. But before the war, not so much. We don’t know, we live with immigrant parents, so we do not understand English. The culture was strictly Japanese (Story #0319).

Japanese language schools also kept Japanese children from playing with non-Japanese children after English (public) school. According to their stories, many of them only began to have close relationships with non-Japanese after entering full-time work where they encountered co-workers of different ethnicities.

While the elderly are generally not against intermarriage, they collectively remember negative Issei attitudes toward it. As Story #0327 Line 4 indicates, “They never like you to marry gaijin, yah” (see also Story #0327 Line 8). Tamura explains that Issei opposition to intermarriage was based on their beliefs in their inherent superiority and cultural incompatibility (1994:184-186). In other words, Issei opposition to intermarriage reflects the extent of their ethnocentrism and their sensitivity to ethnic boundaries associated with differences in customs, language, everyday practices, and food.

The influence of Issei ethnocentrism on Japanese American elderly in Puna is a point to reading their stories about non-Japanese. Story #0321 Line 6 describes Issei discrimination against Filipinos: “We had some, but I wouldn’t say, haiseki (exclusion),

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26 I follow Levinson’s definition of ethnocentrism: “the concept of ethnocentrism combines the belief that one’s own culture is superior to other cultures with the practice of judging other cultures by the standards of one’s own culture” (1996:404). “Ethnocentrism is a human universal in that it is displayed at least sometimes by members of all cultures” (ibid.). I do not regard ethnocentrism as a negative term (i.e., ethnically-based prejudice or discrimination), but consider it a way of representing one’s ethnic identity.
but there was a little discrimination. Filipinos were not as good as *nihonjin* (Japanese).” The story also describes an Issei father who disavows his daughter for marrying a Filipino, showing Issei intolerance to intermarriage. The storyteller, however, observes that “that Filipino boy was the most caring to the parents” and holds a more flexible view on intermarriage: “So, don’t oppose it too much” (Line 8).

Story #0322 Line 6 also shows Issei discrimination: “My father say, ‘Don’t do what Portuguese do.’” This story, in which the storyteller observes that Portuguese are less interested in education, bathing, and clothing than Japanese, points to ethnocentrism in both Issei and Japanese American elderly in Puna. Story #0315 Line 8, told by a ninety-three-year old retired postal worker, crystallizes Issei ethnocentrism by describing a Japanese language school teacher who taught students the Japanese ideal:

“The Japanese are the Japanese, completely different from Portuguese and Filipino. The Japanese must be *maningen* [true human beings].” *Maningen*, she used to tell us. And then, “if we had even only one bad student in this ‘Ola’a Japanese school, even only one bad student, it is shame. It is shame to the whole Japanese.” She say this. I didn’t agree too much, though. Shine shoes, boys shining shoes, you see, some people, Filipino children, Portuguese children, they shine shoes. They get ten cents or twenty-five cents. She say, “Japanese children should not do such things.”

Although Issei ethnocentrism did not penetrate their children as much as they might have expected, it has had an influence on Japanese American elderly in Puna in shaping their sensitivity to ethnic boundaries and their Japanese ethnic identity.

**Intraethnic Difference: Discrimination against Okinawans**

Prefectural boundaries in Japan contributed to divide Japanese immigrants. Their regional identities were rooted in the political history of Japan and local cultural differences. Soon after coming to the plantations in the 1900s, Issei organized
themselves into kenjinkai so they could socialize with those who shared a common political as well as cultural background in terms of dialect, food, arts, and social customs. Growing up in the Issei world, Japanese American elderly in Puna remember what these prefectoral differences meant to Issei social and cultural lives.\textsuperscript{27}

The most salient prefectoral difference that they point out in their stories is the distinction between Okinawans and Naichi (mainland Japanese). Prefectoral differences among Naichi mainly focused on cultural characteristics such as dialect and customs. Story \textsuperscript{#0328} describes the dialects of Hiroshima, Kumamoto, Yamaguchi, and Okinawa, and Story \textsuperscript{#0329} tells how immigrants from Hiroshima and Kumamoto treated guests differently. A woman whose parents came from Niigata prefecture in the northern part of Japan told me that her accent in Japanese, the so-called ‘\textsuperscript{z}\textsuperscript{i}iz\textsuperscript{u}-\textsuperscript{ben}’ inherited from her parents, distinguished her from others whose language was rooted in the southwest part of Japan such as Hiroshima, Okayama, and Yamaguchi prefectures. By contrast, the difference between Okinawans and Naichi involves discrimination against Okinawans: “If we put Okinawan pronunciation in Japanese conversation we are laughed at by Japanese people because at that time discrimination against Okinawan was harsh. We had plantation \textit{haiseki} (exclusion)” (Story \textsuperscript{#0310} Line 4-6); “Oh, there was a big fuss, you know, yeah. Okinawans were insulted, but it cannot help because it’s, it’s a small group

\textsuperscript{27} John Embree (1940) reports that aside from the formal kenjinkai, Issei in Kona on the west side of the Big Island formed \textit{tokoro-no-mono} (the same-region people) through a prefectoral association. The members of \textit{tokoro-no-mono} maintained close relationships and cooperated in arranging marriages and funerals. For Issei, prefectoral relationships were not just sentimentalism toward the home country, but served practical functions. Fugita and O’Brien call Issei social relationships “quasi-kin” ties (1991:40).
last one to come” (Story #0310 Line 8); “Don’t get married to Okinawan. I never
forget that, though. Never forget that” (Story #0327 Line 4).28

For those who have Okinawan ancestry, discrimination against Okinawans by
Naichi is part of their collective memory of plantation life. In this discrimination they see
their ‘Okinawan’ origin, rather than ‘Japanese’ ethnicity. Their ‘Okinawan’ origin is also
felt in stories about the bonds among Okinawan immigrants: “When they socialize these
Okinawan families help each other” (Story # 0330 Line 1). Story #0310 Line 8-12
indicates that Okinawans had their own associations on the plantation. Okinawan
identity is, moreover, acknowledged by non-Okinawans. A seventy-five-year old
housewife remembers:

My father always say, Okinawans are Okinawan, you know. No matter who that
is, even he is no good, they still back up Okinawans. See, that there’s one thing
[Naichi] Japanese. Instead of getting the unity, they get jealous. If one person is
successful, instead of being behind the person, they tear down. My father always
say, that’s the weakness of [Naichi] Japanese (Story #0331).

The storyteller, although revealing Naichi discrimination against Okinawans, also
admires the bonds among Okinawans, summed up in the phrase, ‘Okinawan pride’ (Story
#0331 Line 5). Today, discrimination against Okinawans is not observable in Puna, but
they still talk about Okinawan pride and strong ties on the plantation. Past discrimination
against Okinawans continues to define the group identities of both Okinawans and non-
Okinawans.

28 Tamura describes Naichi discrimination against Okinawans in Hawai‘i: “Naichi parents strongly objected
to their children’s marriage to Uchinanchu [Okinawans], and Nisei Uchinanchu were the brunt of name-
Wartime

Stories about wartime experiences are told as tales of America's discrimination against Japanese among Japanese American elderly in Puna. These are different from other stories in terms that they are rarely told in public. When discussing wartime experiences, the elderly lose the enthusiasm that they exhibit when telling other plantation stories. Their wartime stories center on the U.S. government's institutional oppression of Japanese during World War II. They explain how vulnerable and helpless Japanese were in dealing with martial law, soldiers stationed in Puna, the investigation of Japanese households, and the internment of Issei community leaders. When they tell these stories, they often express uneasy feelings by becoming impassive.

The label 'enemy alien' that was put on their Issei parents or grandparents was an inevitable reminder of anti-Japanese sentiment that systematically branded Japanese Americans during the war. Japanese American elderly in Puna, many of whom were still under age, were subject to various forms of institutional oppression. Some remember wartime experience: “But wartime, Jap, Jap, Jap... everybody, Jap, Jap, Jap... discrimination during the war” (Story #0332 Line 1). Others recall: “Everybody was scared” (Story #0333 Line 3). Still others describe: “They come and pound the door. And say, 'Turn up all, everybody!’ They were arrogant” (Story #0335 Line 1).

Telling these stories, they express the anger, fear, frustration, and helplessness they felt facing oppression and discrimination. The elderly witnessed that all Japanese institutions were ordered to shut down, community leaders were taken away for internment, and martial law restricted their daily lives. Under this civilian control, they were forced to renounce Japanese cultural and social practices, yet were discriminated
against for having Japanese ancestry: "During the war we couldn’t do anything about Japan" (Story #0334 Line 1). This resulted in a predicament in understanding their own identity. Okihiro, commenting that the declaration of martial law was fundamentally an anti-Japanese act, writes about wartime civilian control; “The people’s culture-patterned behavior that ordered their lives—was negated and denied; ultimately, a person’s identity as a Japanese was to be hated and despised” (1991:229). These experiences make wartime stories fundamentally different from other plantation stories. Their reluctance to publicly talk about their wartime experiences is a salient feature that precludes their collective effort to reconstruct this specific part of their past.

**Discussion: Ethnic Identity**

The collective memory of Japanese family and community life during childhood and adolescence forms the foundation of their Japanese identity, except for wartime experiences as I will discuss later. Japanese American elderly in Puna draw an image of their Japanese origin based upon their knowledge of Issei cultural and social characteristics. At home they lived with Issei parents or grandparents and spoke Japanese. In their neighborhoods, they maintained close and lively relationships with other Japanese families in the community. At Japanese language schools, they experienced the strictness of Japanese discipline and *batsu*. In Japanese institutions, they witnessed Issei leadership as a Japanese style of organizing community. In interethnic relations, they were exposed to Issei ethnocentrism, while in intraethnic relations they observed Naichi discrimination against Okinawans. Whether or not they see value in Issei culture depends upon the individual. Nonetheless, this shared knowledge is what
they regard as foundational to their identity and is the resource from which they define themselves. I further discuss this point by reading the contexts of their stories.

Observing that they refer to non-Japanese as *gaijin* and specify *gaijin* according to ancestral nationality, I draw attention to their categorical concept of ‘Japanese’. While they define ‘Japanese’ as having Japanese ancestry, they refer to ‘Japanese’ at two different levels of group identity. ‘Japanese’ may point to Japanese Americans in general, but it may also delineate Japanese American elderly in Puna as a generational cohort living in the same vicinity. Its referential meaning is determined according to situations and contexts, but in telling stories, ‘Japanese’ is often used to distinguish them from younger Japanese Americans and those in different areas. This is evident in the fact that they associate ‘Japanese’ with numerous names of persons, places, and institutions and provide detailed descriptions of experiences bound to specific interpersonal relationships and geographical settings. ‘Japanese’ therefore has a narrow referential meaning in their stories.

‘Ethnic identity’ in this discussion should thus be understood as a specific categorical concept confined to Japanese American elderly in Puna, excluding other Japanese Americans. Following Michael Fischer, “Ethnicity is not something that is simply passed on from generation to generation, taught and learned” (1986:195), and Karen Blu, “Collective identities that can be seen as irreducible tangles of concepts, emotions, and motivations can be found in many areas of the world, but it is far from clear that all of what have been labeled ‘ethnic groups’ have the same kind of identity” (1980:34), I suggest that generational and geographical boundaries are important in discussing the ethnic identity of Japanese American elderly in Puna.
In storytelling, they delineate the meaning of ‘Japanese’ through shared feelings towards Issei culture and collective memories of growing up in the Japanese community. These feelings of attachment, affection, or sentiment are connected to what they believe are timeless, overpowering, and coercive congruities of language, geographical location, customs, and everyday practices. Geertz sees these congruities as the “assumed givens of social existence” (1963:259) and calls them ‘primordial attachments’ or ‘sentiments’ that form the basis for ethnic identity. He explains that primordial attachments are a cultural vehicle that renders a shared sense of belonging by evoking feelings of honor and emotional warmth within the group through various forms of interaction such as rituals, ceremonies, and daily conversation. George De Vos also discusses this sort of formation of ethnic identity:

A sense of common origin, common beliefs and values, a common sense of survival—in brief, a ‘common cause’—has been of great importance in uniting men into self-defining in-groups. Growing up together in a social unit, sharing a common verbal and gestural language allows men to develop mutually understood accommodations (1975:5).

Fischer, too, points to the significance of shared feelings for ethnic identity: “Ethnicity is a deeply rooted emotional component of identity, it is often transmitted less through cognitive language or learning ... than through processes analogous to the dreaming and transference of psychoanalytic encounters” (1986:195). Whatever words these theorists use—‘attachments’, ‘a sense of common origin’, or ‘emotional component’—they regard the basis for ethnic identity as group members’ self-perception or self-determination of congruity and a shared sense of belonging. These insights accord with the concept of ‘Japanese’ among Japanese American elderly in Puna. They define ‘Japanese’ through their feelings of sharing knowledge of Issei culture and collective memories of the
Japanese community. Their collective ‘feelings’ backed up by an ancestral congruity, what Paul Gilroy (1991) calls “ethnic absolutism,” play a critical role in their self-definition as ‘Japanese’. Their stories clearly show that they delineate their ethnic identity in large part according to ancestral congruity and a sense of belonging to the community. However, this self-defining identity formation does not explain the constructive aspects of their Japanese experiences outside the stories. A contextual analysis is needed.

Before discussing the contexts of the stories, I look into stories about the wartime experiences because these are fundamentally different from the other stories in that the constructive aspect is absent. Yasuko Takezawa analyzes stories about internment experiences told by Japanese Americans in Seattle and observes that they once saw Japanese ancestry as a source of guilt and shame and felt that Japanese ethnicity was stigmatized (1995:194). These Japanese Americans, however, through the redress movement, mutually reconstructed their experience of internment using the symbolic image of barbed wire. They rendered a sense of suffering that eventually worked to establish ethnic identity through publicly talking about their wartime experiences. Takezawa regards this redress movement as a cultural construction of the past in which these Japanese Americans collectively revealed their concealed past—‘breaking the silence’—to trade shame for pride (ibid.:195).

This constructive process has never collectively taken place among Japanese American elderly in Puna. Although they were not sent to internment camps, they lived

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29 It should be noted that the concept of ‘Japanese’ is not subject to psychological reduction to an inner state of mind. Ethnic identity is fundamentally an interactional process. ‘Japanese’ means something only when it is expressed among Japanese American elderly in Puna and evokes a shared feeling of belonging.
under harsh discriminatory civil control during World War II and held mixed feelings of guilt and shame, as did Japanese Americans in Seattle. While Japanese Americans in Seattle externalized their wartime memories in a catharsis of the past, Japanese American elderly in Puna still suppress these memories. As I pointed out earlier, their reluctance to publicly talk about wartime experiences hinders their individual memories from becoming collective memories and thwarts a catharsis of their bitter feelings. In short, Japanese American elderly in Puna recall these negative experiences, but do not reconstruct them as a collective experience. Therefore, wartime stories are fundamentally different from other plantation stories in which they actively reconstruct their experiences and draw collective identities.

The first point for contextual analysis of other stories is that Japanese American elderly in Puna do not use the distinction between Haole and non-Haole to delineate their Japanese identity. Even though they do talk about the past discord between Haole and non-Haole that originated at the beginning of the sugar industry in Hawai‘i and sometimes illustrate it as an unbridgeable racial chasm, they rarely single out Japanese from other non-Haole groups such as Chinese, Filipinos, Korean, and Hawaiians. When talking about the inequality between Haole and non-Haole, Japanese American elderly in Puna exhibit a different identity than Japanese identity. It may be seen as local identity that I discussed earlier or ‘panethnic identity’ that developed among working class people in the prewar period (Okamura 1994:162-163). Not delineating ‘Japanese’ in the discord between Haole versus non-Haole is distinctive compared to Japanese Americans on the
U.S. continent who institutionally construct the Japanese ethnic experience in opposition to white American society.30

Second, Japanese American elderly in Puna do not tend to circumscribe their Japanese identity within political interests. For example, many Japanese American elderly state that their collective support of the International Longshoremen’s and Warehousemen’s Union and the Democratic Party from the 1940s to the 1960s is much less tangible in the present. On the contrary, they emphasize their diversified political interests. Some are interested in the welfare of Hawaii’s residents and listen to advocates of welfare policies, while others are concerned with economic development in the area and support politicians focusing on industrial issues. Still others are anxious about environmental issues and favor ecologically sound policies. In addition, more than a few elderly have told me that they are not as enthusiastic about politics as when they were still working. According to them, they have changed their attitudes toward their political interests after retirement, although they do not lose their interest in politics.

Their diversified political interests have resulted from their present situation that includes retirement, anticipation for the future of their off-spring, a relatively higher socioeconomic position than some other ethnic groups, and living standards that have improved over the last five decades. The fact that many of their children have white-

30 Lon Kurashige (2000), investigating the Nisei Week festival that was held in Little Tokyo in Los Angeles in the 1930s and the early 1940s, argues that the festival was planned by the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) for a political purpose. Nisei Week, originally intended to be a festival held by Issei associations to honor the Nisei as American-born children was later handed over to the JACL due to Nisei defiance of Issei leaders and the threat of racial hostility from outside the Japanese American community. It was a vehicle “for deciding who among Japanese Americans determined the ethnic self” and revealed “the JACL’s use of biculturalism to manufacture consent among different groups of Japanese Americans” (ibid.:1634-1635). In other words, Nisei Week was a stage on which the JACL propagated the ethnic identity of the Nisei as Americans to the white American society as well as claimed Nisei dedication to the U.S. and their willingness to draw on their ethnic heritage to facilitate American relations with Japan.
collar jobs may also have an influence on them in de-emphasizing the association between Japanese ethnicity and certain political clout.

Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan (1963), examining ethnic relations in New York, see political interests as more important to ethnicity than primordial ties and cultural differences. They argue that:

Someone who is Irish or Jewish or Italian generally has other traits than the mere existence of the name that associates him with other people attached to the group. A man is connected to his group by ties of family and friendship. But he is also connected by ties of interest. The ethnic groups in New York are also interest groups (ibid: 17).

In the case of Japanese American elderly in Puna, I did not observe that they collectively connected their Japanese identity to their political interests and purposes. Although in the past they had maintained political relationships through involvement in labor unions, today they associate Japanese ethnicity more with ties of family and friendship.

Therefore, their concept of ‘Japanese’ no longer fits well with Abner Cohen’s instrumentalist idea of ethnicity, explained as “fundamentally a political phenomenon, as the symbols of the traditional culture are used as mechanisms for the articulation of political alignment” (1974:97). Cohen’s argument may be applicable to the younger generation of Japanese Americans who are involved in business and politics, however. They use ethnicity as the basis for their political affiliation, such as the Japanese Chambers of Commerce or the Japanese American Community Associations. The majority of Japanese American elderly in Puna, nevertheless, do not belong to this kind of ethnically based political groups. Kotani’s construction of Japanese ethnic identity that homogenizes political interests among Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i, which I discussed in Chapter Two, no longer applies to Japanese American elderly in Puna.
Their stories indicate the transformational and creative aspects of their Japanese identity. It appears continuous, discontinuous, and revitalized over their life times. There is arbitrariness as well as constraint in choosing or not choosing which resources to draw upon in delineating ethnic identity. Many Japanese American elderly state that it was not until after retirement that they started to reflect upon their life experiences. Today they have more opportunities to talk about their past experiences with other Japanese American elderly than before they retired. This is because they now have time to join local activities, participate in church programs, and volunteer at public institutions such as the city hall, police department, and public schools. A number of these elderly who as children have attended Sunday school at the Puna Hongwanji Buddhist Church return to the church for Sunday services, a karaoke club, Buddhist seminars, and volunteering to organize the bon dance and various holiday parties. Other than joining local organizations, many Japanese American elderly men regularly go to local restaurants for breakfast or lunch, where they enjoy chatting with their peers (see the vignette of Chapter Five).

At these activities, they have many opportunities to ‘talk story’. They engage tirelessly in conversation about plantation stories. In other words, their ‘talk story’ is a revitalization of the past that adds to their enjoyment of retired life. Observing the

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31 From my field experience, I have the impression that Puna Hongwanji is maintained by Japanese American elderly members. They finance its renovation and maintenance, publish the newsletter, cater church events, and carry out janitorial duties.

32 ‘Talk story’ is a local term used to refer to ‘chitchatting’. Japanese American elderly in Puna frequently use this term. An example of a local depiction of ‘talk story’ is: “‘Talk story’ is one of the great traditions and experiences of Hawai‘i. It’s just two or more people sharing stories from their lives and it can happen anywhere... the grocery store, the street corner, the beach, at the mailbox anywhere... Talking story is sharing stories, history, ideas, and opinions. You will learn about the other person, their culture, family traditions, and about life in general. Great wisdom is shared during talk story... try it and see what you learn and see how relationships develop in your life. You’ll find you have connections with people you never knew about and you’ll find little miracles popping up everywhere” (Hawai‘i TidBits Encores 2002).
ubiquity of plantation stories, I consider their concept of ‘Japanese’ as part of their
revitalization of the past. To be specific, their current concept of ‘Japanese’ is the
outcome of newly formed communicative processes in which they re-interpret and
transform the meanings of their past experiences with reflection on their present
circumstances. As an experienced or aged generational cohort sharing the same ancestral
association, Japanese American elderly in Puna mutually reconstruct their past through
‘talk story’. Their ‘talk story’ itself becomes part of their resources for further
reconstruction of the Japanese experience. Their ethnic identity is thus continuously in
process.

Japanese American elderly in Puna take Japanese identity quite seriously and
regard it as a given rather than a matter of choice. Their ethnic identity is indisputably
different from ‘new ethnicity’ that Howard Stein and Robert Hill (1977) explain as an
ethnicity that children of intermarried couples choose from possible ethnicities,33 or
‘symbolic ethnicity’—a subcultures created by personalizing a collective identity with
symbolic elements of an ethnic heritage (Alba 1990; Gans 1979; Waters 1990). Japanese
American elderly in Puna are fundamentally different from individuals who choose their
ethnic identity from among several options to suit personal purposes in that they
collectively and practically center their ethnic identity on their social and cultural lives.

Ethnic identity among Japanese American elderly in Puna, however, involves a
creative process when it comes to representation. They understand and express a
Japanese identity by deliberately choosing memories of their family and the Japanese
community in the prewar period, while leaving other memories unspoken. Stories about

33 Stein and Hill (1977) argue that Americans of later generations and mixed ancestry choose an ethnicity.
They call this ‘dime store ethnicity’, distinguishing it from ‘real’ ethnicity.
war experiences are likely to be ignored, and political standpoints tend to be
dissociated from ethnicity. This selectivity is a distinctive feature that underlies the
reconstruction of Japanese experience. Blu (1980) characterizes this sort of
reconstruction of ethnic experience as ‘ethnic symbolism’, a folk concept of ethnicity
based on a notion of cultural heritage. The elderly create their own Japanese heritage by
focusing on stories about interactions with Issei. Therefore, the Japanese heritage that
they take as the keystone of their ethnic identity is a consequence not of arbitrary
recollection of the past, but of culturally defined selective remembering that hinges upon
a present situation in which they as an ethnic group are well off and proud of their
ancestry within the ‘multiethnic’ society of Hawai‘i (Haas 1998).

In this chapter, I discussed the collective ethnic identity of Japanese American
elderly in Puna constituted in their plantation stories. My analysis indicates that they
share a certain frame of thoughts by which they collectively transform an abstract idea
about ‘Japanese’ into concrete descriptions of the Japanese experience. They associate
their Japanese origin with their knowledge of Issei culture, derived from direct
interactions with Issei. This knowledge is the basis for their shared sense of a Japanese
heritage. Primordial sentiment comes into play in evoking this sense of belonging.
However, from analysis of context, it is evident that selectivity is also crucial in
connecting specific knowledge of Issei culture to their Japanese background. From
various kinds of ethnic experiences, they collectively choose certain types of memories
so that they can mutually make sense of who they are today and what they have gone
through as plantation-raised Japanese Americans. Their shared frame of thoughts thus
contributes to their selective remembering, leading to a distinctive representation of their
collective ethnic identity that projects a common image of 'Japanese' on the plantation stories.
CHAPTER FOUR
CLASS IDENTITY

"You guys work hard, no?" When I heard Jimmy’s voice, I knew he had come to tell us, “Everybody, it’s pau hana (end of work) time! Come down to the kitchen. Pūpū (appetizer) is ready!” It was a Saturday afternoon in June 2002 at Puna Hongwanji Buddhist Church where the church members were undertaking a renovation project in preparation for a centennial celebration in November. This church is the largest Japanese American institution in the area, supported mostly by the descendants of Japanese immigrants. The project had started in November the previous year; since then, volunteers had worked every weekend to fix up the facilities. On this day, approximately twenty men and five women, most of whom were over sixty years old, had been working since eight o’clock in the morning. I was painting the wall of the minister’s house with a couple of men, while the rest of the male volunteers were outside installing a new roof on the garage. The five women had fixed the refreshments that the church customarily offered volunteers after the day’s work.

It was about three o’clock, and the sun was moving westward to Mauna Kea, the highest mountain in Hawai‘i. The volunteers, after washing their faces and hands, gathered at a long table set up in the open-air space between the kitchen and the main building. Betty, ‘the kitchen boss’, and other women brought leftovers from lunch; boiled peanuts, dried fish, and rice crackers were already on the table. Each man grabbed a beer from an icebox near the table, picked up some food, and started drinking. Jimmy, church president in charge of the renovation project, promptly thanked the group, “Hi, everyone. Thank you for working hard today. The church really appreciates your help.”
All the volunteers smiled. Jimmy added, “These beers are donated by Mrs. Higa.” I remembered boxes of beer labeled with nametags piled up in the storage room and knew they were donations from church members to the volunteers.

The atmosphere was quite relaxed. Most of the volunteers regularly participated in the weekend renovations and were familiar with each other. They started off the party by talking about the day’s progress. As the alcohol took effect, they began to tease me about my clumsy painting job. Kazu, who sat next to me, amusingly gestured how I was covered in paint from head to toe, leading everyone to burst into laughter. He then turned to me and said, “This kind of experience you can’t have in school, yah? It is good for you to learn these skills.” Being a little embarrassed by this sudden focus on me, I barely responded, “Yeah, I’ve got a lot to learn from you guys.” Kazu contentedly smiled.

During my fieldwork, I participated in volunteer activities such as these at Puna Hongwanji and the Young Buddhist Association Hall in Pāhoa. These religious institutions, which have been social centers for the Japanese community, provided me great opportunities to mingle with Japanese American elderly in Puna and observe their attitude toward work. Later, I would identify their work ethic as a significant common feature. Through the experience of working and partying with them, I sensed firm interpersonal relationships based upon a shared concept of diligence, or what they call ‘good workers’.

Respecting the value of ‘work’ is a fundamental part of the sense of peoplehood shared by Japanese American elderly in Puna. The short story above exemplifies this.
Jimmy's utterance, "You guys work hard, no?" is a common phrase, meant to express admiration. Church members who are not able to offer labor express their appreciation by donating food and beer, and the church offers refreshments as a token of gratitude. The friendly atmosphere among volunteers while enjoying refreshments comes from the feeling of connectedness through work. Teasing me was a rite of initiation by which they recognized me as a worker, one of their kind.

In this chapter, I explore the meaning of work for Japanese American elderly in Puna and discuss their class identity rooted in the plantation experience. Puna Sugar was structured by a rigid managerial hierarchy that overlapped with class differences between capitalists/entrepreneurs/administrators in Honolulu and workers/employees on the plantation. In terms of this hierarchy, everyone on the Puna plantation, including the independent entrepreneurs who ran small business in the towns, were working class people entirely dependent upon the plantation economy.

Today most Japanese American elderly in Puna are retired and live in their own houses. They live on Social Security benefits, pensions, and various sources of extra

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1 The administrative structure was double layered. Board members, including the president, vice-presidents, secretaries, and treasurers based in Honolulu were responsible for making administrative decisions. They appointed the manager of the plantation and maintained relationships with the agent (American Factors) and stockholders. At Puna, the manager was responsible for the whole operation. He appointed superintendents, supervisors, and other supervisory personnel (overseers/bosses/foremen/luna[supervisor]). Managerial positions also included accountants, a civil engineer, an industrial relations director, chemists at the laboratory, and the doctor at the plantation hospital. At the bottom of the plantation structure, the majority of the workforce consisted of skilled and unskilled laborers.

Wages reflected the hierarchy. Payroll in 1933 shows that the monthly salary of the manager was 1,125 dollars, that of a head of the office department was 400 dollars, that of a head of the mill factory was 375 dollars, and a field superintendent received 500 dollars. A head of the transportation department earned 150 dollars a month, a carpenter boss 200 dollars, a head blacksmith 175 dollars, and field luna 75-100 dollars. Monthly salaries of skilled workers were as follows: mechanics 75-100 dollars; electricians seventy dollars; truck drivers fifty dollars; carpenters 85-100 dollars; blacksmiths 100 dollars; and boilermen ninety dollars. Unskilled workers were paid on a daily basis ranging from one to two dollars a day (HSPA archives).
income, and consider themselves well off. Reflecting their present circumstances, they look back on the plantation era and tell stories about their hard working days at work, home, and school. Although they do not use the term 'working class', they describe their subordinate position within Puna Sugar and the socioeconomic system of Hawai‘i. They have a belief in the solidarity of working people on the plantation and continue to respect the value of physical labor. From this perspective, they express their plantation background as class identity and tell how they struggled to improve their lives. The concept of 'work' in their stories thus holds a critical place.

Stories about working people told by Japanese American elderly in Puna follow three themes: (1) the deprivations of plantation life; (2) the inequality between Haole and non-Haole on the plantation; and (3) the upward mobility of plantation children. Stories in each category illustrate how they 'worked hard' to survive the harsh plantation life in the prewar period.

Before I review their stories, I first describe their socio-cultural circumstances in the past and the present. To discuss how and in what way Japanese American elderly in Puna reconstruct class experience in relation to the three themes above, I will analyze their stories by applying Pierre Bourdieu's (1984, 1987) ideas of economic capital (wealth, income, and property) and cultural capital (knowledge, culture, and educational credentials).

Bernhard Hormann writes, "Haole today has connotations of 'upper class' or 'upper middle class'" and includes 'Mainland Haoles' (e.g., military personnel) and 'local Haoles' (second, third, fourth, and fifth generation Haole) (1996:22, 30). Ito explains that Haole partly include "wealthy or upper-middle-class longtime residents from socially prominent white families (often descended from the earliest white missionaries in Hawai‘i)," also referred to as kama‘aina (1999:1). Japanese American elderly in Puna use this term to signify upper/middle-class mainland/local Caucasians, the descendents of prominent white families, and anyone who looks Caucasian in an ethnic categorical sense.
Plantation Life

Context

Hardship that Japanese American elderly in Puna experienced in the prewar period and hard work by which they overcame the deprivations of plantation life are two inseparable pillars of the stories that relate their plantation background. Hardship is often associated with ‘poor’ living conditions, and hard work is told as the endless physical labor involved in earning a cash income and daily chores. Their experiences of hardship and hard work in childhood, at school, and at work define their qualities as people from a sugar plantation.

Today, they live a materially sufficient life in which they own houses, cars, telephones, cable TVs, VCRs, washing machines, dryers, and computers. Many of them have hobbies such as dancing, karaoke, fishing, watching sports, gardening, making handicrafts, cooking, and keeping pets. Also, they regularly travel for pleasure with friends and relatives. Las Vegas is a popular destination. Living this sort of life style, they look back on the past and characterize their lives on the plantation as ‘poor’.

Japanese American elderly in Puna themselves point out the significance of their present life in remembering the past. A seventy-six-year old former shop owner states:

If they live miserable today, if it’s very poor and struggling, no home, no TV, no food, I don’t think they look back on their past and think it was great. They’d think it was terrible. But because they have things good today the past looks good... Once in a while, I look at towels in my bathroom, you know... we have at least five, six of towels, a big bath towel, washing towel, and one more hand towel. And I look back just other day, I was thinking, gee, I had one towel, that thing was kind of brownish, you know, reddish, you know... you used to see it anywhere. And you know, like I said, [if] it was miserable today, if I still live in

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3 The red-brown dirt resulting from volcanic ash common to the Hawaiian Islands is known to stain clothing and other material easily.
that condition, I probably would have had very different memories of time, the past (Story #0401).

The contrast between having five or six relatively new, bright towels and one threadbare, stained towel is a metaphor for the contrast between ‘successful’ lives now and ‘miserable’ lives then. This metaphorical expression is a distinctive part of the rhetoric of plantation stories by which the elderly compare the struggles of the past with the comforts of the present. Although in most stories they concentrate on the ‘poor’ plantation experience and omit reflections on the present, it must be kept in mind that their reconstructions are based on the juxtaposition of the past and the present.

Not only for Japanese American elderly in Puna but also others who have worked on the sugar and pineapple plantations in Hawai‘i focus on the hardship they endured. In other words, hardship is not the experience only of a certain group of people, but a memory that is commonly held by many people in Hawai‘i. The hardship of plantation life is ‘officially’ acknowledged as part of Hawaii’s ‘history’ by historians and social scientists. For example, the difficulties faced by Filipinos have been written about by Alcántara (1981) and Anderson (1984), Chinese by Char (1975), Portuguese by Felix (1974), Puerto Ricans by Souza (1984), Koreans by Patterson (1977), and Japanese by Kotani (1985), Odo and Sinoto (1985), Okahata (1971), and Okihiro (1991). All these studies describe the lives of immigrants and their children, mainly before World War II, and the hardship of their working and living conditions, including housing, food, clothing, sanitation, and welfare. The adversity of plantation life has become an important context for Hawaii’s ‘history’ as well as of the grass-roots plantation stories
told by American elderly in Puna. Many people in Hawai‘i commonly regard past hardship as impetus to strive for the improved living standards they enjoy today.

Japanese American elderly in Puna were in various ways dependent upon the plantation economy as employees of Puna Sugar, independent growers, and private business owners. The wage laborers worked in the canefield, transportation, the factory, offices, or other plantation positions. Field jobs consisted of cultivation (planting, weeding, and fertilizing) and harvesting (burning dry leaves, cutting, bundling, and loading). Most of the workforce of Puna Sugar did these jobs until the introduction of mechanization in the early 1950s. Employees in the transportation department took care of mules, flumes, and railroads until the late 1940s, when trucks were introduced. Factory workers ran cane cleaners, shredders, mills, pumps, boilers, evaporators, and clarifiers. Office workers included bookkeepers, timekeepers, accountants, industrial engineers, purchasing agents, warehouse clerks, statistical clerks, and cashiers. Other jobs included construction workers, directors of industrial relations, chemists, and supervisory/administrative personnel.

Independent growers, or contract laborers, were employed by Puna Sugar in every stage of the sugar-raising operation, including opening land, planting, cultivating.

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4 Cultivation included planting, weeding, and fertilizing, and harvesting consisted of burning dry leaves, cutting, bundling, and loading the sugarcane.
5 Before the introduction of the internal combustion engine, the main power source on the plantation was livestock. Thus, stables were a major plantation facility. Livestock was carefully treated under the direction of stable bosses. It was the only power source that supported every field operation on the plantation.
6 Flumes are large gutter-like water ways. They were made of wood in the early days, but iron flumes took over later. Flumes not only transported sugar cane, but also provided water for camp residents. There were several major flumes such as the 18 Mile Flume in the Mountain View area and the Kaumana Flume (‘Ōla‘a Sugar Annual Report 1915).
7 Puna Sugar utilized the southern branches of the Hawai‘i Consolidated Railway Company that ran between Hilo and the mill, the mill and Kapoho/Pāhoa, and the mill and the Mountain View area. Trains carried sugarcane as well as passengers.
harvesting, and transporting sugarcane. Manager McStockyer justified the contract system:

Agreements will be made by which a large portion of the crop will be cared for by laborers on shares. This method is particularly satisfactory to the Japanese and will obviate many of the difficulties arising out of the contract labor system, by giving the laborers an individual interest in the crop (‘Ola’a Sugar Company Annual Report 1900:15).

Most independent growers carried on small family-run operations on land leased from Puna Sugar in the Kea’au and Mountain View areas or from the Laymans in the Pāhoa area. Some Japanese did become large contractors, however. They did everything from opening land to harvesting and hired other Japanese and Filipinos.

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8 When penal contracts were prohibited after the annexation in 1900, sugar companies had to maintain a labor force without punitive compulsion. Knowing that the Japanese plantation workers were seeking alternative employment opportunities in family farming and urban trades, and that Japanese workers would prefer subcontracts to wages, Puna Sugar considered an extensive contract system as a better means of keeping workers, particularly Japanese, on the plantation than the conventional wage labor system.

9 These large contractors were also community leaders (see Issei Leadership in Chapter Three), and some camps were named after them. See also Footnote 14.

10 Susan Campbell and Patricia Ogburn introduce a different perspective on Puna Sugar’s labor management: “Their original plan was that ‘Ola’a [Puna Sugar] would be instrumental in bringing about the Americanization of Hawai’i by fostering a homeowning class of small farmers who would grow cane for the mill. The venture was planned as a demonstration of a plantation as a small farming enterprise in which a large portion of the crop would be cared for by laborers on shares. L. A. Thurston [a founder of Puna Sugar] believed that Hawaii’s future prosperity depended in the long run on the production of crops by small independent farmers who owned or leased the land they cultivated. The corporation would operate the mill and assure a market for the produce. The promoters predicted that ‘Ola’a [Puna Sugar] would become the banner plantation for all Hawai’i. This was a radical departure from the ideas of the old plantation system that opposed both independent cane growers and diversification” (1992:3).

11 The contract system was designed to favor Puna Sugar. First, payment was based on the open market quotation from New York, which reduced the risk of a deficit, although Puna Sugar still had to provide advance money, fertilizer, and sometimes its own laborers to help the contractors. Second, Puna Sugar could keep its number of employees to a minimum and maintain lower overhead wage costs. Third, Puna Sugar could attract contractors by emphasizing the possibility of making money with little capital outlay. Contractors, meanwhile, did not have much autonomy under the strict control of supervisors in the farming operation. From planting to harvesting, Puna Sugar demanded that detailed instructions be followed and imposed harsh penalties if they were not. For example, harvesting contracts regulated that cane stubble should be cut no more than an inch above the ground; if this was violated, the company measured the value of the cane left and charged the contractors for it. With regard to cultivating, Puna Sugar always compared the cane harvested in the company’s field to that in the contractor’s field and requested contractors provide the same quality. Puna Sugar also held the right of way in the canefield, even when independent growers farmed their own land: “A free right to enter said land, to examine, cut and remove said crops, and a free right of way into and across said land and any other land owned, leased or controlled by the Planter [the independent grower]” (HSPA Archives). This is because the company needed complete control over
Many residents in Puna engaged in cultivation contracts as independent
growers, even when they had other full-time jobs. Some employees of Puna Sugar were
independent growers on the weekends. Shopkeepers, school teachers, and postal workers
also made independent contracts or helped their family members fulfill their contracts. It
is therefore difficult to categorize these working people by occupation. Even
housewives, mainly Issei, took part in field operations. Many Japanese American elderly
remember helping their parents and grandparents in the canefield when they were
children. In addition, their family members often operated various side-businesses such
as doing laundry for single male Filipino workers, sewing, ranching, or farming
alternative cash crops. 12

Given these circumstance, they rarely took days off on the weekends. New Year’s
Day and the Fourth of July were the only breaks everyone had from work. Japanese
American elderly in Puna consider that ‘work’ in the plantation days was not just a means
of making a living, but life itself.

Stories

Given these circumstances, Japanese American elderly in Puna illustrate the
hardship they endured with images of economic adversity, big families, and the physical
and infrastructural accoutrements of poverty. Economic adversity is often characterized

planting and harvesting in order to maintain the efficiency of mill operations and harvest cane for the
highest amount of sugar content. Considering that growing cane takes two years, Puna Sugar had to
carefully plan the planting schedule so that the mill ground cane constantly and economically, yielding the
highest rate of crude sugar per acre. Also, since harvesting was usually done by Puna Sugar’s labor force,
careful scheduling was needed to keep workers harvesting throughout the year without working overtime.
12 Diversion from sugarcane to other cash crop proceeded from the 1960s because of unstable sugar prices
on the market. Alternative cash crops were papayas, tangerines, coffee, anthurium, and orchids. Japanese
American elderly in Puna invariably state that the sugar business in Puna was never lucrative. For instance,
“Many times, like, I used to raise some field in Pahoa mauna (mountain side). That tonnage was low, many
times...don’t balance. I have to pay” (Story #0420 Line 3).
by a poor diet: “We didn’t know a steak. You know, corned beef and Vienna sausage were a big treat” (Story #0402 Line 11); “Only special occasions, yeah, chicken” (Story #0403 Line 4); and “Whatever we eat, it is fine although it tastes bad, but you have to have enough” (Story #0603 Line 11). They also depict poverty by stressing a lack of daily necessities and, in some cases, self-imposed privation: “Everybody’s barefoot, no more shoes, no can afford shoes” (Story #0404 Line 2); “Rice came with 100 pound bag...we made the clothes, we made underwear, undershirt and everything” (Story #0402 Line 5); and “My mother had to take me to the hospital. But they didn’t want to go because they had to pay money. We tried not to go to hospital” (Story #0405 Line 3).

Stories about big families are also associated with poverty: “My family was six girls and two boys. Old days, all big family. That’s why, all families were poor in those days, yah” (Story #0406 Line 1-3); “My family had twelve. The monthly income you made was barely enough just to take care of family needs, yah. That’s not enough but somehow we were able to...We had a rough time” (Story #0407 Line 1-3); “There were thirteen children, thirteen mouths, how can you afford to get meat and fish? You cannot” (Story #0603 Line 1); “Raise children, big families. All those families had plenty of children. Like Higa [family], they had eight children. Asato [family] had about nine or eleven. [Another family] got eight, big family” (Story #0408 Line 8); “Everybody has to sleep together” (Story #0409 Line 2); and “We were taught not to play, we were taught not to waste time, we were taught to work because we had many children” (Story #0410 Line 2).

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13 Corned beef and Vienna sausage are relatively inexpensive canned meats popular in Hawai‘i, especially among working class families and their descendants.
In addition to economic adversity and big families, the physical and infrastructural accoutrements of poverty are part of the ‘poor’ image. “Each camp never had the kind of drainage, yah” (Story #0411 Line 1); “Old days they don’t have radios, they don’t have any TVs” (Story #0312 Line 1); “We never had electricity until I came back from army” (#0402 Line 1); and “People in countryside used to buy ice because they don’t have a refrigerator” (Story #0313 Line 1).

While Japanese American elderly in Puna feature poor living conditions in their plantation stories, they also describe how they dealt with hardship by working tirelessly. The statement, “everybody work hard” (Story #0406 Line 3), penetrates their stories. ‘Everybody’ includes employees of Puna Sugar, independent growers, shopkeepers, school teachers, wives, mothers, grandfathers, grandmothers, sons, and daughters, and ‘working hard’ characterizes plantation life. The following stories exhibit this point:

I work 46 years and nine months for this plantation. The last nineteen years I was a harvesting supervisor. So, I was working full-time, and then, I used to raise cane [as an independent grower]. Of course, my family used to, my wife and my father used to have all cane [to grow sugar cane as a side crop] (Story #0412 Line 4-6).

Most of residents, they used to raise sugarcane. Sugar was extra (Story #0413 Line 1). Everybody has extra work, oranges, sugar... those days orange and sugar and anthurium. And eventually papayas. That’s why people didn’t have a break, raising sugarcane and other things (Story #0414 Line 5).

One day we used to work about thirteen, fourteen hours, you know, a day. Yeah, no kidding. Yeah, we work hard (Story #0415 Line 5-7).

They really work hard because besides raising a family, they had to work in the canefield. They all had their own canefield. We had thirteen acres (Story #0407 Line 3).

Oh, no dreams. That’s why they work as hard as they can. They made young boys go to school (Story #0416 Line 3). That’s all the job we have, those days. So, I work fifteen cents a day. And all the boys fourteen or fifteen, they have twenty-five cents a day (Story #0417 Line 6).
Friday and Saturday, you have to go to canefield. And summer time we went to the canefield. They call it school gang, like, *hoe hana* (to do hoe work) (Story #0418 Line 1).

By the time I was fourteen years old, I worked for plantation, you know. Work on Saturday. My spending money was, I earned it myself. Every summer time I work. I was self-sufficient, we have to” (Story #0419 Line 4); “That was our job to go there to work on the canefield to have my father bring in the money (#Story 0602 Line 24).

Nobody work more hard than my mother because my mother raised pigs and she used to wash clothes for Filipinos (Story #0607 Line 7).

So, I used to work on the field weekends, yah. That’s why even I’m sewing something, I had to finish it soon, and I come home, change clothes, go to the canefield, and work until five o’clock (Story #0618 Line 3).

**Discussion**

Japanese American elderly in Puna remember the hardship of plantation days in their descriptions of economic adversity, big families, and the infrastructural poverty. At the same time, they explain how *everyone* dealt with hardship by *working hard* in the canefield, towns, factories, and at home. ‘Poor’, ‘everybody’, and ‘work’ are key words used to describe the plantation experience. These words have specific contextual meanings related to concrete images: ‘poor’ is associated with a plain diet and lack of daily necessities, ‘everybody’ includes family and community members, and ‘work’ describes physical labor executed without respite. These words do not just refer to discrete parts of plantation life, but are integrated into a whole image of the past, an image of everyone being poor but working hard together for a betterment of life.

This way of remembering is a feature of plantation stories and representative of their class identity. The premise of these stories is the eventual overcoming of hardship through perseverance, diligence, and cooperation. Both past adversity and the struggle for a better life are two structural tropes of these stories. Japanese American elderly in Puna, stressing the ‘poor’ image, connect their plantation origin to an appreciation of
‘work’ that has brought them to where they are today. In the following discussion, I demonstrate their collective class identity by focusing on how the value they place on ‘work’ shapes a sense of unity, the feeling that they were/are members of a group of working people from the plantation.

As their stories show, Japanese American elderly in Puna regard ‘working people’ as those who worked outside the home for cash income as well as those who worked inside for the family. ‘Working people’ for cash income include employees of Puna Sugar, independent growers, shopkeepers, business owners, school teachers, public servants, ranchers, farmers producing cash crops other than sugarcane, and people washing and sewing clothes. ‘Working people’ for the family are mothers, grandmothers, and sisters who took care of all kinds of chores and raised vegetables and livestock in the backyards. School-age children were also ‘working people’ on the weekends and summer breaks when they helped in the canefield. In many cases, ‘working people’ had more than two jobs. The boundary between ‘working people’ for cash income and the family is indefinite, and one’s occupation is not a significant way of categorizing ‘working people’ in these stories.14 All the family and community members, except for very young children, are remembered as working people who struggled to improve their lives.

14 Japanese American elderly in Puna do, however, categorize employees of Puna Sugar as ‘plantation workers’, and people who lived in and ran business in towns as ‘village people’, but there is no implied hierarchy. “Yeah, strong sense of community, very strong. So, plantation workers had something else over the village people. Plantation workers, they had furo, community bath, firewood used to come, you know. Like us, we have to buy firewood. But water, we didn’t have to worry about because we, village people, used to help put out fire on the canefield with cane knives. In return, when we are short of water, we could get water from the plantation in our water tank for free. So, village people and plantation help each other. With plantation employees we work together” (Story #0510 Line 2, italics added).
Japanese American elderly in Puna, remembering how they encouraged each other, center on a sense of unity family held by family and community members. Within each household, family members had strong ties that kept the big family going. Members of the Japanese community, knowing that neighbors shared similar living conditions, carried out institutional activities to improve their social lives and nurture community spirit. The comment, “All families were poor in those days, yah. But everybody, that’s why everybody work hard” (Story #0406 Line 3) represents the idea of ‘working people’ in the Japanese community in the prewar period. Japanese American elderly in Puna collectively remember that every ‘worker’ was struggling to make ends meet and support big families on a limited income. This is how they reconstruct a sense of unity among those who share a plantation background and express their class identity.

Just as Japanese American elderly in Puna recall people in the past community from their own inclusive perspective, they also understand the nature of ‘work’ in a specific way. Their stories demonstrate that they consider work as not merely imperative for survival, but as valuable lifetime activity. They internalized this idea through their experiences of work and the teaching of their parents. The elderly describe ‘work’:

Everybody’s working. That’s why people from Japan kept working until they died. No more vacation, no more holiday, no more such thing, vacation. Even after retirement they work on the yard, making flowers (Story #0414 Line 7). Work, work, work. My father worked all his life (Story #0421 Line 3-5). My father kept working until he died (Story #0618 Line 3). Because our life is only work, yah. Work and family (Story #0419 Line 4).

15 While Japanese American elderly in Puna emphasize poverty as common among them, in different contexts they describe the so-called ‘big shots’ in the community who had large sugar operations. These contractors had their own camps for their employees on the plantation. For example, Jiro Iwasaki founded Iwasaki camp in the early 1900s (Duis 1984) (also see Story #0414). Jūzaburō Sakamaki is also considered a big shot because he held a distinctive position in Puna Sugar as an interpreter/negotiator for Japanese workers until the Hawai‘i-born came of age.
Since we were little, we've never been playing. We had many siblings, we had nothing but working (Story #0618 line 9).
We were taught not to play, we were taught not to waste time, we were taught to work (Story #0410 Line 2).

Whether or not Japanese American elderly in Puna are today willing to engage in physical labor depends upon the individual. Nevertheless, most of them acknowledge that work was not optional, but a necessity in their early years. Work includes putting one's complete and sincere effort to the task at hand, and thus becomes a moral imperative. Laziness or unwillingness to work was cause for critique, not only when a specific task was left undone or done sloppily, but more importantly as a shortcoming in a person's character. This thoroughgoing work ethic became a central component of the value system of these plantation-based Japanese American elderly. No matter what kind of work they did in the past, their appreciation of the value of work today defines themselves as people sharing a plantation background.

Japanese American elderly in Puna, connect the situation of everybody working hard then to circumstances now in which they live a materially affluent lifestyle. They respect the value of work and take pride in their life accomplishment brought about through mutual encouragement to 'work hard' within the family and community. The phrase 'working hard' therefore has a symbolic meaning that expresses a sense of unity among 'working people' then and their common qualities now as people who once endured deprivation. The meaning of 'working hard' plays a critical role in shaping a collective understanding of themselves and provides the basis for delineating their class identity.
Japanese American elderly in Puna also compare the present and the past when they contrast their support of American democracy and respect for equality among all ethnic groups with Puna Sugar’s unfair wage structure based on race and their own political fight for fair working conditions. Inequality based on racial difference between Haole and non-Haole on the plantation in the prewar period is a significant memory linked to their reconstruction of their class experience as plantation-raised non-Haole. I review the structural aspects of the sugar industry in Hawai‘i to introduce key issues that concern their remembrance of ‘working days’.

White elites dominated Hawai‘i politically through the Republican Party and economically through the Big Five corporations from the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893 until 1954 when Democrats defeated Republicans. While Hawai‘i was supposedly governed by democratic institutions and principles under American law, Haole planters, merchants, and politicians established a ruling oligarchy along with the rise of the sugar industry (Okamura 2000). The Big Five corporations dominated the sugar industry in Hawai‘i. In 1920, their combined yield was eighty-eight percent of total sugar production: American Factors, twenty-nine percent; C. Brewer, twenty-six percent;
Alexander and Baldwin, twenty-three percent; Castle and Cooke, ten percent; and T. H. Davis, six percent. They also controlled other industries that included pineapple production, retail merchandising, electrical power, telephone communication, railroad transportation, steamship lines, and banking (Takaki 1983:20). The Big Five almost exclusively dominated Hawaii's economy. They were owned by a small number of white elites who controlled Hawaii's sugar kingdom through a network of mainland corporations. The 'American sugar oligarchy' refers to the Big Five monopoly in Hawaii. The Big Five controlled the sugar plantations by a divide-and-rule management policy that employed ethnic separatism to prevent united labor resistance as well as to improve workers' discipline and operative efficiency by stimulating nationalistic/ethnic consciousness (Grant and Ogawa 1993:143; Liu 1983; Takaki 1983:68). Also, by provoking prejudice among ethnic groups and by remaining themselves aloof from the daily operations of the plantation, the white elites could preserve their racial superiority on the plantation while legitimizing their privileged position through plantation paternalism (Grant and Ogawa 1993:143). In 1894, the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association (HSPA) was established to centralize management information and decision-making. This institution took responsibility for wage ratings as well as importing and distributing laborers to the sugar plantations (Takaki 1983:83).  

17 The population of the white elites was approximately 4,000 out of a total population of 150,000 in Hawaii in 1900 (Japanese American National Museum 1997:20; Nordyke 1989:178).

18 According to Takaki, the planters deliberately favored a multiracial labor supply and ethnic separatism to serve economic and political purposes (1983:27-28). This strategy resulted in the importation of foreign laborers from China, Japan, Germany, Norway, Portugal, Korea, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines in different periods. Beechert (1985), on the other hand, explains that the HSPA imported workers from various countries because they simply sought lower labor expenses, not because they intended to create a
On each sugar plantation, managers determined occupational assignments and wages, according to race. For example, Portuguese were more likely to be assigned to *luna* (supervisors). A Scottish blacksmith would have made $4.16 a day, compared to $2.94 for a part-Hawaiian blacksmith, $2.37 for a Portuguese, and $1.50 for a Japanese (Grant and Ogawa 1993:143). The differentiation in wages and benefits was a key issue of the labor movement, leading to strikes. In 1909 the Higher Wage Association organized by Japanese sugar workers went on strike on the island of Oahu, and in 1920 the Japanese Federation of Labor and the Filipino Labor Union struck against the HSPA. Neither strikes achieved their ends (Kotani 1985:27-40; Takaki 1983:153-154).

Inequality in working conditions was the most salient distinction between non-Haole and Haole. For the workers, it was a humiliating experience of discrimination and subordination.

A perquisite system based on plantation paternalism was used by the HSPA and sugar companies to the workforce. It provided workers with free housing, medical care, and water, but all other daily necessities had to be purchased at plantation stores and were charged to workers’ paychecks. This system meant that workers and their families depended on the company and had little chance to improve their living or working conditions on their own. The company required strict obedience and diligence. Takaki explains that plantation paternalism contributed to effective sugar production not only by extracting a “good day’s work from the laborers” but also by weakening the “power of workers to organize and strike” (1983:64-65). Moreover, it “functioned as an ideology to maintain the caste/class reality of plantation society” in which the majority of non-Haole multiethnic labor force. Also, he states that ethnic segregation on plantations did not result from strategic planning, but was simply the consequence of different groups of immigrants arriving at different times.
on the plantations were subordinate to Haole (ibid.). “Acknowledging that the laborer
had a soul and feeling and thus was entitled to some humane treatment, they [the white
company elites] identified themselves as members of ‘a strong race’ and urged their
fellow planters to show ‘mercy’ to their workers” (ibid.:66). Claiming their right to
impose “Caucasian civilization” on the plantation, the company owners argued that Haole
were necessarily the best supervisors and directors (ibid.). They compelled the workers
to follow detailed rules concerning their private lives as well as work (ibid.).

Before World War II, ethnic cleavages among the sugar workers hindered the labor
movement. Ethnically based labor organizations were rarely successful in negotiating
with the companies. When Japanese workers struck on several O‘ahu plantations in
1909, they failed partly because the Japanese leaders refused to solicit support from
Filipino workers; this enabled the planters to bring in Filipino strike breakers (Grant and
Ogawa 1993:145-146). Eleven years later, in 1920, Japanese and Filipino workers
cooperated in the first interethnic strike with “blood unionism” (Takaki 1983:164).
Nevertheless, they again failed because of the companies’ use of anti-Japanese
propaganda to create discord between Japanese and Filipino labor organizations
( ibid.:171).

A turning point for the labor movement was the organization of the first multiethnic
union led by the ILWU, whose organizers came from San Francisco during World War
II. These organizers pointed to the influx of Mainland workers and their higher wages in
By 1946 more than 20,000 of the approximately 24,000 sugar workers had joined the
ILWU (Japanese American National Museum 1997:73). Arakaki, the first president of the ILWU 'Ōla'a unit, recalls the unionization and 1946 strike:

> Our tactics for unionization were] day-to-day and weekend visits from *pau hana* [the end of work-time] until late into the night - in house-to-house visits from camp to camp to get 1,000 workers to sign up for the union on little white cards ('Ōla'a Kurtistown Oldtimers' Reunion 1996:10).

Arakaki explains that unionization was necessary because of the "wartime martial law that had kept us frozen to our jobs and low wages, poor working conditions, and discrimination" (ibid.). The ILWU 'Ōla'a unit signed its first union contract on October 1, 1945 with Puna Sugar ('Ōla'a News 1945:November). This signified the end of the traditional paternalism of sugar plantations in Hawai'i. From this point on, "Wages, hours, and working conditions would henceforce be negotiated, not dictated" (Beechert 1985:295). Puna Sugar Manager L. S. Williams commented on the agreement process:

> We are happy to report that during the election period, the period of negotiation, and the period subsequent to the signing of the Contract, cordial relations have been maintained with Union Officers and members, and the long-drawn-out formalities have been handled on a basis of mutual confidence, and with a minimum of friction ('Ōla'a Sugar Annual Report 1945).

A year later, when the first territory-wide sugar industry strike led by the ILWU began on September 1, 1946, the workers at Puna Sugar went on strike for the first time (Weingarten 1946:45). As a result of the seventy-nine-day strike, the union won a new

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19 On January 12, 1945, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) issued a declaration that all employees in the sugar industry in Hawai'i, except for supervisory employees and those engaged in cultivation and harvesting, were non-agricultural workers. Thus, they were subject to the National Labor Relation Act ('Ōla'a Sugar Annual Report 1945; Beechert 1985:292). This led to the organization of the ILWU Local 148 unit that included employees working in transportation, factory, and other supportive jobs (Beechert 1985:292). On January 24, 1945, an election in this unit was held under the direction of the NLRB, which resulted in a vote of ninety-five percent in favor of this unit becoming the exclusive bargaining agent for all covered employees (ibid.). During 1945, the similar elections were held all over Hawai'i, and thirty-three of thirty-five plantations came to have ILWU bargaining units (ibid.).

20 Except for the Pioneer mill in Lahaina, Maui that struck for 123 days.
contract, establishing uniform working conditions for all ILUW members on thirty-three sugar plantations, a minimum wage raise, and shorter working hours (forty-hour a week).

The victory of the 1946 strike gave non-Haole workers a new perspective on their relationship with the companies. They were no longer ruled by the perquisite system, but able to negotiate their working conditions. As workers found collective power against the companies, ILWU Political Action Committees turned their attention to the domination of the Republican Party over Hawaii's politics and called for the Democratic Party to support political power for the workers. Prior to 1946, the companies had overseen workers' participation in the legislature. Kotani describes:

Many plantation workers were forced to cooperate with Republican campaigns. Some plantation managers called in the lunas before an election and assigned them to stand at the polls to hand workers copies of the approved slate of candidates (1985:131).

In Puna, a ninety-one-year old former Puna Sugar employee states:

I didn't like the plantation because the plantation was Republicans. And you know, the road down Milo street, they had a gate and election time nobody can go down there. They don't want Democrats to go and vote, and they tell you to vote for Republican. I didn't go (Story #0434 Line 1-3).

Workers, confronting the company's pressure to vote Republican, gave up their right to vote. However, with the victory of the strike, the ILWU raised their awareness of politics and encouraged them to vote their conscience. Their rising political awareness eventually led to the 'Democratic Revolution' in 1954 in which the Democratic Party took over the legislature, occupying more than two-thirds of the House seats and nearly
two-thirds of the Senate (Kotani 1985:136). A century of absolute top-down labor management in the sugar industry in Hawai‘i was transformed.

**Stories**

Japanese American elderly in Puna often mention the power relations between Haole/Portuguese luna and immigrant laborers in the canefield in the early plantation days before the 1920s. The difference between boss Haole and subordinate non-Haole was taken for granted until 1946:

The plantation top guys were all Haoles, OK? (Story #0411 Line 1). We know that luna, the boss are all white (Story #0422 Line 2). In our plantation, whitemen rule, yah? (Story #0426 Line 2). Portuguese and Haole, they were the field supervisors. *Luna*, he was a *luna*. No more Japanese *luna*, all Portuguese *luna*. Down the mill, garage, all the Haole supervisors (Story #0429 Line 2-4).

In spite of the fact that 35.8 percent of supervisory staff were Japanese by 1945 (‘Ola’a Sugar Annual Report 1946), Japanese American elderly in Puna hold on to the image of Haole as boss in their plantation stories and stress the Haole company Puna Sugar’s domination over the plantation. This image, which they either heard from Issei or

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21 The ‘Democratic Revolution’ in 1954 was not only attributed to the ILWU, but also to the political influence of the Japanese community, which made up the overwhelming majority of non-Haole voters. In 1940, registered voters in Hawai‘i were 31.0 percent Japanese, 30.2 percent Caucasians, 24.7 percent Hawaiians, 8.5 percent Chinese, and less than one percent Filipinos (Haas 1998:148). Japanese and Hawaiians had the leading political clout in the Democratic Party (Kotani 1985:132). Japanese were not only influential voters, but also candidates. See Other Considerations in Chapter One.

22 Some Japanese American elderly depict brutal white *luna* in these old tales. For example, they still bring up an incident of white *luna* lynching a Japanese shopkeeper. In 1889 in Honaka’a on the island of Hawai‘i an Issei merchant Katsu Goto was lynched and murdered by five white *luna*. Allegedly, Goto was killed because he encouraged Japanese sugar workers to stand up for their rights against the company (Kubota 1985:18; Okhiro 1991:35).

23 Although Portuguese *luna* was common in the early plantation days before the 1920s (Nordyke 1989:45; Takaki 1985:77), they are considered different from Haole because they were originally imported as laborers for the sugar industry in Hawai‘i (Hormann 1996:22; Tamura 2000:67).

24 ‘Ola’a Sugar Annual Report (1946) indicates that there were thirty Japanese among the 109 supervisory personnel (including department heads, but not managers or assistant managers).
derived from their own experience of seeing Haole, is the origin of the chasm
between Haole and non-Haole, tied closely to their class experience.

They also focus on their experience of unfair treatment by Puna Sugar in
describing their subordinate position:

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Plantation, yah, only the guy will get the credit is the whiteman, the top man in
the department. Workers like us, we get nothing. We don’t get no credit, we are
on the bottom, yah (Story #0425 Line 1).
They get more money, they get better house, everything the plantation provide,
the whitemen get the first one, we get all the junk ones (Story #0426 Line 4).
Japanese got cheap, gaijin [in this case, the storyteller refers to gaijin as Haole]
which is more expensive, therefore, there’s three-dollar different.” Workers say,
“No excuse. We’re doing the same work” (Story #0427 Line 1).
Pay for Japanese, and pay for hakujin [Caucasian], they have double standards.
They won’t get the same (Story #0428 Line 1).
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The double standards in wages and benefits imposed upon non-Haole workers is the most
concrete aspect of inequality that Japanese American elderly in Puna remember about
Puna Sugar. For Hawai‘i-born American educated Japanese American elderly, it was an
incentive to join the labor movement. A ninety-three-year old retired postal worker
contends:

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When I was in school, we learn how America was born. They fought for
freedom, freedom of choice, freedom of religion, freedom of education. I’m just
as good as Haole. Then, if Haole say, I’m not as good as them, I fight (Story
#0432 Line 1).
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Although Japanese American elderly in Puna refer to the image of Haole as boss
and the racial inequality at Puna Sugar, they, especially women, rarely talk about
firsthand interpersonal experiences with Haole on the plantation. In other words, the
absence of direct contact with Haole is a feature of their plantation stories. They only
make general comments about interactions with Haole:
Haole are bosses, they don’t have to work. A few Haole we have over here, either land owners, or bosses, or supervisors. Nobody [i.e., no Haole] works in the field in our days (Story #0423 Line 2).

I don’t think the Japanese associated with Haole too much because Haole are way up there. Like Japanese, Chinese are all way down here (Story #0424 Line 4).

Haole people, oh, yeah, they keep themselves, they don’t invite you…But when I used to work, the Filipino used to invite me, sometimes I used to go Filipino party. But Haole different (Story #0433 Line 4-8).

Whether talking about work in the canefield or their personal lives, stories of interpersonal relationships with Haole are rare.25

The image of Haole as ruling authority is based not on recollections of particular individuals, but on an abstract concept of ‘Puna Sugar’ or ‘the company’. Japanese American elderly in Puna illustrate their subordinate position by focusing on an institutional top-down relationship with Puna Sugar. They blame Puna Sugar for their subordination. “The plantation, I guess they wanted control. So, they gave them kerosene, they gave all. The plantation store. Without plantation, these people couldn’t make a living, yah. So, it’s just like control” (Story #0430 Line 6). ‘The plantation’ is replaced with ‘they’, and ‘they’ are the authority of ‘control’ in this story. For the storyteller, what controls is invisible and intangible authority, an abstract image of the company. The absence of concrete images of actual Haole individuals is a significant aspect of their construction of their class experience in relation to the racial hierarchy in Puna Sugar.26

25 A few Japanese American elderly, however, remember derogatory remarks made directly to them by Haole. Some describe being discriminated against by white school teachers, and others recollect discriminatory remarks from Puna Sugar executives. A former sugar worker, not of Puna Sugar, writes, “I still remember the haole executive who said to me, ‘You guys could always live cheaper, Scotch [author’s nickname], so it didn’t matter that your paychecks were cheaper’” (Kurisu 1995:63). Nonetheless, these remembrances are sporadic and not part of the collective voice of Japanese American elderly in Puna.

26 Japanese American elderly in Puna do remember certain local dignitaries who were Haole. The Shipmans in Kea‘au and the Lymans in Pahoa were landowners who came to Puna before Puna Sugar
When taking about the class distinctions after the ILWU won the 1946 strike, Japanese American elderly in Puna expand their perspective from mere Haole versus non-Haole relations on the plantation to the entire political arena of Hawai‘i. They remember that as the multiethnic labor movement developed, they became aware of the politics of Hawai‘i. An eighty-six-year old former ILWU member states:

I’m very active for Democratic Party. Today Democrats have state control, the legislature. Without them all the benefit that you folks [non-Haole workers] have, you’re not gonna get it. Because the Big Five control, they’re only thinking about own money. This is what you guys [non-Haole workers] have to understand (Story #0431 Line 1).

The storyteller sees that the Big Five and the Republican Party were together responsible for inequality on the plantation and believes that unfair treatment was eliminated because subordinate workers collectively supported the Democratic Party and fought against Haole companies. For them, therefore, the altered political map after the 1946 strike is a significant factor in explaining their socioeconomic status as non-Haole workers.

Discussion

Japanese American elderly in Puna growing up in the plantation socioeconomic environment of the plantation developed a distinctive perspective toward their plantation origin and identity. Their stories indicate that they consider the boundary between Haole and non-Haole a decisive factor that differentiated the ruler from the ruled, or the boss from the subordinate. They uphold this view with reference to Haole as boss and the opened a plantation. Their names are known by most of the elderly, but impressions of those Haole vary. Some respect them as benefactors of the local community (e.g., for donating land to religious institutions), and others only acknowledge their names as longtime residents. Few Japanese American elderly in Puna associate them with their image of Haole the ruler. Neither the Shipmans nor the Lymans cultivated sugarcane by themselves. They leased their land to Puna Sugar and independent growers, while managing ranches that they had started before 1899 (Cahill 1996).
double standard in wages and benefits. These stories readily represent Haole as the symbol of authority and source of domination on the plantation.

Aside from differentiating Haole from non-Haole, there is another underlying dichotomy Japanese American elderly in Puna use in constructing their class experience as working people. The Haole on the plantation are never considered workers; workers are exclusively associated with non-Haole. This workers versus non-workers dichotomy, coinciding with the dichotomy of Haole versus non-Haole, is how they fundamentally differentiate themselves from Haole, ‘Puna Sugar’, and ‘the company’. As I discussed earlier, they place great value on ‘work’ and respect hard working people. Making a commitment to given ‘work’ and taking responsibility for completing tasks are how they judge the quality of workers. They regard this quality as an essential part of peoplehood for the plantation grown-ups. The elderly believe that this understanding of peoplehood is commonly held among all the working people from the plantation, but that Haole do not share the same idea about ‘work’. According to them, Haole work differently from the way non-Haole work. They explain the difference: “Plantation office manager is only in name, but Japanese are the one who actually work” (Story #0435 Line 1) and “Boy, I mean, they are no managers in a real sense. All hakujin [Caucasian]. See, this, this is the part of it. They were real lucky that they had a Japanese bookkeeper, controller” (Story #0436 Line 1-6).

A ninety-three-year old retired postal worker talks about how a Haole boss failed to take responsibility for his job:

For instance, my nephew, he has good hands. Only he doesn’t have a degree because he went only through high school and community college. No more bachelor’s degree. And he work for this ( ) company. And superintendent is
hakujin, but he's the number two man in the factory. And he come home ten at night when they're working twelve-hour shift. Ten at night he [the superintendent] say, "Hey, Y [his nephew], the machine is broken, come and fix." Why doesn’t he fix? He’s the boss, superintendent. He [his nephew] has to go and fix. And two in the morning machine stop. The factory cannot move. Look, how many people working, and they sit down and cannot do anything. He [his nephew] has to go and fix. That guy is only name... Hakujin, useless, only name. They have the engineer's, mechanical engineer's degree (Story #0428).

The storyteller, while underlining the importance of educational achievement in gaining a higher rank in the workplace, comments upon Haole attitudes toward 'work' and criticizes Haole for not taking enough responsibility for their work. This story indicates that the elderly differentiate Haole from themselves in terms of not only structural superiority, but also poor work ethic.

The term 'Haole' contains both structural and categorical meanings, depending on the context of the stories. When Japanese American elderly in Puna mention 'Haole' in reference to the socioeconomic hierarchy on the plantation before 1946, it means specifically the white elites who managed the Big Five and Puna Sugar. In this context, 'Haole' are exploiters of non-Haole workers as owners of the means of production in Marxist terms (Marx 1967), or capitalists who pursue profit and effective labor control through the strategy of divide and rule.

27 Japanese American elderly in Puna would not agree with my using Marxist terms to explain their class identity, or even using the term 'class'. This is my expository strategy to demonstrate a certain kind of collective identity. Some Japanese American elderly who were labor union leaders still remember the anti-red campaign in the late 1940s and strongly deny their involvement in the Communist Party (see Beechert 1985:305-307; Kotani 1985:120-124).

28 When it comes to its categorical meaning, however, 'Haole' remains a point of reference from which the elderly characterize their own image. "You talk about Haole style, Haole style basically is about yourself, you know. Self-perpetuation, you know. I mean that's the image we have. Our age people, we do have prejudice in a sense. I work with Caucasian, white, many of them. I'm sure that many nice people, and they like to impose their value on you. Their values would be different from us. They won't respect our values, but just like, they're saying their culture is better than ours. 'So, you better be more like us'. 'How can we? My color is this'. That's what we say" (Story #0437 Line 2-6). The storyteller admits to having a biased image of Haole, but believes that Haole have different cultural values from Japanese and are likely to 'impose' their values on others. This characterization of Haole is not particular to this storyteller. In
The structural meaning of 'Haole'—as symbol of authority—is also found in the terms the 'Big Five' and 'Puna Sugar'. When these Japanese American elderly talk about the labor movement and political involvement, they use those terms more often than 'Haole'. This is because they shift their viewpoint from the dichotomy of 'Haole the ruler' versus 'non-Haole the workers' to that of the 'company the authority' versus the 'ILWU the workers' in the context of the labor movement, and to that of 'Republicans the dominators' versus 'Democrats the challengers' in the context of politics.

When it comes to its categorical meaning, however, 'Haole' remains a point of reference from which the elderly characterize their own image. A seventy-five-year old retired school teacher states:

You talk about Haole style, Haole style basically is about yourself, you know. Self-perpetuation, you know. I mean that’s the image we have. Our age people, we do have prejudice in a sense. I work with Caucasian, white, many of them. I’m sure that many are nice people, and they like to impose their value on you. Their values would be different from us. They won’t respect our values, but just like, they’re saying their culture is better than ours. ‘So, you better be more like us’. ‘How can we? My color is this’. That’s what we say (Story #0437 Line 2-6).

The storyteller admits to having a biased image of Haole, but believes that Haole have different cultural values from Japanese and are likely to 'impose' their values on others. This characterization of Haole is not particular to this storyteller. In many cases, Japanese American elderly in Puna similarly categorize Haole as a group in comparison to themselves.

In telling plantation stories Japanese American elderly in Puna continue to hold onto the image of Haole the ruler in the prewar period and make it a significant resource.
for construction of their class experience. Their knowledge of Haole in the days of raising sugarcane is one way they locate their socioeconomic status on the plantation, although they do not use the term ‘Haole’ to talk about current labor relations or politics in Hawai‘i. They no longer regard ‘Haole’ as a group of people that exclusively monopolize authority in Hawai‘i.

**Upward Mobility**

**Context and Stories**

The class identity of Japanese American elderly in Puna is also evident in the stories of how they escaped, or wished to escape, from physical labor in the canefield as they become old enough to work full-time. Knowing the difficulty of raising sugarcane through the experience of helping their parents in the canefield, working for Puna Sugar in the summer, and joining the vocational programs at school, they, men in particular, desired upward mobility and strove to obtain jobs other than plantation work. They detested the strenuous labor involved in raising sugarcane, from cultivating to milling. They characterize it as ‘backbreaking’, ‘strenuous’, ‘grueling’, ‘tedious’, ‘tiring’, ‘exhausting’, ‘dangerous’, and ‘endless’. They comment that they had to ‘work like machine with no break’ in ‘scorching sunshine’ or in the ‘hot and noisy’ mill. Intensive

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29 With regard to a racial issue, I do not include the racial identity of Japanese American elderly in Puna in this discussion. According to Michael Omi and Howard Winant, race is “a fundamental organizing principle of social relationships” (1986: 66) and “an unstable and ‘decentered’ complex of social meanings constantly being transformed by political struggle” (ibid.:58). Following this definition, I see the racial identity of Japanese American elderly in Puna as quite complex and difficult to generalize. It involves not only Haole, but also other racial groups in Hawai‘i, and its criteria should cover the boundaries of skin color, social stratification, discrimination and prejudice, exploitation, natives and immigrants, and cultural domination and resistance in the past and the present. Moreover, it should be concerned with racial issues in the entire U.S. in terms of national politics. The racial issue should be treated separately from this discussion, using different analytical approaches.

30 Although Japanese American elderly in Puna do not see the term ‘Haole’ as an image of absolute authority today, they acknowledge that there are still prominent white families in Hawai‘i (kamaaina families—see Footnote 2) along with prominent Chinese merchant families and royal Hawaiian families.
manual labor in the canefield continued until 1953, when Puna Sugar completed the introduction of mechanical harvesting (‘Ōla’a News 1953). When an electric system took over the hydropower system in the mill factories in the 1940s, Puna Sugar started twenty-four-hour operations so that employees had to work day and night in three eight-hour shifts.

The lower wages in the sugar industry compared to other industries was also regarded as a drawback in working for Puna Sugar. Victor Weingarten reports:

Apprentice mechanics were earning a base pay of 28¢ an hour, field hands were getting 25¢, plantation store clerks were receiving 19¢, highly skilled mechanics were earning as little as 50¢ an hour. Away from plantations, unskilled labor was getting 82¢ an hour (1946:41).

He also points out, “[In 1942] the average annual plantation wage was $928—less than $18 a week, as against $1,454 for factory workers, $1,703 for workers in various trades, and $2,441 for construction workers” (ibid.:40). Moreover, a “worker on the outer islands earned from one-half to two-thirds less than workers on Oahu” (ibid.). One Japanese American elderly, looking back on his graduation from high school, comments, “Those days, so poor, yah. We want to get away, you know. I didn’t want to work in the plantation, you know what I mean?” (Story #0438 Line 3). Low wages and tough labor were the factors that turned these Japanese American elderly away from Puna Sugar.

A ninety-year old retired independent cane grower reminisces about his schooldays:

But, plantation try to keep them [students] on the plantation. And they used to force the Future Farmer of America. They all said, boys should take that course, join the organization, you know. That’s a school organization so that they become future farmers. Future farmer of what? Sugarcane? (Story #0439 Line 2-6).
Although Japanese American elderly in Puna did not see a positive future in the sugar industry, sugar companies, foreseeing a labor shortage due to restrictions on labor importation, regarded public schools as channels through which Hawai‘i-born youths would remain as plantation workers and promoted vocational education with governmental and educational leaders. The school curriculum included vocational programs such as the Future Homemakers of Hawai‘i (FHH) and the Future Farmers of America (FFA) (Rainbow 1939:7). While the FHH consisted of female students and aimed at improving sewing, cooking, and other homemaking skills, the FFA was a national organization for male students who studied vocational agriculture (ibid.). Okihiro explains that the Department of Public Instruction set up the “Educational Campaign—to make the Japanese laborers see the value of labor on the sugar plantation and encourage the young element to follow the footsteps of their parents” (1991:143).

The purpose of this educational campaign was “to direct the second generation into useful labor” in the sugar and pineapple industries in Hawai‘i, expressed as the “back-to-soil admonition” (ibid.:144). This admonition was institutionally carried out by Issei Christian minister Reverend Okumura who organized the so-called ‘New Americans Conference’ that was held annually from 1927 to 1941 in Honolulu to encourage the Nisei to remain agricultural laborers. In spite of this conference, Nisei participants expressed their opinion that the “wages on plantation are entirely incompatible with American standards of living, that the ‘Back-to-the-soil’ movement [Reverend Okamura’s admonition] as suggested by the territorial agriculturists is wrong in principle” (ibid.:145).
While Japanese American elderly in Puna frown on the vocational programs held at school, they invariably state that they saw education as the only means of obtaining a better job.

If you don’t have education, only thing you can do is farming (Story #0616 Line 3).
As far as I know, you know, those persons who have education, you will be supervisors, see. It is education. They go up high school. Because Japanese, because Masu Nakamura [superintendent], he has better education, it helps. People have education, they have better chance (Story #0440 Line 3-5).
No more Portuguese because Haoles are more educated. They become the department head (Story #0429 Line 6).

Believing that education would lead to upward mobility, many Japanese American elderly, most of whom were born after the 1930s, attended high school. “Japanese wanted education as much as possible. Therefore, most Japanese went to high school” (Story #0441 Line 8).

For them, a high school diploma was the first step towards socioeconomic success.

A ninety-year old retired independent cane grower comments:

At that time, those who graduated high school, if they went to plantation, they went to the office, if they have an office job. If no more office job, they won’t go. They went to Hilo, worked in Hilo, or went to Honolulu. You graduate high school, you don’t want working on the field. High school graduates, they want an office job (Story #0442 Line 2-6).

Besides office jobs, other specialized job skills such as carpentry, mechanics, or welding allowed high school graduates to escape manual labor on the plantation. “During the war, many people who have good hands, they work for the construction, you know, making road and for military. So many of them didn’t come back” (Story #0442 Line 6).

Some women also attended vocational school to learn dressmaking, nursing, and typing
and had specialized jobs. A few women earned a Bachelor’s degree and became school teachers.

The majority of men joined the Army or Navy, either through the draft or as volunteers.31 “After World War II, many of them went to service. I would say ninety percent...high percentage of us, we all went to service. Draft was still on, you know, people my age, Seventy years old, World War II, Korean war, Vietnam war” (Story #0443 Line 1). After serving for a couple of years, they acquired vocational skills as well as GI bill benefits, and either entered private companies or attended a university. Some of those who earned a degree went into public education and later became counselors or principals.

While some left the plantation to pursue careers, others stayed in Puna and had specialized jobs at Puna Sugar or became public officials, businessmen, shopkeepers, or farmers who planted more profitable cash crops.32 In any case, Japanese American elderly in Puna had a negative view of working in the canefield and struggled to obtain other jobs.

Discussion

The point of these stories is their determination to avoid becoming laborers in the canefield. Japanese American elderly in Puna were taught to work hard by their parents and grandparents, and they did so in order to escape the manual labor Issei had undergone. As plantation grown-ups, they respect their parents’ and grandparents’

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31 Most of my male informants joined the military after World War II. This is because they were not old enough in 1943.
32 It is not uncommon to meet a Japanese American elderly man who is the only one among brothers remaining in Puna. One man explains that he stayed in Puna because one of the brothers had to take care of their parents and the family property, while the others followed their ambitions outside the plantation.
perseverance and diligence as sugar workers and have incorporated their work ethic into their own attitudes. Many of the elderly took seriously their parents’ emphasis on education and devoted themselves to study. An seventy-eight-year old retired school teacher states:

I think Japanese [Issei] really put a lot of emphasis on education for their children. They place more emphasis on education. I guess even if they sacrifice comfort, they wanted their children to go to school. So, I think, I guess children, sort of, can sense that. “To be successful, I got to be educated” (Story #0444 Line 2).

On the other hand, seeing that their parents and grandparents were inescapably tied to raising sugarcane, an occupation disdained for its toughness and scant reward, they considered sugar workers to be at the bottom of the socioeconomic structure in Hawai‘i and detested the thought of staying in the same position. This dual view toward sugar workers and raising sugarcane fueled their desire for upward mobility.

While Japanese American elderly in Puna were driven to improve their circumstances by a strong work ethic and aversion to labor in the canefield, they decided a future plan according to their family situations. As I noted in my discussion of All I Asking for Is My Body in Chapter Two, a sense of responsibility for the family is shared among plantation-raised Japanese Americans. For example, when they had a chance to obtain a college education with GI bill benefits, their decision involved consideration of family support. An seventy-eight-year old retired school teacher who decided to attend a university recollects:

I think plantation children with plantation background, you know, that you can go to a certain point, and then, you got to start helping the families. In my case, I was thinking, “Oh, I have to finish school as soon as I can, so I can start working as soon as I can” (Story #0444 Line 2-4).

33 Tamura confirms that the Nisei and their parents took education seriously (1994:91-124).
A seventy-seven-year old retired shop owner remembers:

You got to figure, now I’m just twenty years old. I come back, I had GI bill alive, you know. But, I come home, I’m twenty years old, my father is seventy now. So, I said, ‘Well, forget school’. I’d like to go to school, but I got to support my family. I decided to go to work (Story #0445 Line 1).

Their career decisions indicate that the family was an important consideration as they proceeded to raise their living standards.

Their stories of upward mobility represent recognition of their lower socioeconomic status as sugar workers. By emphasizing the seriousness of education and the necessity to support the family, they explain the disadvantage of having grown up on the plantation. This adversity is crystallized in the following story told by a seventy-eight-year old retired school teacher:

I guess they had a feeling that they had to succeed in education. We had to endure more than other people because we were poor, we know that we had just one chance to succeed, yah. So, you try to make the best of it (Story #0446 Line 2-6).

This story exemplifies their experience as people with a plantation background who had scant resources and limited opportunities to improve their lives. This is what I regard as their class experience molding plantation stories.

**Discussion: Class Identity**

I observe in their stories a sort of identity defined by what Pierre Bourdieu delineates as social class: groups of people who are in “similar positions in social space” that provide “similar conditions of existence and conditioning” and therefore create “similar dispositions” which in turn generate “similar practices” (Bourdieu 1987:6, quoted in Swartz 1997:154). I apply this definition to the class identity of Japanese American elderly in Puna as follows:
(1) ‘Similar positions in social space’—They were born on the plantation and raised by working people under limited socioeconomic conditions in terms of access to resources as well as life chances. After struggling for upward mobility, today they are retirees, most of whom own houses and live a comfortable material life; they are categorized as a privileged ethnic group with relatively higher socioeconomic status in Hawai‘i (Okamura 1982, 1990, 1998a).

(2) ‘Similar conditions of existence and conditioning’—They delineate themselves by looking at their present and past lives. By collectively acknowledging what they gained/achieved/inherited and were deprived of materially (property, technology), socially (education, job status, community bonds), and culturally (wartime restriction) in their lives, they define themselves. Collective memories, prevailing images in the mass media, and ‘a history’ written by professionals are conditioning factors.

(3) ‘Similar dispositions’ which in turn generate ‘similar practices’—They share a similar understanding of family, community, and the values of ‘work’ that they developed in plantation days. Their perspectives toward themselves as an experienced age cohort is based on their pride in overcoming hardship and reaching today’s living standards. This results in their practice of telling plantation stories that show similar ways of determining what experiences are remembered or silenced, what meanings are attached to the remembered experiences, and in what context the experiences are presented.

Bourdieu’s idea of social class is applicable to how Japanese American elderly in Puna draw identity boundaries based on not only economic/material conditions, but also
upon their childhood situations, education, careers, and interpersonal relationships
with people both inside and outside the family and community. Bourdieu writes:

Social class is not defined by a property (not even the most determinant one such as the volume and composition of capital) nor by a collection of properties (of sex, age, social origin, ethnic origin—proportion of blacks and whites, for example, or natives and immigrants—income, educational level etc.), nor even by a chain of properties strung out from a fundamental property (position in the relations of production) in a relation of cause and effect, conditioner and conditioned; but by the structure of relations between all the pertinent proper ties which gives its specific value to each of them and to the effects they exert on practices (1984:106).

Social classes are therefore outlined and differentiated not by property itself, but by the structure of relations that adds values to property and action. This opens up a perspective that transcends Marxist and Weberian frameworks of class by problematizing their objectivity. In their frameworks, class is objectively defined as one’s position in society, regardless of how people themselves see their position. Ortner points out that class is “not an objectively defined object in the world, but a culturally and historically constructed identity” (1998:3). My theoretical perspective on class identity stands on this point, although I include a Marxist perspective to visualize the plantation hierarchy. I view the class identity of Japanese American elderly in Puna neither objectively by numerical data and the dichotomy of haves versus have-nots, nor subjectively as individual judgment, but in terms of a value system, what Bourdieu calls “the structure of relations” by which they collectively reconstruct their plantation experience as part of their peoplehood.

The concept of ‘working people’ is a culturally and historically constructed class identity among Japanese American elderly in Puna, so it is also ‘local’ in terms of their presupposition of structural boundaries. These two terms are both inseparable from their
identity as plantation grown-ups. The terms are rooted in a dynamic of non-Haole solidarity brought about because of subordination to the prewar white sugar oligarchy. As discussed in Chapter Three, local identity among Japanese American and non-Japanese elderly in Puna originates in their experience of mingling at school and work (Story #0301; Story #0302). It is by their own definition based on shared knowledge of certain behaviors, values, and beliefs. Their shared knowledge, which includes the meaning of being the descendants of immigrant workers, is the basis for a value system that leads to social class. Therefore, it must be kept in mind that the concepts of ‘working people’ and ‘local’ both reproduce their class identity, just as the concept of ‘Japanese’ recreates their ethnic identity, as told in plantation stories.

Bourdieu further theorizes social class. As Swartz summarizes, class differentiation is determined by two principles: one is the “dominant principle of hierarchy” based on the distribution of “economic capital (wealth, income, and property)” and the other is the “second principle of hierarchy” correlated with the distribution of “cultural capital (knowledge, culture, educational credentials)” (1997:137). In the case of Japanese American elderly in Puna, the distribution of economic capital is told in stories of a plantation structure that differentiated Haole from non-Haole, the Big Five from the workers. Cultural capital is articulated in stories about educational achievement, a work ethic, and firm family and community ties. Both kinds of capital are essential bases for explaining their socioeconomic position on the plantation.

First, focusing on economic capital, I discuss the reconstruction of their class experience. A Marxist perspective toward class is useful in observing how Japanese American elderly in Puna look at the distribution of economic capital in the plantation.
world and associate it with their plantation origin. The distinction between the capitalists and the workers, which fundamentally stands on the Marxist idea of mode of production, is one perspective for understanding inequality in their work place, poor living conditions at home, and limited chances for upward mobility, even though they do not relate their viewpoint in Marxist terms. In telling plantation stories, they construct their identity by objectifying or historicizing their deprived plantation lives as a ‘history’ of exploitation. For them, the socioeconomic hierarchy structured by Haole capitalists is an inexorable fact supported by solid evidence such as the distinction of the Big Five versus the workers. When they tell stories, they act upon this ‘fact’ and construct their class experience using their concept of ‘work’ as a basic factor in the formation of class structure.

Investigating Hawaii’s working people’s viewpoints toward work and life, Edward Beechert argues that:

the labor history of Hawaii provides ample evidence of the potential of the working class to see itself as a class—and at the point at which class consciousness can be truly said to exist, the potential for an organization to express that awareness also comes into being” (1985:323).

According to Beechert, class consciousness among workers developed from the “notion of class for itself” and overpowered the “ethnic militancy of earlier years” based on nationalistic-linguistic camps, resulting in an “incorporated racial unity in its structure” (ibid.:328). Beechert, applying a Marxist perspective, observes that Hawaii’s workers gave rise to ‘class consciousness’ against the power and privilege of the white oligarchy and created a multiethnic network among non-white workers in pursuit of common material interests. He argues that it is workers themselves that substantiated the working
class in the process of resistance and accommodation to struggle, conflict, and exploitation in the plantation economic structure.

Class identity is also concerned with cultural capital. On the one hand, Japanese American elderly in Puna may identify themselves as working people by making concrete statements such as, ‘I am a labor union member’. On the other hand, they may express their identity indirectly by associating it with various sorts of experience including stories of poor living conditions, big families, hard work, and the desire for upward mobility.

Erik Wright writes that class identity is rooted in objectively given material interests and “shaped by idiosyncrasies of personal biographies and by historical patterns of struggles, as well as by the intersection of class with other forms of social collectivity (ethnicity, religion, language, region, etc.)” (1997:396). According to Wright, people do not change class identity instantaneously as they move into a new class location because class identity is “viewed as a ‘backward-looking’ concept: it is rooted in one’s personal history and in the ways in which that personal history is tied to the history of communities and social groups” (ibid.:495-496). Wright’s idea provides scope for outlining how and why Japanese American elderly in Puna, most of whom consider themselves well off in their present lives, still regard their plantation experiences as a significant period and emphasize their plantation background as an essential part of their peoplehood. A set of plantation experiences told in stories is, for them, cultural capital to which they connect their origin as working people.

Wright calls this a ‘processual approach’ and explains that it aims to understand how people learn to be class members with an accompanying identity, worldview, and lifestyle and to unfold the trajectory of their life experiences in terms of both “individual
biography and collective history" (ibid.:495-496). Wright emphasizes the importance of the past in constructing class experience. He coins the phrase “class biographies” as a combination of “individual biography” and “collective history” by stating that “the institutional and cultural legacies of victories and defeats in past class struggles matter just as much as the accumulation of life events in an individual biography” (ibid.). The 'class biographies' of Japanese American elderly in Puna are the plantation stories in which they express their convictions about the value of 'work' and of their plantation origin by sketching out accumulated experiences of enduring hardship, struggling for upward mobility, winning equality, participating in politics, and reaching present living standards. This string of life events told in stories, what Wright calls 'class experience', are cultural capital that shape the class identity of Japanese American elderly in Puna.

Paul Willis suggests that “the field of symbolic and material, lived relations should be represented in their own concreteness, at their own level, without continually reducing them, mechanistically, to basic determining structures” (1981:201, italics added). He argues that:

The role of ethnography is to show the cultural viewpoint of the oppressed, their “hidden” knowledges and resistances as well as the basis on which entrapping “decisions” are taken in some sense of liberty, but which nevertheless help to produce “structure” (ibid., italics added).

This informs my argument that the class identity of Japanese American elderly in Puna is a cultural and historical representation and that there is 'structure', or 'structure of relations' in Bourdieu’s terms, or a frame of thoughts as I discussed in Chapter One, that directs the cultural creativity of these elderly in remembering, evaluating, and representing their plantation lives. As stated earlier, I take class as neither an objective
nor subjective social category, and it is not my argument that Japanese American elderly in Puna are categorized as working class or that they define themselves as working class. Their class identity is not reducible to such 'basic determining structures'. My argument is that they collectively reconstruct their class experience in the practice of telling plantation stories so that they intersubjectively understand who they are and where they are from.

Their reconstruction of class experience is not reducible to an abstract form because cultural creativity does not always proceed from agents' intentions, but is "bound up in the complex way in which structures are inhabited through 'cultural forms'" (ibid.). Their stories of poor living conditions, big families, the unity of working people, Haole companies, and upward mobility take various forms and are structured in complicated ways. There is no grand scheme for deconstructing these stories. For example, their experience of having undergone hardship cannot alone constitute class identity. It must be collectively remembered by them within specific contexts that juxtapose the past with present living situations. Therefore, instead of reducing the cultural forms of the plantation stories, I locate 'structure' or a frame of thoughts within the notions of economic and cultural capital in their practice of reconstructing class experience.
CHAPTER FIVE
GENERATIONAL IDENTIY

“Gaku-san (my first name), boku ikutsuni mieru? (How old do I look?)” George smilingly asked me in perfectly fluent Japanese. It was an afternoon in the summer of 2002 at a local restaurant in Kea’au Shopping Center. Glenn, Mako, and Mitsu, regular customers in their seventies cast curious glance at me, as they sipped their coffee. “Well, I guess you’re over eighty years old, eighty-three or eighty-four?” I said “I turned ninety-three years old this year. I was born in 1909. My teacher at Japanese language school told me that it was Meiji nijū-yonen (the twenty-fourth year of the Meiji era),” George proudly unveiled his age. Glenn suddenly cut in, “Koji is a living history of Kea’au, he is the one you got to talk to.” George continued talking to me, “How old are you? Thirty-five? Forty? To me, you’re just like a newborn baby. Even if you were sixty, still you’d be a child. Maybe seventy, you become otona (adult),” said George half jokingly, half seriously. The other three guys quietly smirked. Remembering his light steps as he entered the restaurant, I meekly responded, “George, you don’t look ninety-three years old, you’re very alert.”

The restaurant faces a busy street that leads to the only supermarket in Kea’au. Almost every five minutes, Koji, Glenn, Mako, and Mitsu saw their friends or acquaintances walking by and waved at them through the window. Many Asians, presumably Japanese and Filipinos, and a few whites, probably Portuguese, waved back. When I addressed George respectfully as, “Mr. Kanazawa,” he interrupted me and said, “Call me George. It’s the American way.” He smiled. I spoke to him again, “OK, George, seems like you know everyone passing by here.” He, looking out the window,
answered, “Well, not everyone. I don’t know about those Haoles.” George pointed to a young Caucasian couple wearing shoes and long pants. Mako murmured, “We have quite a few of those Haoles coming in.” George followed Mako, “Mukashi (old times), our days, this town was like a Japanese town. We had many nihonjin (Japanese), and everybody knew each other.” “Where are they now?” I asked. “A lot of Japanese moved out for a job,” answered Mitsu. “And Issei folks have all passed away,” added George. Then, Glenn spoke up, “I left Puna for a job, too. I lived in Los Angeles for thirty years. But I returned here right after retirement. My sister, too. She returned from Honolulu after she retired. Yappari umarekatoko ga ee, yah? (After all, there is nothing like one’s birthplace). My oldest brother never came back, though.” At that moment a voice came from behind us, “So, hang out here and talk story everyday with old friends?¹ You guys retired, get the good life, huh?” Earl, the owner of the restaurant now in his seventies, a Japanese American born in Honolulu, teasingly made a comment, evoking a grin from the four men.

I will never forget the intimate atmosphere that these elderly created in that small local restaurant. From the very first visit I was impressed by it, and the more I became familiar with them, the stronger I felt it. Japanese American elderly in Puna, occasionally or regularly stop by this restaurant to share local knowledge and the sentiment that links them together as an age cohort. The short description above indicates the way they insert Japanese words and phrases in their speech and their expressions of attachment to

¹ About ‘talk story’, see Footnote 32 in Chapter Three.
familiar sites and people in the past and the present. In this chapter, I explore the nature of their shared knowledge and sentiment in connection to their generational identity.

In conventional terms, Japanese American elderly in Puna are categorized as Nisei or Sansei—second or third generation Japanese immigrants. This generational grouping of Japanese Americans has been studied by a number of scholars (e.g., Fugita and O'Brien 1991; Kitano 1993; Maykovich 1972; Nakano 1990; Takahashi 1997; Takezawa 1995; Tamura 1994). However, I do not use the terms ‘Nisei’ and ‘Sansei’ to identify Japanese American elderly in Puna because of the complexity of their generational profile. During my fieldwork, I met Japanese Americans who introduced themselves as Nisei or Sansei as well as many who referred to themselves as ‘Nisei-han’ (half Nisei)—children of a Nisei married to an Issei. Therefore, I simply refer to them as Japanese American elderly in Puna, although I use the term ‘Issei’ to refer to Japanese immigrants.

In their stories of ‘our days’, these Japanese American elderly characterize themselves as an age cohort bonded through common economic, social, and cultural experiences. According to Karl Mannheim (1952), a generational cohort is defined as an age cohort that recognizes the same identity based on a shared understanding of historical events and cultural traits. This definition of a generational cohort fits the case of Japanese American elderly in Puna. Their stories exhibit similar ways of recognizing and understanding historical events such as the hardship of plantation life, Haole domination, the labor movement, and upward mobility, as well as cultural traits influenced by Issei and an American education and social life. Mannheim suggests that a generational cohort

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2 I did not encounter in Puna any Kibei, “Children born in Hawai‘i but who spent good part of their childhood in Japan” (Tamura 1994:28).
may develop an original worldview. As they go through a period of “socio-cultural destabilization,” they may develop a “unique reformulation of the conservative, liberal, or socialist worldview” from the earlier generational worldview (Mannhein 1952:286-312, quoted in Takahashi 1997:11). Japanese American elderly in Puna have shaped their worldview from an Issei worldview combined with an American life before and after World War II. This has resulted in what Mannhein calls a “unique reformulation” of their value systems (ibid.).

From a phenomenological viewpoint, Alfred Schutz (1967) discusses “consociates,” people who partake of each other’s experiences in interpersonal relationships that entail ‘growing older together’. Consociates may be friends, lovers, kinsmen, colleagues, or classmates. David Plath applies this notion of an age cohort to explain the shared “rhetoric of maturity” among elderly in Japan (1980:9). According to him, the elderly in Japan identify, justify, and project a specific concept of maturity. For example, the title of grandmother or grandfather is a compelling classification among consociates; one’s age cohort quite likely calls one ‘grandmother’ or ‘grandfather’ regardless of one’s preference.

I observe this rhetoric of maturity in Japanese American elderly in Puna, although it is not about a biologically-based classification. These elderly are now mature and experienced, as they have gone through a number of historical events, such as the plantation economy in the prewar period, World War II, the labor movement, and the closing of Puna Sugar. They exhibit a rhetoric that expresses their nostalgia for lost plantation days. The most salient aspect of the rhetoric is the usage of the phrase ‘our
days' with which they identify, justify, and project their mature identity as an age cohort or consociates.

Framing Japanese American elderly in Puna as an age cohort with Mannheim’s idea of generation and Plath’s rhetoric of maturity based on Schutz’s consociates, I search for features in their stories that represent a generational identity as plantation-raised Japanese Americans. I take two analytical approaches. One focuses on their dual perspective—‘Japanese’ and ‘American’—from which they articulate their generational characteristics. The other concentrates on their emotional attachment to the past, expressed as nostalgia or sentimentalism for the plantation days.

Their dual cultural perspectives and nostalgia crosscut issues of ethnicity, class, and gender, and are the basis for their constructing images of ‘our days’ and ‘nowadays’. This represents an original viewpoint from which they see their lives in the past and define their peoplehood in the present. In other words, when they say ‘our days’ and ‘nowadays’ in telling stories, they are not only describing their past and present lives, but also reflecting upon ongoing issues rendered from various transitions. Ultimately, by comparing and contrasting ‘our days’ to ‘nowadays,’ the elderly shape their origin in memories of plantation life.

Their dichotomous notion of ‘our days’ and ‘nowadays’ is a significant part of their frame of thoughts through which they project generationally specific experiences. In theorizing this projection, I borrow Sylvia Yanagisako’s (1985) concept of the “dialectic of interpretation” to understand how these elderly view their social and cultural characteristics in terms of ‘Japanese’ and ‘American’. I also use Barbara Myerhoff’s (1982) notion of “Re-membering” to show how they reaggregate interpersonal
relationships in the past and the present in order to acknowledge their peoplehood and the meaningfulness of their lives.

**Cultural Perspective**

As I discussed in Chapter Three, Japanese American elderly in Puna became familiar with Issei culture through interacting with Issei at home, at Japanese language school, and in the community. Their knowledge of Issei culture and worldview, learned through Japanese language, is underlying their everyday practices, social life, sense of morality, and value judgments.

The significance of Japanese language is one of their salient generational characteristics. In their stories told in English, these elderly insert a myriad of Japanese words to describe ‘Japanese’ thing. Although many of these Japanese words are also known among younger Japanese Americans who were born after World War II in Puna, the way the elderly explain these words is distinctive, particularly when it comes to interpreting conceptual words such as *oyakōko*, *giri*, *ninjō*, and *enryo*. Whereas younger Japanese Americans readily provide English glosses of these words, the elderly often regard them as untranslatable. A ninety-three-year old retired postal worker comments:

> There are many words that you cannot, you can explain, but there was no [English] word that you can express the same meaning. ...And *oyakōko*. See, in English, filiality [*sic;* filial piety]. But it doesn’t have deep true meaning of *kōkō*. So, there are many words that you cannot truly express the real meaning. Japanese have more deep meaning. English words are barely surface only, no more the deep meaning (Story #0502 Line 6-11).

Japanese American elderly in Puna often used these Japanese conceptual words in characterizing one’s actions. For instance, they would characterize presumptuous actions as ‘no more *enryo*’, or considerate actions to parents as ‘*oyakōko*’. In interviews, they used these words as they did in their conversations, knowing I am a native-Japanese speaker. See Other Consideration in Chapter One.

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3 For example, they may define *oyakōko* as filial piety, *giri* as obligation, *ninjō* as humane feelings, and *enryo* as holding back.

4 Japanese American elderly in Puna often used these Japanese conceptual words in characterizing one’s actions. For instance, they would characterize presumptuous actions as ‘no more *enryo*’, or considerate actions to parents as ‘*oyakōko*’. In interviews, they used these words as they did in their conversations, knowing I am a native-Japanese speaker. See Other Consideration in Chapter One.
The storyteller's characterization of Japanese words as 'deep' and English as 'surface' can be attributed to his contextual understanding of Japanese words. He acquired their meanings through direct interaction with Issei in specific cultural contexts. In other words, he understands the pragmatic meanings of the words.

For the elderly, Japanese words contain not only referential meanings, but also contextually defined meanings that are only understood among people who share the same cultural perspective toward the situation in which the words are used. The first half of Story #0502 exemplifies this point. The focal Japanese words are *giri* and *ninjō* ('contractual obligation' and 'human sensibility', Kitano 1969:102). The storyteller became a Morse code reader for a Japanese newspaper company in Hilo when he was a high school student because the owner knew his father. He was trained at the company's expense. A couple of years later, he made a deal to train his successor so that he could quit the job and go to university. He trained a replacement and obtained admission from a university, but the trainee left for personal reasons. The storyteller, however, insisted that he would leave the company and attend the university. He told the owner that he had carried out his part of the deal as promised, and that the trainee's leaving was not his fault. The owner, seeing his determination to leave the company, asked his father to persuade him to stay.

Then, my father told me, he say, "it is important to keep a promise, but *giri* and *ninjō* are more important for human beings." And, "if you go to college, *Hawai Mainichi* [the newspaper] cannot be maintained." He say, "Not only *Hawai Mainichi*, but also hundreds or thousands of subscribers will be troubled." "If you do this, how can I walk on the street, facing those people?" "If you have Japanese blood, you have to think and rethink this." Oh... So, I say, "Then, one more year I stay here" (Story #0502 Line 2).5

5 Underlined words are my translations of the original transcript in Japanese.
The storyteller gave up his plan because of *giri* and *ninjō*. *Giri* in this case is located in the following relationships: 1) between the storyteller and the owner because even though the storyteller fulfilled his obligations, he still feels indebted to the owner for training and hiring him in the first place; 2) the father and the owner because the father owes the owner for giving his son a job; 3) the father and other people in the community because the father feels responsible for his son’s actions if he causes trouble for them; and 4) the owner and the newspaper subscribers because the owner is responsible for providing the newspaper. *Ninjō* is found in the following: 1) leniency towards the owner because the trainee’s leaving is not the owner’s fault; 2) thoughtfulness towards community members because they will be troubled if the newspaper is unavailable; and 3) consideration towards the father because if the storyteller rejects his father’s admonition, the father will lose face in the community and to the owner who is ‘begging’ him for help. Therefore, *giri* and *ninjō* concern an extensive web of relationships in which one’s actions set off negative chain-reactions. The father’s statement that ‘*giri* and *ninjō* are more important for human beings’ than a ‘promise’ suggests that *giri* and *ninjō* are an unavoidable part of the interconnectedness of individuals. The father’s comment that, “If you have Japanese blood, you have to think and rethink this,” implies that *giri* and *ninjō* are part of a worldview that Japanese have to understand.

The story demonstrates the storyteller’s reconstruction of the meanings of *giri* and *ninjō*. It shows how he understands the meanings of these Japanese words and

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6 Kitano explains that “the Japanese word *giri* connotes a moral obligation toward others, and is related to role position, involving an individual through his family with the ethnic community as well. He therefore has a responsibility not only to himself but to his family and to the community, both of which exert much inhibiting pressure on deviant behavior” (1969:67). In this case, *giri* is placed on the father if the son’s action conflict with public necessity (a steady newspaper supply).
incorporates his father’s worldview into his own cultural perspective. Note that the underlined utterances were originally related in Japanese, the storyteller’s reconstruction of his father’s words. This language switching further suggests that the storyteller’s contextual understanding of the words is based on his knowledge of Japanese language in addition to learned Issei values. This way of understanding Japanese words is observable not only in this storyteller but also among other Japanese American elderly who have experienced direct interactions with Issei, even though few of them explain Japanese words as astutely as this storyteller due to loss of a good command of Japanese. When Japanese American elderly in Puna comment that Japanese words as untranslatable, they are pointing to specific contextual meanings rooted in a worldview particular to Issei.

While these Japanese American elderly acknowledge the influence Issei have had on them, they also articulate their own cultural perspective that is based on selectively accepting or rejecting Issei influences. None of the elderly accept Issei culture unconditionally. Many elderly continue to regard some Issei cultural features as valuable ‘traditions’ in their own culture. For instance, “We still hang onto so many old fashion tradition, I guess” (Story #0501 Line 1) and “I believe in traditions, you know, I believe in tradition” (Story #0601 Line 28). However, they also state that there is an irreconcilable gap between themselves and Issei, pointing out that Issei are from a different world and follow different ways of thinking and doing things than American ways.

They see other features of Issei culture as unacceptable. For example, some do not find ‘any use’ in Issei institutional ties: “Hiroshima kenjinkai and all that. Sometime, I don’t know, I’m not a member. To me, it’s unnecessary. They sent a membership
[form], you know, fliers. But, I don’t see any use for that kind of organization" (Story #0503 Line 2). Others consider Issei humility old-fashioned. One man remembers how his Issei mother was reluctant to accept welfare because she felt it would give the family a negative reputation. He explains: “You know why she took it? She like to give something to her grandson. But before that she ask me, ‘If it is all right? Isn’t that shame to take it?’ It’s her mentality, yah, these people. Really that old” (Story #0504 Line 2). The storyteller criticizes Issei sensitivity about shame.

Male domination is another notorious aspect of Issei culture upon which both men and women among the Japanese elderly frown upon (e.g., Story #0609 Line 8; Story #0610 Line 10). They also refute the generational hierarchy in which Issei controlled children by maintaining authoritarian, distant, and conservative relationships with them. Story #0505 exhibits these points. First, the storyteller points out that Issei did not listen to their children’s opinions or give reasons for denying their requests. Second, the storyteller criticizes Issei non-verbal communication style as “psychologically no good, old Japanese style. No, it’s no good.” Lastly, the storyteller denounces his father’s oppressive demands for obedience from his children: “You must not talk back to me, that’s unnecessary.”

Moreover, the elderly consider Issei mode of socializing as inappropriate for their own community interactions. In Story #0318 Line 6, the storyteller and his wife criticize

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7 Kitano explains Issei “techniques of social control” (1969:67). An Issei social system “was successful in controlling the behavior of its members, who in turn were characterized by conformity and little social deviance” (ibid.). He regards Issei social structure as a vertical structure “that places the father in a position of indisputable leadership, with other positions deriving from this authority and being clearly prescribed” (ibid.:65). Fugita and O’Brien also point out that “the Nisei considered their Issei fathers to be authoritarian, distant, and conservative” (1991:78). Maykovich connects the father’s authoritarian control over family members to Confucian parental authority that had taken root in samurai moral teachings (1972:30).
Issei for stimulating vanity by publicizing the amount of donations made for community events. They testify that their generation respected privacy. Likewise, many Japanese American elderly, alluding to the excessive closeness of Issei social relationships in the neighborhood, state that they respect privacy in the current Japanese community and do not interfere with other Japanese families. 'We don’t bother' is the phrase the elderly use to characterize their current relationships with their neighborhoods. It can be rephrased as, 'We respect our neighbors and do not interfere in their business as Issei in plantation camps did'. Even though they live near neighbors they have known since the plantation days, their style of socializing is more individualistic than it was in the past. Their rejection of Issei social and cultural mores is an indication of their mixed reactions to Issei; on the one hand they glorify the Issei legacy, and on the other hand they flatly disagree with many Issei values and practices.

While Japanese American elderly in Puna criticize certain aspects of Issei culture, they also maintain some Issei cultural values as they look at their lives in the past and the present. In other words, they evaluate their plantation experience and current lives by conjoining what they define as 'Japanese' and 'American' cultural values. An seventy-eight-year old retired school teacher states:

Our days, not much intermarriage, yah, and then I guess you grew up in your own values, Japanese values. But nowadays I guess because of a lot of intermarriage and changing ways of thinking... The way of thinking is different... Now is the time about fourth, fifth generation. I think society has been changing really rapidly. I guess it’s Americanized. Too liberal, you know, no more traditional, the culture we brought up with (Story #0446 Line 4-6).

The storyteller, remembering his plantation days as 'our days', states that the way of thinking among the younger generation 'nowadays' is changing. They are becoming
'Americanized' and 'liberal', and losing the 'Japanese values' and 'traditional culture' that the storyteller was brought up with on the plantation. The storyteller implies that knowledge of 'Japanese values' and 'Japanese tradition' has a significant influence on the way of life among his age cohort and thus is a generational characteristic distinguishing them from younger Japanese Americans.

Another story indicates that they incorporate 'Issei style' into their social interactions. A seventy-five-year old retired school teacher expresses 'Issei style' as an essential part of what distinguishes them from Haole:

When you talk about Haole style, Haole style basically is about yourself, you know. Self-perpetuation, you know. I mean that’s the image we have. They come first. Japanese style, we think of how other people feel before we do certain things, before we speak out. The main thing, we hold back. That’s the way we’re brought up. American is not that way (Story #0437 Line 2-4).

The storyteller connects ‘holding back’ in interaction with others to a Japanese or Issei style of interacting, and ‘self-perpetuation’ to a Haole or American style. He further contends that the difference between Japanese/Issei and American/Haole among his cohort is based on generation and race: ‘Our age people, we do have prejudice in a sense’ and ‘My color is this’. The attitude of holding back is one of the ways the storyteller identifies himself and his cohort as ‘Japanese’ of the same generation. This is not particular to this storyteller, but prevails among Japanese American elderly in Puna, who value reticence and composure in social interactions. Even outspoken Japanese American elderly, who refer to themselves as non-conformist or radical, in considering aggressiveness necessary in some interactions, acknowledge that ‘holding back’ is a
distinctive cultural trait among Japanese American elderly, regardless of their personal preference. 8

On the one hand, Japanese American elderly in Puna respect Issei ‘traditions’ and reject American ‘liberalism’. On the other hand, they criticize Issei ‘old’ fashioned habits and follow American ‘modern’ ways. In either case, nonetheless, they do not totally reject the other cultural values, but try to be eclectic, choosing desirable qualities from each set of values. Therefore, their stories are not told from a clear-cut cultural perspective as either ‘Japanese’ or ‘American’ but from the fusion of two different cultural perspectives. This dual perspective is a distinctive generational aspect of Japanese American elderly in Puna.

The significance of the dual perspective in constructing a generational identity is also made tangible by its absence in wartime stories. As discussed in Chapter Three, wartime stories are fundamentally different from other plantation stories. The lingering bitter feelings of anger, fear, frustration and helplessness in the face of an identity crisis during the war hinder them from publicly talking about wartime experiences. Their reluctance to reconstruct their wartime experiences may persist because the American authority’s racist wartime policies denied both their Japanese and American identities. If the dual perspective is the basis for the way they look at the world, wartime stories are quite unlikely to be reconstructed as part of their life experience and incorporated into their collective generational identity.

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8 Tamura’s (1994) discusses the problem of ‘holding back’ for Japanese Americans: “While both Japanese and Americans valued perseverance and commitment to long-term goals, Japanese also emphasized restraint, control of emotions, composure in the face of hardship, deference, reticence, and nonverbal communication. The Nisei exhibited personality traits that reflected the Japanese ideal, and in this way Japanese culture persisted. But these traits conflicted with American ideals of spontaneity, confrontation, and verbal assertiveness” (1994:177).
Japanese American elderly in Puna readily essentialize the dichotomy of ‘Japanese’ and ‘American’ when they talk about themselves. It is a fundamental frame of thoughts not only among these elderly, but also among professionals. As I discuss later, social scientists, historians, and journalists base their arguments on the ideas of assimilation, acculturation, and Americanization. In academic discussion in particular, this dichotomy is a paradigmatic framework with which scholars analyze and explain Japanese Americans and their generational characteristics. The ideas of cultural retention, accommodation, assimilation, and acculturation are the most influential theoretical frameworks for delineating generational transitions among Japanese Americans in relation to the ‘host’ American society. For example, Stephen Fugita and David O’Brien (1991), taking an assimilationist perspective as sociologists, argue that both the Nisei and the Sansei structurally assimilate into the ‘American’ life in terms of social, economic, and political styles, while simultaneously maintaining their ethnic affiliation and sense of community through ways of socializing inherited from Issei.

Aside from the assimilationist approach, Americanization is another concept used to describe Japanese American generational characteristics. Tamura (1994) discusses the effect of Americanization on the formation of Nisei ethnic identity. She explains Americanization as “[an] organized effort during and following World War I to compel

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9 This assimilationist theoretical approach originates in Robert Park’s idea of a cycle of contact, competition, accommodation, and assimilation developed in the 1920s (Lyman 1968). It was later elaborated into the concept of assimilation by Milton Gordon (1964). According to Gordon, the process of assimilation involves seven types of assimilation (i.e., structural, cultural, material, identification, attitude receptional, behavioral receptional, and civic assimilation) and in its final phase renders homogenization, reducing prejudice, conflict and discrimination between the larger society and the assimilated group of people. Kitano (1969) also uses Gordon’s model and explains Japanese American generational characteristics on the U.S. continent.

10 The term ‘Americanization’ contains two meanings. One is based on nativism: “intense opposition to an internal minority on the ground of its foreign” (Higham 1955 quoted in Tamura 1994:53). The other characterizes Americanism as the principles of freedom and democracy.
immigrants and their children to adopt certain Anglo-American ways while remaining at the bottom socioeconomic strata of American society” (ibid.:52). Alan Shoho (1990) also relates Americanization to white American ideology and investigates the public education of Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i before World War II. Both studies demonstrate how the Nisei identity was shaped by both institutional coercion to Americanize and by ‘Japanese’ social and cultural influences.

The ideas of assimilation and Americanization presuppose an eventual absorption or incorporation into the ‘host’ American society regardless of continuity of cultural attributes. Cultural pluralists, by contrast, hypothesize the development of subcultures among ethnic groups. Glazer and Moynihan (1963) and Michael Novak (1973), for instance, suggest that groups of immigrants and their descendents share specific cultural ‘traditions’ within the larger society. This pluralistic view later advances the concept of multiculturalism, as Haas explains:

Successful multiculturalism exists when a dominant group accepts diversity as of positive benefit to the society, gives up total dominance, and allows formerly subordinate groups to enter the mainstream, though not all groups may achieve upward social mobility (1998:10).

From a multiculturalist standpoint, the dual perspective of Japanese American elderly in Puna are the consequence of the development of an original subculture.

Yanagisako refutes the cultural pluralism model, which assumes people choose only between the fixed alternatives of either an idealized ‘American’ culture or a mythical ‘Japanese’ tradition as “the inert aggregate of beliefs, values, norms, and practices whose meanings and relations are forever ascribed by culture” (1985:250). She underscores the importance of the “historically situated symbolic processes through
which symbols and meanings, and hence culture, are transformed" in studying
Japanese American culture (ibid.). Yanagisako argues that Japanese Americans do not
simply learn a ‘Japanese traditional’ system from the conservative Issei inside the family
and an ‘American modern’ system from progressive Americans outside, but rather they
construct notions of ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ from what they have experienced both
inside and outside the family (ibid.). The question is not about the degree of
acculturation or cultural retention, but the transformational process by which Japanese
Americans creatively contrast ‘Japanese’ and ‘American’ and integrate them into their
own folk model of culture and history. Observing oral kinship autobiographies of
Japanese Americans in Seattle, Yanagisako interprets cultural symbols such as ‘family’,
‘work’, ‘duty’, ‘love’, ‘Japanese’, and ‘American’ in relation to marriage, filial relations,
siblinghood and extended kinship. She concludes that Japanese American kinship holds
itself together and differentiates itself from kinship among other Americans because of a
continuous (re)interpretation of historical roots that results in a shared model of kinship
categorization.

Yanagisako’s idea of a transformational process in which Japanese Americans
negotiate between ‘Japanese’ and ‘American’ and between the past and the present to
(re)construct meanings of “cultural symbols” (1985:244) can be applied to delineating the
dual perspective of Japanese American elderly in Puna. It reveals how they negotiate
between two axes to interpret their plantation memories and to create the meanings of
‘our days’ and ‘nowadays’.

The dichotomy of ‘Japanese’ and ‘American’ is a basic concept for those who
study Japanese Americans. It may be used categorically or structurally: ‘Japanese’ as a
criterion to distinguish Japanese Americans from other ethnic/racial groups, or Japanese Americans as political, social, and economic constituents of America. Whether it is applied from "the native’s point of view" (Geertz 1983) or an observer’s analytical standpoint, this dichotomy is always at the center of discussions on Japanese Americans. When it comes to plantation stories, Japanese American elderly in Puna relate this dichotomy to their dual perspective in complicated ways. They may apply it categorically, structurally, subjectively, and objectively when reflecting upon the plantation days as well as their present lives.

When they tell stories about ‘our days’, the dual perspective play a critical role in presenting their worldview. As I have discussed, they remember Issei cultural characteristics from their interactions with Issei, reconstructing their cultural attributes within the contextual meanings of Japanese words, customs, and practices, moral sense and work ethic, and a style of communicating and socializing. This reconstruction of Issei culture is not just a description of what they experienced in the past, but a meaningful representation of their ‘Japanese’ knowledge that exemplifies their generationally specific cultural perspective.

Japanese American elderly in Puna also reconstruct Issei culture from their perspective as Americans who have an American education, follow an American lifestyle, and communicate primarily in English. Born, raised and currently residing in America, they remember, evaluate, and represent memories of plantation life from an American perspective. Their knowledge of the American ideals of freedom, democracy, and independence, and their use of English are resources for marking Japanese cultural traits. They talk about the hierarchical Issei family and institutional relationships, their
current families and community relationships, and their plantation experiences in English. Encountering new ways of thinking among the younger generation through direct interaction and the mass media, they assume that American culture is ever changing; this is juxtaposed against a supposedly static ‘traditional Issei’ culture, even though they may not be aware that Issei culture is also in process through their American values. Thus, from an ‘American’ perspective, these elderly distinguish ‘our days’ from ‘nowadays’, ‘traditional’ from ‘liberal’, ‘old’ from ‘new’, and ‘Japanese’ from ‘American’, in relating their cultural origins. In other words, their emphasis on ‘Japanese’ in the stories of ‘our days’ is a consequence of their American identity. At the same time, it is a significant way they differentiate themselves from other Americans as well as from younger Japanese Americans. Their dual perspective is thus a fundamental frame of thoughts by which they recognize themselves as an age/generational cohort.

Yanagisako similarly observes Japanese Americans in Seattle:

Japanese Americans have constructed a selective version not only of a traditional Japanese past but of a modern American present. In placing what they conceive as Japanese culture and American culture in symbolic opposition, the Issei and even more so the Nisei have reinterpreted symbols, norms, and forms of action from each culture as the opposites of those from the other. In doing so, they have created a new system of meanings in which the elements of the “American” present are as much a product of this dialectic of reinterpretation as are the elements attached to the “Japanese” past (1985:243).

What Yanagisako calls a ‘dialectic of interpretation’ is quite similar to what I term the ‘dual perspective’ of Japanese American elderly in Puna.\(^\text{11}\) Yanagisako’s argument

\(^{11}\) For example, Yanagisako explains that Nisei synthesis of the American ideal of love and compassion with the Japanese sense of duty and commitment in marriage is a “dialectic of interpretation” (1985:107-108).
explicates how they apply the dichotomy of ‘Japanese’ and ‘American’ to interpret their plantation experiences and express their generational traits.\(^\text{12}\)

**Nostalgia**

When Japanese American elderly in Puna look back on transitions in Puna and contrast the present decline of the Japanese community to its past prosperity that they remember enjoying as the largest ethnic group on the plantation, they invariably express a feeling of loss of the familiar sights of towns and camps as well as the liveliness of the Japanese community.

Today, sugarcane is long gone. The canefields have been taken over by wild bush, turned into new subdivisions, or plowed for cultivation of papayas and flowers. The sugar mill factory, having no sugarcane to grind, is left a desolate part of the landscape marked by two large chimneys.\(^\text{13}\) There are no more rumbling sounds heard from the mill or clouds of red dust raised by cane trucks. Some of the original residents still remain at the Portuguese Camp in Kea‘au and camps in Mountain View, while 8 Mile Camp, 9 Mile Camp, 9 1/2 Mile Camp in Kea‘au and all the camps in Pāhoa and Kapoho

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\(^{12}\) Embree writes about the Nisei in Kona in the 1940s: “With the American way brought into juxtaposition with the Japanese way of doing things, the fact that there is more than one design for living is brought home to every second generation Japanese. As a result both ways are discussed, and even first generation immigrants feel the need of defending the Japanese custom as the best way for Japanese people. This little piece of logic nicely avoids all weighing of the relative merits of the two systems—a thing difficult for any sociologist, let alone a farmer busy raising coffee. The second generation does not always accept the easy rationale of Japanese custom made by their parents, *but they rarely have anything better to offer*. In trying to please the parents and not be un-American at the same time, they try to follow both ways. For instance, even when the marriage is performed according to Japanese style and a good deal of money has been spent on Japanese style dowry, the groom feels that he must buy both an engagement and a wedding ring for his bride” (1941:87, italics added). This ambivalence may be seen as the starting point of the dual perspective of Japanese American elderly in Puna. As youth, they could not help being culturally eclectic in following both ‘Japanese (Issei)’ and ‘American’ ways of doing things. After becoming mature and experienced people, they no longer passively accept the eclecticism, but positively transform and incorporate ‘Japanese (Issei)’ culture into their own cultural lives as Americans.

\(^{13}\) Processing machinery (e.g., the mill, boilers, and centrifuges) was sold to the Fiji Sugar Corporation, Ltd. in 1988 (Campbell and Ogburn 1992). The generators are still in operation to provide electricity to the area.
have been razed. 8 1/2 Mile Camp and Iwasaki Camp have been taken over by recent immigrants from the Philippines. Kapoho Town was covered by lava from the volcanic eruptions in 1960. ‘Ola’a Town was bulldozed to make a way for a new commercial center, consisting of a supermarket, a hardware store, and restaurants. Pāhoa Town maintains its old appearance, but most stores and shops have changed hands. The Kea‘au-Pāhoa road is being widened to a four-lane road, and new Kea‘au elementary and intermediate schools have been built on larger plots of land to accommodate increasing number of students.

Once familiar faces are also gone. Issei have all passed away, and most of the children of Japanese American elderly in Puna have left Puna for jobs in urban areas such as Hilo, O‘ahu, or the U.S. continent. Many former plantation residents also have moved out of Puna due to the land development and family circumstances. The outflow of the Japanese population has led all Japanese language schools to shut down and Buddhist churches to undergo attrition in their congregations. The bon dance, the most popular local annual festival, has also been continually downsized over the last four decades.

Meanwhile, new subdivisions developed since the 1970s such as Fern Areas, Fern Forest, Hawaiian Areas, Hawaiian Beaches, Hawaiian Paradise Park, Leilani Estate, Nānāwale Estate, and Orchidlands Estate are occupied by outsiders from Hilo, Honolulu, and the U.S. continent for affordable property prices.¹⁴ The population of the Puna district has increased from 5,154 in 1970 to 31,335 in 2000 (Hawai‘i County Data Book 1980, US Census 2002). The population of Japanese in Puna has dropped from 2,077 in

¹⁴ Many newcomers are relatively low income families seeking the so-called ‘starting house’ as their first real estates purchase. Others came from the U.S. continents to grow marijuana. See Historical Background in Chapter One.
1970 (40.7 percent of the total population) to 1,282 in 2000 (4.1 percent of the total, except for Japanese in new subdivisions) (ibid.). These data support comments from the elderly that ‘Our sugar plantation community is long gone’.

Japanese American elderly in Puna, observing these changes, remember the liveliness and closeness of the old Japanese community on the plantation. They still hold a sense of belonging to the Japanese community that once maintained a vigorous community spirit and draw the image of the ‘good old’ plantation days from this memory. They evoke a shared sentimental feeling associated with their plantation background. Their retrospection on community life in the ‘good old’ plantation days is a crucial expression and acknowledgment of their generational identity. It connects a personal attachment to past interpersonal relationships with a collective nostalgia for the liveliness and closeness of the old Japanese community.

A seventy-six-year old house wife expressed her nostalgia by saying that the ‘community spirit’ had been lost along the decline of the Japanese community:

July fourth, kind of different, yah. See, like Japanese association. OK, we have a village picnic that we go to the beach. But ever since picnic started...they don’t want to go already. It’s kinda disappeared. They go on their own. Community spirit has disappeared...a lot of them moved away, new people come. Then, subdivisions came out, you know. They have their own, so, and you know, mostly it was centered on our own camps and they weren’t there. That’s why...no more the closeness in our place. Everybody is on their own (Story #0323 Line 3).

The storyteller recalls community life in a camp in Kea‘au in the prewar period and sees that ‘community spirit’ and the ‘closeness in our place’ has been lost. She attributes the loss to Japanese residents who are no longer interested in going out with other families as well as to newcomers who do not know the way of plantation community life. A
seventy-eight-year old housewife and her husband, an eighty-three-year old retired independent farmer, describe how Issei socialized in plantation days:

Wife: Old days, the Japanese everybody went out to all party, party, party. Nowadays people they just mind their own business. They hardly know their neighbors already.

Husband: Old days, Japanese emperor’s birthday, *tenchōsetsu*, all they celebrate. All the Japanese get together, yah. And those days, mostly Japanese, yah, so funny, big party, you know. Those days, all the community party (Story #0506 Line 4-10).

The storytellers, comparing the present Japanese community to an Issei community in Mountain View in the 1920s-30s, contrast the difference between active interpersonal relationships in the communities in the ‘old days’ and the individualistic social relations of ‘these days’. The husband, looking back on Issei parties, notes that as a child he found the eagerness with which Issei socialized even ‘funny’. The stories above indicate that Japanese American elderly in Puna see social relationships in the current Japanese community as inactive and oriented on the nuclear family, whereas the past Japanese community was ‘close’ and ‘active’.¹⁵

The liveliness and closeness of the Japanese community are also often emphasized in plantation stories without comparison to the present situation; “But the fourth of July, summer time, the whole village go down to Mauna Kea pond. You know they have this in Kapoho, they have this pond. We used to call Mauna Kea pond. The fourth of July the whole village used to go there” (Story #0507 Line 2). The storyteller, talking about the ‘Ola’a Town picnic on the fourth of July, stresses that ‘the whole village’ participated in it. Community participation is emphasized in their stories with the use of words such

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¹⁵ While Japanese American elderly in Puna do not see much community spirit or closeness in the present community in Puna, they do not comment negatively on their current social situation. Rather, many of them say that they are comfortable having individualistic relationships with their neighbors, without the meddling social relations that Issei might have had in a past close-knit community.
as 'whole', 'entire', 'all', and 'everybody'. One female elderly, who married into a family in Pāhoa, had two wedding parties: one at her home in Kona and the other in Pāhoa. She describes how the communities on both her side and the groom’s side made her wedding a community event: “One is at my house Kona. Before I leave my house, all the community, all get together. And then, one is H’s house. And you know, those days it was three days, you know” (Story #0611 Line 38). One man also recollects his wedding: “I was brought up in 9 mile camp, see, all the people in the camp came to our party” (Story #0508 Line 3). The storyteller, who married a non-Japanese woman during World War II, explains that he held a wedding at a Christian church, inviting ‘all the people in the camp’, in spite of martial law restrictions on gathering. In stories about ceremonial occasions such as weddings and funerals, Japanese American elderly in Puna commonly emphasize the ‘whole’ participation of Japanese residents and their ‘community spirit’ in the plantation era.

The elderly also recall the strong ties of the Japanese community in everyday plantation life. “But everybody goes together. People in Pāhoa were all close, but nowadays it is different” (Story #0311 Line 2). Talking about the YBA Hall in Pāhoa where Japanese Buddhist residents conducted various religious as well as social activities, the storyteller remembers the liveliness and closeness of Japanese residents in Pāhoa. Other Japanese American elderly connect mutual help among neighbors to a sense of community: “I think the community as a whole is very close because especially our age, depression years, we have to be close to each other. When they have something extra, they come to give you. And that was our way of living” (Story #0509 Line 1). As
I reviewed in Chapter Four, the unity of working people on the plantation was based on shared hardship.

Some talk about a sense of community by pointing out the cooperative relationships between employees of Puna Sugar and the ‘village people’ who consisted of merchants and their family members in town:

Yeah, strong sense of community, very strong. So, plantation workers had something else over the village people. Plantation workers, they had *furo*, community bath, firewood used to come, you know. Like us, we have to buy firewood. But water, we didn’t have to worry about because we, village people, used to help put out fire on the canefield with cane knives. In return, when we are short of water, we could get water from the plantation in our water tank for free. So, village people and plantation help each other. With plantation employees we work together (Story #0510 Line 2).

Growing up in ‘Ola’a Town, as a village person, the storyteller recalls the interconnectedness between the employees of Puna Sugar and the people in town and points out that their bonds were built on dependence upon sugarcane. Although this categorization may be specific to the former ‘village people’, this is another way of expressing a sense of ‘community spirit’.

Even while noting that the Japanese community spirit is vanishing, Japanese American elderly in Puna still feel the closeness of members of the old Japanese community in the present. One camp reunion organizer, talking about making a list of former camp residents, explains their remaining ties:

You better believe because Japanese aren’t difficult to get along. Somehow Japanese socialize with each other. At funerals everyone comes out and they see each other. *Hakujin* [Caucasian] different. *Hakujin* and Portuguese. Portuguese have a lot of fights among siblings. That’s why there are many cases of ‘I don’t talk to my sister’. But Filipinos, mostly, just like Japanese. When somebody dies, they help each other... so that was easy (Story #0511 Line 1).
Describing how she made the list by tracing one household to another through inquiring with former residents, the storyteller emphasizes the persistence of Japanese social relationships in contrast to Caucasians and Portuguese.\textsuperscript{16}

Another woman introduces the local word ‘hippari’ to explain interconnectedness among Japanese: “Hawai‘i, any kind, hippari, we call it. No matter what family you come from, everybody is related as relatives in Hawai‘i” (Story #0512 Line 1). Hippari, presumably based on the Japanese word hiku (to pull, to draw, or to drag, according to Koine 1993), is to trace one’s kin relations back to ancestors in Japan or to extended family networks. According to Japanese American elderly in Puna, almost all of them are related to each other one way or another, and even non-Japanese are often counted in because of the high rate of intermarriage. With the word hippari, they exhibit their extensive interpersonal network both in the past and the present. Their retrospection on Japanese community life is thus not just a tracing of past interpersonal relationships, but a way of defining their plantation origin and peoplehood as an age cohort in the present.

Their shared feeling of loss is a kind of collective nostalgia. According to Millie Creighton, collective nostalgia arises in times of transition in lifestyle and “is part of a collective search for identity which looks backward rather than forward, for the familiar rather than novel, for certainty rather than discovery” (2001:10744). Romanticization of rural life is common in collective nostalgia, and images of rural life evoke a desire to return to a closer bond with nature as well as to reciprocal human relationships idealistically associated with a home village. “The nostalgic emulation of deeply embedded human relationships thought to characterize rural areas, and ‘natural’ life

\textsuperscript{16} Regarding relationships among Japanese neighbors, see my discussion on Neighborhoods in Chapter Three.
styles, involve a quest for community and the desire to affirm a collective identity” (ibid.). For Japanese American elderly in Puna, the Japanese community is a place where they were born and raised as well as a place where they established close interpersonal relationships, or what they call ‘community spirit’, with other Japanese under similar adverse living conditions. Living an independent lifestyle in a transformed community today, they regard the close-knit Japanese community of their memory as an immutable sanctuary where they still feel a sense of home. Therefore, romanticization is inevitable in remembering the Japanese community. The stories of ‘our days’ must be accompanied by deep emotions so that they are continuously told, otherwise the memory of the Japanese community will fall into oblivion. In telling their stories, Japanese American elderly in Puna idealistically project an image of oneness among community members by using the words such as ‘whole’, ‘everybody’, and ‘all’. They also integrate what they believe are unique and special generational characteristics into the phrase ‘our days’.

The collective nostalgia found in plantation stories must be considered separately from the general nostalgia that often involves sentimental longing for the past. As I discussed, the collective memories of these elderly are rooted in economic deprivation and struggles for a better life. They regard these experiences as difficult and never long to return to those days. These elderly are pleased to remember overcoming the hardship of plantation life and enjoy their current living standards (e.g., Story #0401). They accept the transition in community life as a part of modernization. Their collective nostalgia is thus based not on sentimental longing but on shared hardship and cherishing
interpersonal relationships of the old Japanese community. Ubiquitous comments on the adversity of plantation life and the absence of comments suggesting longing for the past proves that their collective nostalgia does not involve a desire to actually return to the past.

The fact of their aging and the generation gap with the younger generation also contribute to their collective nostalgia. Barbara Myerhoff, who studies Jewish elderly at a life care center in southern California, writes:

Center elders required witnesses to their past and present life and turned to each other for this, though it is a role properly filled by the succeeding generation. Lacking suitable heirs to their traditions and stories, they were forced to use peers who, they realized, would perish along with them, and thus could not assure the preservation of what they had witnessed (1980:32).

Myerhoff observes that the Jewish elderly tell their life stories among themselves out of a desire to have the meaningfulness of their life experiences acknowledged. She argues that remembering the past in search of a collective identity is significant for an aged ethnic cohort. Japanese American elderly in Puna, entering old age, also desire to find meaningfulness in their life experiences. Their eagerness to tell plantation stories is in this sense rooted in collective nostalgia; they aim to acknowledge the meaningfulness of their lives as well as leave the stories to younger generations of Japanese Americans who do not and are not able to share their experiences of plantation life. Knowing that their collective memory of close interpersonal relationships in the past Japanese community is particular to their age group, they actively tell these stories to each other at every occasion and create sites for telling their stories so that they can revitalize and

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17 Japanese American elderly in Puna do not long for their past close interpersonal relationships in the neighborhood, either (see Footnote 13).
demonstrate their past interconnectedness. Camp reunions are organized for such purposes. The voice of their collective nostalgia is reproduced in a local newspaper:

You could rely on nearly everybody, and we were all considerate of one another. If someone needed a hand, everyone pitched in to help. All the people were warmhearted and kind, all the wonderful traits that you miss in today’s generations (Hawai‘i Tribune Herald 1996 July 14:8).

Myerhoff also points out the significance of childhood memories when elderly tell about their lives. She explains:

[Elite] may experience the self as it was originally and know beyond doubt that one is the same person as that child, still dwelling within a much-altered body. The integration with earlier states of being surely provides the sense of continuity and completeness that may be counted as an essential developmental task in old age (1982:110).

When Japanese American elderly in Puna remember the close-knit Issei community, they recall what they felt or thought through their childhood eyes. They may comment, for instance, that Issei ways are ‘funny,’ as Story #0506 Line 5. In this moment of re-experiencing, they connect themselves in the past to themselves in the present and gain a sense of continuity in their lives. I argue that collective nostalgia among these Japanese American elderly is based on re-experiencing childhood memories or sensations, especially the interconnectedness of the Japanese community. These childhood memories or sensations are thus a resource for not only cherishing the innocent past, but also defining the nature of their plantation origin and identity.

Childhood memories are significant to collective memory in another way. Creighton points out, “collective nostalgic romanticization time—the time of childhood—has become a place, a place where security and belongingness seemed assured” (2001:10746). Evocation of a sense of security and belonging occurs when one
remembers one’s childhood experiences of significant people in one’s family and community, mothers in particular. A eighty-four-year old retired businesswoman talks about the sense of security that she felt in the past Japanese community:

But I think a person who has a strong sense of security, can have a strong sense of *gaman* [perseverance], too. You have to have the security first. Not only from the family, but from community. Like I told you, we had this little box, in that we all support each other and have boys and girls, more children. And that develops, develops, and develops until it becomes part of you (Story #0613 Line 4-6).

The storyteller, seeing the Japanese family and community as a ‘little box’ in which every adult helped take care of all the children, remembers how she felt a sense of security within the Japanese community of her childhood. She also implies that as one grows up in the ‘little box’, the sense of security eventually fuses into a sense of belonging that assures of being part of the community. For Japanese American elderly in Puna, childhood memories are thus resources for drawing an image of the Japanese community as ‘home’ from which they evoke a sense of identity.

Collective nostalgia is a consequence of the reconstruction of ‘our days’. It is generationally and ethnically specific sentimentalization of the past that is brought up by the desire to feel a sense of completeness as a plantation-raised person as well as by the desire to acknowledge the meaningfulness of plantation experiences. Therefore, their collective nostalgia is a culturally specific type of remembering that mirrors their generational and ethnic identities. Myerhoff dubs this type of remembering "Re-membering":

To signify this special type of recollection, the term “Re-membering” may be used, calling attention to the reaggregation of members, the figures who belong to one’s life story, one’s own prior selves, as well as significant others who are part of the story. Re-membering, then, is a purposive, significant unification, quite different from the passive, continuous fragmentary flickerings of images and
feelings that accompany other activities in the normal flow of consciousness. The focused unification provided by Re-membering is requisite to sense and ordering. A life is given a shape that extends back in the past and forward into the future... Without Re-membering we lose our histories and our selves. Time is erosion, then, rather than accumulation (1982:111).

The collective nostalgia of Japanese American elderly in Puna is Re-membering. It is through the reaggregation of interpersonal relationships in the past Japanese community. By Re-membering, they find the proper way of relating their ‘own prior selves’ with others and define the origin of their peoplehood. Telling stories about community life is an activity of “purposive, significant unification” for the elderly as a generational cohort, and with Re-membering, they collectively give their lives “a shape that extends back in the past and forward into the future,” resisting the erosion of time and the attrition of the meaningfulness of their lives.

**Discussion: Generational Identity**

In this chapter I outlined the generational identity of Japanese American elderly in Puna as made evident in their plantation stories. I demonstrated the generational feature of their dual perspective based on the dichotomy of ‘Japanese’ and ‘American’ and their collective nostalgia for the liveliness and closeness of the past Japanese community. These two aspects of their generational viewpoint seem discrete, but they are integrated in that the elderly link the past and the present. The phrase ‘our days’ does not just refer to old plantation days, but reflects an interpretation of the meaningfulness of their past lives and their interconnectedness as members of an age cohort sharing a plantation background.
CHAPTER SIX
GENDERED IDENTITY

"You've got to get along with the fujinkai (wives' club), that's the first thing you must learn when you become a minister," said Reverend Nishiyama, stirring sugar into his cup of coffee. It was a Monday morning in July 2002 in the large kitchen at Puna Hongwanji Buddhist church where I lived that summer. Twelve fujinkai members and a couple of men were having breakfast at a long shiny kitchen table after the weekly cleaning. Every Monday morning from about six to nine o'clock, fujinkai members come to the church to clean inside the building, arrange flowers on the altar, and prepare breakfast for the volunteers. Usually I was the only man who helped the fujinkai. Male church members often came by to drop off homegrown vegetables to be turned into pickles as part of the fundraising, but rarely took part in the fujinkai's volunteer work. They only bantered with the volunteers but seemed to steer clear of fujinkai business.

Yoshi, a former church president, who had brought daikon [radish] from his farm in Mountain View, smiled and nodded at the Reverend. Fujinkai members, although they must have heard what the Reverend said to me, kept chatting and did not respond. I turned to the Reverend and asked, "Why is the fujinkai so important?" He cleared his throat and said, "Well, all church activities depend on fujinkai's help. From regular Sunday services to the bon dance, I can only do the ceremonial part, and the fujinkai does the rest of it. Of course, men help too, but the fujinkai does the major part, like catering food. Not only that, as long as you have the support of the fujinkai, you can get through any kind of church business." Yoshi nodded again in agreement with the Reverend. "Any church business?" I repeated. "Yes, the fujinkai has a strong influence
on church activities, and as long as the fujinkai is in favor of you, you will be fine no matter what church project you do," said the Reverend.

Fujinkai members were eating pancakes and talking about making pickles. I somehow sensed that they were not going to respond to the Reverend. I turned to Kiyoko and Nancy, who were sitting next to me, and asked, "What do you think about it?" They looked at each other and shrugged their shoulders. Kiyoko looked down at her coffee cup and said, "I don't know." Then, Nancy cheerfully raised her voice and said, "Would you guys like another helping? We have plenty of pancakes left over." The Reverend, Yoshi, and I simultaneously answered, "No, thanks. I'm full already." We smiled at each other. A few seconds later, Yoshi muttered to himself, "Well, I got to unload daikon from my truck." Ann, who was chatting with women at the other end of the table, immediately said, "Yoshi, put them in the sink. We're going to wash them after breakfast." At that moment I was sure that all the fujinkai members had known that the Reverend and I were talking about them, but they intentionally and collectively did not join the conversation or express their feelings or opinions.

Fujinkai members have their own world. They share a certain manner of conducting themselves, although each individual differs in many ways such as speech style, emotional expression, and level of social activity. Every fujinkai member is unique in her personal interactions and traits. Nevertheless, they communicate with each other in a specific way and maintain a boundary between themselves and others, male church members in particular. One of the most salient characteristics of their communication style is that they rarely assert their opinions when they are with others. When they
express their feelings and thoughts in front of others, they do so in an indirect fashion. Their attitude renders an exclusivity to their world that wards off interference from others. Male church members are well aware of and respect this boundary. My observation above exemplifies this point.

Lila Abu-Lughod (1986) observes that Bedouin women communicate with each other by writing poems that contest the ideological power of the Awalad Ali community in Egypt. Fujinkai members similarly create their own world using a distinctive form of communication. The key to reading their communication is to understand their attitude and plantation stories. In this chapter, I first show how they indirectly express their understanding of womanhood through stories of Issei women and men. Second, I discuss their attitude, focusing on how their silence in the public domain meaningfully connects to their gender-specific experiences as ‘Japanese’ women.

During my fieldwork, I met Japanese American elderly women at Puna Hongwanji, Kurtistown Jodo mission, Hilo Hongwanji, Higashi Hongwanji, Puna Congregational Christian church, the Kea‘au senior citizen club, and three life care centers in Hilo. While I conducted one-to-one interviews with some of them, I participated in the fujinkai at Puna Hongwanji in order to listen to their plantation stories and learn their customs and practices in church activities. The fujinkai is the primary source of information for my investigation of plantation-raised women’s identity.

The Puna Hongwanji fujinkai (hereafter ‘the fujinkai’) started in 1909 (The Hawaii Federation of Honpa Hongwanji Buddhist Women’s Association 1989:104). It is the
largest and most active women’s institution in the Puna district. In 2002, the fujinkai
had 154 members from Hilo, Kapoho, Kea‘au, Kurtistown, Mountain View, Pāhoa, and
Volcano. Activities of the fujinkai include catering church events such as the New
Year’s party, the bon dance, and the bazaar, cleaning church facilities, hospital
visitations, and providing a Buddhist education for children. Besides attending Sunday
services, fujinkai members go to Puna Hongwanji every Monday to clean and whenever
help is needed for church events.

The Fujinkai Survey (Appendix B) shows that the fujinkai consists of married,
unmarried, divorced, and widowed women (Q14). Most members were born in Hawai‘i
(Q1). Their average age is 75.3 years old (Q2). Roughly half of the members were
children of Japanese immigrants (Q3, 4), and approximately ninety percent of them are
married with grown children (Q14, 22). More than half of these women are
grandmothers (Q22-2). As experienced, long-time residents in the local community,
fujinkai members are familiar with plantation life as well as present happenings in the
area. They also know other Japanese American elderly women through an interpersonal
network that covers the Kea‘au senior citizen club, other churches, and life care centers.

Soon after I started fieldwork at the fujinkai, I found a need to include an analytical
approach in addition to a discourse-centered approach in investigating the gendered
identity of these women. While a few women allowed me to interview them and talked
readily about their plantation experiences, the majority of fujinkai members held back.
They expressed themselves and spoke freely only with their intimates, family members,
and close friends. Their silence in the public domain was salient but problematic for

1 The Puna Hongwanji fujinkai merged with the Kapoho fujinkai in 1955 and with the Pāhoa fujinkai in
discourse analysis, yet at the same time it requires examination. Therefore, I take two approaches. First, I employ a discourse-centered approach in examining stories told by fujinkai members as they relate to their gendered identity. Second, considering information gleaned from participant observation, a literary analysis of works of Japanese American women writers, and findings from the discourse analysis, I delve into the relationship between their silence and gendered identity.

Stories

When fujinkai members tell stories about their plantation experiences, their memories of Issei women and men play a major part in their characterization of their lives. If their mothers or fathers were Issei, fujinkai members associate their distinctive gendered experiences with expectations Issei had about men's and women's roles. About eighty percent of fujinkai members had either an Issei mother or father, or both (the Fujinkai Survey Q3, 4), and their stories commonly center on episodes with Issei. Reading these stories, I explore how fujinkai members relate their womanhood to their identity as plantation-raised Japanese American women. First, I discuss the significance of the image of Issei women in plantation stories, and second, I demonstrate the context of their stories about Issei men, in which they present themselves today as experienced mothers and wives.

Issei Women

Memories

Fujinkai members begin stories by remembering their childhood experiences at home. Having meals with their family members and taking a bath in turn are popular starting points (Story #0601). From these beginnings, they go on to describe their
observations of the role of each family member, including father, mother, brothers, sisters, and themselves. A focal point is the family hierarchy rooted in Issei culture: “My father is the head man” (Story #0601 Line 10); “All in order” (Story #0601 Line 22); and “Real Japanese style” (Story #0601 Line 26). Whether Issei culture is taken positively or negatively depends upon the individual as well as the context of the stories. When gender inequality is associated with Issei culture, the story is likely to be told negatively. When it is about moral codes concerning respect for elderly and group harmony, the story tends to be told positively. One comment, “I believe in traditions” (Story #0601 Line 28), is an example of the latter.

Episodes about how Issei mothers took care of big families are an essential part of these stories. The Fujinkai Survey indicates that the average number of people in their families was eight with 5.4 siblings per household (Q5, 6). Memories of big families such as “There were twelve or thirteen people in my family” (Story #0601 Line 10) and “ten children” (Story #0602 Line 8) are repeatedly connected to describing how Issei mothers struggled to cook, wash, nurse, and clothe their children (Story #0602 Line 22; Story #0603). The burden of washing clothes for their children (Story #0602 Line 8-18) or for single Filipino workers (Story #0602 Line 10) is often pointed out. Others took sewing jobs, or raised vegetables or livestock in their backyard to contribute to family finances. Some also worked in the canefields.

A premise underlying these stories is that Issei women suffered from the adverse economic situation. Fujinkai members remember that from the 1920s to the 1940s, when Issei were struggling to raise sugarcane to make a living, Issei women worked hard and rarely took a break from work and daily chores (Story #0602 Line 3-26). Issei women
were so occupied with taking care of their families that they did not even have “time
to think” (Story #0601 Line 32). The image of hard working Issei women with no
breaks, no holidays, and no fun time, and living in deprivation remains embedded in the
memories of fujinkai members.

When fujinkai members contemplate how Issei women felt about their children,
you often become emotional, expressing affection and sympathy for their mothers and
grandmothers. In most cases, fujinkai members assume that Issei women felt maternal
love for them, based on their own experiences of motherhood. Story #0602 Line 26-30 is
about an Issei mother’s retirement. The storyteller, remembering her Issei mother
wanting to stay with her children, who are now married and independent, notes that her
mother always wanted the “feeling of having her children around.” Story #0604 Line 10-
12 describes how the storyteller’s mother was happy to come to Hawai‘i. The storyteller
understands that her mother’s struggle during plantation days paid off when her mother
said, “Such hardship was nothing,” and that her mother feels “happy” that her grown
children have taken her on a trip to South America and her home village in Japan. Story
#0605 Line 8-10 tells of the unfortunate events that Issei women had to endure, including
their pain when their sons left to become soldiers during World War II. The storyteller
points out their helplessness and sorrow: “They cannot help anything about it,” “It is the
hardest for the heart of mothers,” and “Mothers’ hearts must have been hurting.” The
maternal love of Issei women for their children is a significant theme in these stories and
is seen as the source of Issei women’s perceived greatness.

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2 Men also become emotional when they talk about similar memories of their Issei mothers.
Strengths

Fujinkai members invariably point out physical and internal strengths of Issei women. Issei women were ‘tough’ and ‘strong’ in supporting big families (Story #0606 Line 2-4; Story #0601 Line 2). This is the bottom line in all stories about Issei women. However, each story may give a different impression of their strengths, depending on the individual storyteller. While fujinkai members commonly find strength in their perseverance, some refer to their efforts in negative terms: “All those years she was a slave, yah” (Story #0607 Line 3), while the others dramatize the stories in a humorous and uplifting fashion (Story #0603).

Physical strength is attributed to Issei women as mothers of big families as well as diligent workers and homemakers. It is commonly told that Issei women bore many children (Story #0602 Line 8; Story #0608). They kept working during pregnancy until just before delivery and resumed working soon after giving birth (Story #0608). Some stories point out that Issei women were never free from washing diapers and that they were always carrying an infant due to frequent childbirths every couple of years (Story #0602 Line 24; Story #0608). Fujinkai members also underscore their physical strength when describing their daily chores and work in the canefield.

Their internal strength is often emphasized as, “There was steel in her character” (Story #0609 Line 6), and “She was the ‘rock’ yah, in the family” (Story #0601 Line 32). Fujinkai members define Issei women’s internal strength as perseverance and determination in carrying out their roles as mothers and wives. The stories fall into several patterns which illustrate perseverance and determination.

(1) How Issei women struggled with physically difficult tasks.
(2) How they sacrificed their own pleasure for the family: “She was not the one who would participate in dance” (Story #0601 Line 32); “She didn’t never have that much time to have fun with” (Story #0602 Line 8); and “She might have wanted to see a movie” (Story #0605 Line 8).

(3) How they accepted women’s subordinate position: “She always taught us, when you serve rice, the father first” (Story #0601 Line 14); “She was very subservient” (Story #0601 Line 32); “She has no mind of her own” (Story #0604 Line 4); and “They are subservient to her husband and everything” (Story #0609 Line 8).

(4) How they quietly undertook their duties: “I never hear her complaining” (Story #0604 Line 12) and “No whining” (Story #0610 Line 4).

These four points—struggle with work, self-sacrifice, acceptance of subordination, and quietness—are associated with perseverance and determination when fujinkai members talk about the internal strength of Issei women.

Internal strength is considered part of the ethos of Issei women that fujinkai members believe is rooted in ‘Japanese’ culture. Stories #0604 and #0601 exemplify this point. In Story #0604 Line 4, the storyteller describes her mother as docile and obedient to her husband as if “she had no mind of her own.” This submissiveness is not interpreted as weakness, on the contrary, it is seen as strength in that her mother suppresses herself and sticks to the “old Japanese way” that insists “it is a women’s duty to follow the husband” (ibid.). In other words, the mother is strong enough to remain docile and obedient and fulfill the culturally defined duties of a ‘Japanese’ mother. The

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3 They do not relate Issei women’s physical strength to ‘Japanese’ culture as much as internal strength.
storyteller also sees strength in her will and bravery when the mother “grab the chance” (Story #0604 Line 8) to have a better life in Hawai‘i than in Japan. Recollecting her mother’s comment, “Such hardship was nothing” (Line 10), the storyteller expresses her mother’s strong will and determination in going through anticipated hardship, including playing the ‘traditional Japanese woman’s role.

Story #0601 also illustrates Issei women’s perseverance and determination. When the storyteller’s father took responsibility for the family, her mother patiently followed him according to “the way Japanese women should be” (Line 32). Her strength is found in “strict” (Line 14) self-restraint to the “order” (Line 4) or “system” (line 20) that the storyteller believes is important for family management. However, when her mother took over her husband’s responsibilities, she “carried on” (Line 32) the tasks without crumbling. She became a “rock in the family” (Line 32) and challenged herself to learn to write her name in English, going “a little more beyond following my father” (Line 32). The storyteller sees her mother’s strength in her determination to “be the leader of the family” (Line 32).

The Image of Issei Women

Analysis of these stories demonstrates that fujinkai members draw an image of Issei women that focuses on their cultural background, hard work, and maternal love for their children. Fujinkai members emphasize their physical strength as mothers of big families as well as their internal strength in persevering with determination to play the role of ‘traditional Japanese’ women. Most fujinkai members affirm Issei women’s devotion to the family and respect them as great mothers. I argue that fujinkai members
construct an image of ideal ‘Japanese’ women in their storytelling, thereby establishing a fixed point about which they locate their womanhood.

It is construction because most fujinaki members ignore Issei women who do not fit this image. For example, the Fujinkai Survey indicates that eight members grew up with less than five family members in their households (Q5, 6), so not all Issei women had big families. There were also Issei women who did not suffer under poor living conditions: “There were a few rich Issei women” (Story #0605 Line 8). Marginalizing Issei women who do not fit the ideal model is part of the construction of the image of great Issei women.4 Marilyn Iwama, reviewing texts of Japanese American writers, argues that they often characterize Issei women and men as “the most traditional or the most Japanese” based on Japanese American assumptions of “behaviors and norms that they hold to be naturally fitting” to Issei women and men (1998:23, italics added).5 This assumption of ‘naturally fitting’ Issei characteristics is also a constructive feature of the image of Issei women.

The respectful image of Issei women overlooks certain aspects. Laurie Mengel, referring to Kitano (1969:131) and Ichioka (1977:9), points out the extreme contrast between two stereotypical images of Issei women as either mothers “represented as a uniform generational group coming from a homogenous culture with identical values and

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4 It should be noted that the respectful image of Issei women stands on a consensus of fujinkai members (see the Fujinkai Survey Q14). There is no doubt that Issei women’s sacrifice, struggle, and devotion to the family and community are remarkable. My argument here is that the image of Issei women is an outcome of a cultural process in which the Japanese Americans created this image by selecting certain memories of Issei women by reflecting on their own present socioeconomic circumstances. It is not my intention to argue whether this image is ‘true-authentic’ or ‘untrue-fake’.

5 Kotani points to a more realistic image of Issei women. He writes that “the quiet Japanese working women, who demonstrated a remarkable toughness in field labor, also proved to be less obedient and tractable than they appeared” and introduces a story that describes how Issei women loafed on the job in the cane field (1985:28).
ideas,” or as prostitutes “presented as ignorant bumpkins who were kidnapped, tricked, coerced, or sold for sexual slavery” (1997:19). Whether they are ‘good’ dutiful mothers or ‘bad’ manipulated whores, Issei women are depicted as:

oppressed and manipulated by the expectations of others, unable to break out of their isolation by their inability to become anything but stagnant bearers of a backwards, traditional culture...while the martyred quality of the picture bride is to be admired and revered, the tragic image of the whore is to be pitied and dismissed (ibid.:20).

After investigating Issei women’s divorce records and oral histories, Mengel concludes that “the reality of Japanese immigrant women, illuminated by the divorce records, was far different and more complex than that of the binary picture bride/whore stereotypes” (ibid.:35). According to her, these stereotypes prevail because Issei women who do not fit socially expected models are ostracized as deviants and never brought to light; in reality, Issei women sometimes chose not to be passive and dutiful (ibid.). Mendel’s study shows that the collective image of Issei women is subject to a selective process in which misfit Issei women are left out or labeled as unconventional, eccentric, exceptional, unexpected, or undesirable.

The process of creating an image of Issei women is recognizable not only in grassroots storytelling among fujinkai members, but also in prevailing discourse in the mass media and academia. I regard this process as a cultural phenomenon particular to Japanese Americans. To be specific, it is a symbolic process in which Issei women are historicized to authenticate the Japanese American ‘heritage’. In order to elaborate on the cultural invention involved in imaging Issei women, I examine public discourse on the subject.
The Construction of the Image of Issei Women in Public Discourse

Focusing on the image of Issei women is an integral part of public discourse about Japanese Americans not only in Hawai‘i, but also on the U.S. continent. The ‘picture bride’, which is featured in a documentary (Uchinanchu, United Okinawan Association of Hawai‘i 1981), a novel (Picture Bride, Uchida 1997), and a movie (Picture Bride, Miramax Film 1995), may be the most popular story that contributes to the creation of the image of Issei women. Academic writings also shed light on Issei women who came to Hawai‘i and elsewhere in the United States. Kitano introduces the harsh Issei lives with the comments:

Life was intolerable. Everything was different. My husband was not much help. Cooking, shopping, cleaning, washing dishes and washing clothes, taking care of the babies—many Issei women remember getting up after childbirth to go to work in the fields—these are some of the things I remember. *Hon-to ni ku-ro shi-ta* [We truly suffered] (1969:64).

The Japanese American National Museum similarly describes Issei women: “They worked from early morning until late at night, laboring in the fields all day and then cooking and doing laundry for the bachelors in their camp to earn money—all the while taking care of her children” (1997:17). Patsy Saiki historicizes the past 100 years of Issei women, focusing on their struggles and wisdom for survival (1985:67-69).

The process of turning an image of Issei women into a part of Japanese American ‘history’ in a national context is obvious in recent academic work. The most comprehensive is Eileen Sarasohn’s (1998) *Issei Women: Echoes from Another Frontier*. This book relates the life stories of eleven Issei women on the West coast and demonstrates their struggles, eventual success, and moral prerogatives such as discipline, filial duty, compliance, self-reliance, and endurance. Sarasohn effectively inserts her
own supplemental descriptions of Issei women’s voices to enhance the readability of the book, while preserving Issei women’s viewpoints toward their own lives. She writes at the end; “their lives are a testimony to excellence without a need for personal glorification, and they find contentment in having constructed a firm foundation for future generations. Their words echo through the generations that have followed” (ibid.:227-228). Acknowledging and praising Issei women’s contributions to future Japanese Americans, Sarasohn historicizes the image of Issei women by turning their voices into preserved testimony that “echo[es] through the generations that have followed” (ibid.). Sarasohn’s work shows the significance of the image of Issei women in making a ‘history’ for Japanese Americans.

Okihiro (1991) and Mei Nakano (1990) also describe Issei women. Introducing hole hole bushi (plantation work songs) written by Japanese immigrants, Okihiro presents an Issei women’s lament.

It’s starting to pour
There goes my laundry
My baby is crying
And the rice just burned (Okihiro 1991:32).

He explains:

Women commonly worked in the fields up to the day of delivery, took their babies to work, and left the infants at the field’s edge under makeshift shelters to shield them from the sun and from biting insects. Women’s hands, alternately hardened by gripping a hoe and softened by washing clothes, cradled their newborn babes, cooked, and sewed, patched, and ironed clothing for their families (ibid.).

Juxtaposing hole hole bushi to the blues rooted in the African American heritage, Okihiro turns the image of Issei women drawn in hole hole bushi into a part of national history:

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6 Hole hole bushi is a term derived from combining the Hawaiian hole hole (the work of stripping dried cane leaves) with the Japanese bushi (tune) (Okihiro 1991:29).
"The beginnings of hole bushi locate the germination of a people, neither Japanese nor European American, but uniquely indigenous and American, deeply rooted and with green leaves" (ibid.:33).

Nakano (1990) describes Issei women's devotion and self-sacrifice to their children with the term 'legacy'. She uses a rhetorical technique to picture Issei women:

We have seen a portrait of a woman standing beside her spouse and a large brood of children. The garment she wears is most likely the only "dress up" garment she owns. She has subordinated her own wants and needs for those of her children so that they could present themselves in the best possible light to the world outside her own. Apart from running her household, she has toiled as an unpaid worker outside. Or, she has earned a few dollars by doing piece work at home, by working in the fields or fisheries or by cleaning other people’s houses. She has tried to instill in her children a sense of duty and responsibility and has transmitted a sense of the value of education. She has also passed on the inclination to work hard and to persevere in the face of adversity (ibid.:69).

**Picturing** the imaginary figure of an Issei woman from her detailed description of Issei women in the previous part of her book, Nakano interweaves devotion and self-sacrifice into the image. By emphasizing their role as mothers, Nakano transforms the lives of Issei women into a legacy. Furthermore, as Okihiro does, Nakano argues that Issei women's experiences should be seen as a part of national history: "It seems required of this account to sum up the legacy they left for the contributions that Issei women made toward the survival and success of their progeny, and ultimately to the country" (ibid.).

In other words, through the process of historicizing Issei women for the Japanese American heritage as well as American history, both Okihiro and Nakano try to transform the image of powerless immigrant mothers into a powerful symbol not only in the gendered context of Japanese American women and men, but also in the racial context of
the relationship between minority Japanese versus majority white Americans in the United States.

As the writings of Sarasohn, Okihiro, and Nakano exhibit, the image of Issei women is shaped not as a stereotypical description of female Japanese immigrants, but as an icon of the great mother to which Japanese Americans attach their ancestral origin as well as their history. Also, the construction of the image of Issei women is oriented both inside and outside the Japanese American community. As I pointed out, the construction of the image is concerned with power relations between Japanese American women and men as well as between the Japanese American community and American society. This public discourse is thus a political construction for recognition of Japanese American history and identity.

The Image of Issei Women and Gendered Identity

When fujinkai members tell stories about Issei women, they also represent their own womanhood as plantation-raised Japanese American women. Their characterization of Issei women is based on an idealized image of 'Japanese' women. Some aspects of Issei women are incorporated into their own self-images, while others are rejected by being ignored. Yamamoto analyzes Japanese American daughters' narratives about their Issei mothers and states that "it is all too easy to forget that representations of mothers and maternity are mediated by their [daughters'] narrative authority" (1999:152). In the case of fujinkai members, their 'narrative authority' over the construction of the image of Issei women hinges upon an idea of womanhood that fujinaki members hold as their gendered identity.
To outline the gendered identity of fujinkai members based on their images of Issei women, I concentrate on motherhood because it is where the lives of fujinkai members, who also lived through the plantation days as mothers, intersect with those of Issei women. At this intersection, their gendered identity is observable in their biological roles as mothers as well as in the cultural and social positions of ‘mothering’ that are connected to a set of gendered customs, practices, and beliefs in rearing and caring for children. Considering that motherhood is not universal but is rooted in specific socioeconomic and cultural situations, I explore the motherhood of fujinkai members in relation to their interactions with Issei women, acquisition of ‘Japanese’ cultural values, and experiences in the socioeconomic environment of the plantation. In addition, the fact that their stories are told in hindsight, after having completed the obligation of mothering themselves, is an important context for understanding their sense of ‘motherhood’ and gendered identity.

As I discussed previously, fujinkai members emphasize Issei women’s strengths. When they become mothers themselves, they find the value of perseverance and determination and incorporate this value into their own attitudes. Story #0611 Line 50-60 and Story #0612 Line 9-16 show that fujinkai members went through the same sort of hardships as Issei women did. Although fujinkai members had neither as many children

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7 I am aware that I ignore women who do not have the mothering experience in this discussion. The Fujinkai Survey shows that forty-two women have children and nine women did not answer the question (Q25-1, 25-2). I have no information about how many fujinkai members do not have children.

8 To distinguish from the father’s responsibility toward children, I use the term ‘mothering’ to signify the maternal practice of nurturing and socializing children. Nancy Chodorow defines women’s ‘mothering’ as a fundamental constituting feature of the sexual division of labor that is structurally justified by “institutional arrangements” and “ideological formation” (1978:32). Taking a psychoanalytical approach, she argues that mothering is “neither a product of biology nor of intentional role-training,” but an element that reproduces gender in the social organization by delineating the concepts of masculinity and femininity in the mother-daughter and mother-son relationships (ibid.:7).
nor as many chores as Issei mothers had, they still had to struggle throughout their mothering years (the Fujinkai Survey Q23-1). Living with their parents-in-law (Q20-1, 20-2) also affected some of their mothering experiences. When fujinkai members remember these difficulties and talk about how they encouraged themselves, they invariably point out the significance of the value of perseverance and determination, using the Japanese term *gaman*; “to endure, persist, persevere, or to do one’s best in times of frustration and adversity” (Hirose 2001:170). They explain that Issei women taught them *gaman* as an important quality in a ‘Japanese’ way of life. It is a well-known Japanese term among fujinkai members (Q26).

I regard the concept of *gaman* as a critical element that links fujinkai members with Issei women, and their motherhood with their image of Issei women. Their shared understanding of *gaman* lies in valuing perseverance and determination in playing the role of mother. To explicate the meaning of *gaman* within its context is to outline their gendered identity in relation to their historical situation. When I asked fujinkai members to explain the word *gaman*, they responded as follows: “Young girls, no more *gaman*”; “Japanese women have what they call *gaman*”; “Japanese women do *gaman*”; and “Other nationality, no *gaman*. “ Although their expressions differ one from another, *gaman* is a point by which they distinguish themselves from others, a trait they view as particular to mature Japanese American women.

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9 The Fujinkai Survey Q25-1 and Q25-2 indicate that eighty-five percent of fujinkai members have had an average number of three children, whereas their mothers took care of an average number of 5.4 children (Q5). Also, their material lives improved after the 1940s. As electricity was installed in Puna, washing machines, refrigerators, electric ovens/stoves, and sewing machines came into use, which reduced the burden of their chores.
While Japanese American men use *gaman* in its general meaning (see Hirose’s definition above), fujinkai members give this word a gender-specific meaning. In telling about their experience of mothering, *gaman* signifies a mother’s perseverance and determination in dealing with chores, work, and family relationships for the sake of the children. In other words, it is an underlying quality Issei women and fujinkai members drew on to overcome or endure problems involved in fulfilling the obligations of mothering.

One fujinkai member explains that “when you have the *gaman*, you hang in there, stick to it, and *gaman* to overcome whatever the problem” (Story #0613 Line 4). Another fujinkai member comments, “You *gaman* and stay in a marriage for the sake of the children and to save face” (from the Fujinkai Survey answer sheet). No matter what problems they have, Japanese mothers “hang in there” or “stick to it” (Story #0614 Line 4) to keep the family together, allowing their children’s needs to supersede their own. This is the core meaning of *gaman* that fujinkai members internalized from their image of Issei women and externalized as their own values. *Gaman* may require that a mother endure unfavorable relationships with her husband and in-laws by holding herself back. *Gaman* may necessitate suppressing her anger or sadness and taking no retaliatory action against gender discrimination in the family and community.10 *Gaman* may prevent her from blaming her adversity on anyone, including her parents, husband, and other family and community members, in order to sustain group conformity.11 *Gaman* may encourage her not to give up on family life “no matter how hard the work, no matter how deep the

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11 Sarasohn writes about *gaman* and Issei women: “Shizu [a picture bride] accepted her burdens as a child without complaint and simply endured. Shizu never blamed her parents for her lot in life and spoke of her father with respect and gratitude” (1998:57).
ache in their heart, no matter how many twists and turns they faced in life” (Japanese American National Museum 1997:17). To exercise *gaman* is, therefore, to maintain considerable perseverance and determination in confronting and enduring adversity to raise her children, even when it seems a negative sacrifice among fujinkai members.12

Fujinkai members emphasize the value of *gaman* by pointing to its origin in Issei maternal love. While some scholars relate *gaman* to the general Issei behavior of suppressing emotion (e.g., Kitano 1969:109), fujinkai member view the nature of *gaman* not in ‘doing *gaman*’ itself, but its motivation out of maternal love for children. The phrase ‘for the sake of the children (*kodomo no tame ni*)’, which expresses Issei maternal as well as paternal sacrifice,13 is critically felt among fujinkai members and infiltrates descriptions of their own motherhood. One fujinkai member explicates the significance of Issei maternal sacrifice: “Issei in the old days sacrifice, very frugal, very, very frugal. They did without things for the sake of their children” (Story #0605 Line 8). Another woman comments, “We [mothers] think about them [children] first, before we think about ourselves” (Story #0614 Line 2). This represents their understanding of the phrase ‘for the sake of the children’ (see also Story #0615 Line 2).

Fujinkai members exercised *gaman* in their mothering years not because it was an enforced ‘Japanese’ custom, but because they valued it themselves. They associate it with the maternal love that they experienced through being mothered by Issei women as well as through mothering their own children. Fujinkai members today enshrine the

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12 Sarasohn sees some aspects of Issei women’s *gaman* in a negative light, but writes that “The issei women did not consider *gaman* or endurance of difficult times a negative sacrifice. She had been trained to expect *kurō* [severe physical or emotional hardship] as a lesson in life” (1998:146).

13 Nakano explains that “the Issei were motivated by a profound commitment to the family: ‘*Kodomo no tame ni*’ (for the sake of the children) became almost a moral imperative for most immigrants” (1990:37-38).
value of *gaman* in both the image of Issei women and in their own gendered identity as mothers.

Issei culture has had a significant influence upon their image of the ideal ‘Japanese’ mother. Nevertheless, fujinkai members do not entirely base their own womanhood and gendered identity on this image. They look at their gender from a perspective that takes into consideration present social and cultural contexts. In other words, they delineate their womanhood and gendered identity in their own right. While fujinkai members maintain *gaman* as a ‘Japanese’ cultural value, they refuse to accept other aspects of Issei culture such as the gender hierarchy: “We’re not subservient. We fight like dogs” (Story #0609 Line 8), and “I wouldn’t accept American men like that. I say ‘Good-bye, *sayonara*’.” (Story #0610 Line 10). This indicates that fujinkai members’ womanhood and gendered identity are an outcome not of passively following the image of Issei women, but of a process in which they actively interpret, transform, and incorporate selected parts of Issei culture while reflecting on women’s status in current American society.14

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14 Historical situations that fujinkai members take into consideration are different from those of Japanese American women on the U.S. continent in terms of the absence of racial factors. Race is a critical factor for Japanese American women on the U.S. continent in looking at Issei mother-American daughter relationships (e.g., Cheung 1993; Lim 1990; Yamamoto 1999). Several literary critics offer informative analyses of female Japanese American writers’ perspectives on their Issei mothers by focusing on their racial experiences in American society. These writers, identifying themselves as a racial minority in the U.S. and daughters of Japanese immigrants, experience dilemmas between ‘Japanese’ and ‘American’ values and between identities of ‘Japanese’ and ‘American’ women. After going through these dilemmas, they discover an undeniable ‘Japanese’ identity that they have unknowingly internalized from their Issei mothers.
Fujinkai members who have experiences of living with Issei men invariably state that Issei men had a significant impact in shaping their thoughts and behavior as women. Their stories suggest that interactions with Issei men in daughterhood left both positive and negative memories. While in some stories Issei men are characterized as arrogant, drunken, lazy, and violent, in other stories they are depicted as kind, diligent, wise, attentive, intelligent, and peaceful. Unlike the image of Issei women, impressions of Issei men vary from one story to another and are not generalizable. Nonetheless, most stories include the top-down relationship between Issei men and their daughters and wives, no matter how they depict Issei men. As a first step of analysis, I demonstrate this point by presenting how fujinkai members see the absolute position of Issei men in the family. My analysis employs the terms ‘authority’, ‘discipline’, ‘belief’, ‘strictness’, ‘leadership’, and ‘privilege’ in order to sort out the portions of the stories that indicate gender hierarchy based on Issei culture.

Stories #0619, #0611, and #0616 are told by a woman whose parents were both Issei. She was born in Kona in 1918 and married into a Japanese household in Pāhoa in 1938. She still lives in Pāhoa. She tells her experiences of accepting an arranged marriage and doing chores in her husband’s household, followed by a ‘bathing’ episode (#0619). First she describes her father’s authority over her marriage in that he determined who she would marry and forced her to marry: “You have to get married”

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15 “A Japanese household” means a household originated by Issei.
Her father also disciplined her to become a 'good' wife:

"My father said, 'Once you as a bride go into groom's family, never come back and step in my house, even they fire you. Even though they cook you or fire you, don't come back'" (Story #0611 Line 44). Her father taught her to devote herself to her marital family, no matter how difficult it might be. He also implied that she would no longer belong to 'his house' once she married. She also learned beliefs in women's impurity and their supernatural effects from her father: "Women don't go in the bath tub [furo] first. It will be defiled" and "He don't want any women to walk over the tools. It is going to crack when women step over it" (Story #0619 Line 3). She describes her father as strict and privileged: "My father was strict. Women don't go in a bath tub first. My father has to be the first" (Story #0619 Line 3).

Stories #0617 and #0618 are told by a woman whose parents are both Issei. She was born in 'Ola'a in 1920 and grew up in 'Ola'a Town. Her father was a shoemaker who managed a shoestore. After marriage she moved from 'Ola'a to Hilo. She tells how her father managed the family business, recalling her father's words. Again, she emphasizes his strictness in forcing his children to speak Japanese: "My father was very strict. My friends used to dread to come my house. They used to get scared of my father" (Story #0617 Line 1). Her father also trained her to become a 'good' wife: "And he used to say, 'A bride who speaks something wrong is going to be returned'. He always told us, 'A bride should be careful, if she takes a bath before the father [father-in-law], she is going to be kicked out'" (Story #0617 Line 3). Her father taught her to speak correctedly to her husband and father-in-law, and to behave properly as a bride by bathing

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16 Story #0616 indicates that her mother also has this authority.
in the correct order. His sense of discipline was strong: "My father say, 'Human beings must keep studying until you die once you are born'" (Story #0618 Line 11). She, like the previous storyteller, points out father's privileged position: "My father takes a bath first, and everybody follows him in order" (Story #0618 Line 3). As head of the family, her father maintains authority over the entire family: "He used to be oyaji [the Old Man (Benedict 1946:122)]. That's why he control everything, actually" (Story #0618 Line 15).

Both storytellers talk about their fathers' authority over family matters such as marriage and family business, their strictness in disciplining them to become 'good' brides, and their privilege in taking a bath first. The stories suggest that both fathers treat their daughters as belonging to their husbands' families after marriage and believe that a bride must behave properly so that she will be allowed to remain a member of the marital family.

As daughters, they had to obey or accommodate their fathers' authority, strictness, privilege, and belief in a gender hierarchy, regardless of what opinions or preferences they had. The comments, "It was so sad to come to a strange place" (Story #0611 Line 8) and "No choice, no choice" (Story #0611 Line 28) show that they had to obey their fathers' decisions about their marriage, irrespective of their own feelings. Their fathers' decisions were final and irrefutable: "I cannot answer back to father" (Story #0611 Line 28).

Their fathers were the boss of the family, the authority over all the children. This was something that they learned to accept as normal. "But I had that habit already.

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17 Regarding the 'privilege' of taking a bath, Glenn comments that "Going first to bathe was a symbolic indicator of privilege in the Japanese home" (1986:202).
Women don’t go in a bath first. I used to go the last and the last person has to wash, so I have to do that” (Story #0619 Line 3). “He used to be oyaji. My father tell my brother what to do. That’s how it work. But he was a very smart man, even though his body was small” (Story #0618 Line 15).

The former storyteller acquiesces to her father with resentment, while the latter has a less negative attitude about his leadership. Obedience to the father is the core of both stories, however, and this is a common feature of fujinkai members’ stories about Issei men. In some cases Issei men impose their commands on daughters and wives; in other cases, they persuade the family to follow their lead. No matter what image of Issei men is presented in these stories, the underlying theme is a top-down relationship between Issei men and their daughters and wives. This narrative structure sustains the stories, whether about relationships between arrogant men and submissive women, or leading men and obedient women. While “No choice, no choice. My father gave me away” (Story #0611 Line 28) exhibits a daughter’s submission, “He taught us it, and I always remember this” (Story #0618 Line 11) shows a daughter’s appreciation of her father.¹⁸

Both storytellers associate their fathers’ behavior with ‘Japanese’ culture and situate the father-daughter relationship in contemporary American society. Their comments, such as “Not like these days, yah. Just like old Japan, I guess” (Story #0611 Line 48) and “He used to be oyaji” (Story #0618 Line 15) indicate that they juxtapose an ‘old Japanese’ way against contemporary American trends. The top-down relationship

¹⁸ During my fieldwork, I never came across stories of overt resistance to the father by daughters. However, Embree records two stories of daughter’s resistance in Kona (on the other side of the island from Puna). “One girl eloped a while ago and her family hasn’t forgiven her yet, so that years later the girl and her parents still do not see each other. Another girl, an adopted daughter, eloped twenty years ago with a farmer’s son (who later became a storekeeper). Ever after neither foster parent would approve the marriage” (1941:75).
and emphasis on 'Japanese' culture permeate the stories about Issei men told by fujinkai members.

Context

To outline the relationship between the gendered identity of fujinkai members and their memories of Issei men, I look into the context of these stories and examine the significance of telling stories about Issei men and the gender hierarchy in the family. Considering telling stories about Issei men as a form of representation of womanhood distinctive to fujinkai members, I discuss how they integrate their rather bitter experiences of being obedient to Issei men into their present sense of womanhood as mature plantation women.

Most Japanese American elderly women frown at their memories of sexist Issei men who were believed to possess excessive authority over choosing their daughters’ life partners, their strict disciplinary measures in producing good brides, and their gender-based privileges over their wives, daughters, and daughters-in-law. Fujinkai members regard this image as a remnant of old Japanese tradition that is unacceptable to Americans. A comment, “I know Japanese men, very difficult to deal with. They are self-centered, everything is supposed to be for them, right? I wouldn’t accept American men like that. I say ‘Good-bye, sayonara’” (Story #0610 Line 10), supports this point. Another fujinkai member states, “Well, I think, they [Issei] brought customs from Japan. Men, men are superior to women, and women should be absolutely submissive

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19 Issei fathers had authority not only over any arranged marriages, but also over love marriages. While a love marriage was more popular than an arranged marriage among fujinkai members (thirty-four love marriages to eight arranged ones: the Fujinkai Survey Q18), the women still needed approval from their parents (especially their fathers’ authorization) to follow formal wedding procedures (e.g., have go-betweens and exchange gifts between families). Yanagisako also observes parental authority over children’s marriage: “Toward the end of the prewar era Nisei marriage arrangements began to acquire more of an American appearance though with parental approval still of great importance” (1985:69).
Social scientists also elaborate the image of Issei men in terms of culturally defined gender differentiation. Nakano states that:

Absolute authority lay vested in the eldest male, the patriarch, at least in theory. His role could be compared to that of a benevolent ruler: he represented the family to the outside, oversaw the family operations and took legal responsibility for all the family members. All family members were required to obey him and accord him preferential treatment. He sat at the head of the table, was served first the choicest part of the meal, and went first to bathe (1990:34).

Yanagisako, focusing on Issei male leadership, explains:

From Issei men’s point of view the female, inside sphere is encompassed within the male, outside sphere, and is therefore governed by male authority. He may be compassionate and understanding but, more importantly, he must exercise firm leadership as head of the household (1985:102).21

These descriptions summarize the commonality among various stories about Issei men and the foreignness of their sexism compared to contemporary American society.

Generally, the ‘old Japanese tradition’ that is represented in an Issei belief in male supremacy is not passed on to the following generation because it is not important for Japanese Americans.22 Japanese American elderly in Puna have abandoned the ‘old Japanese’ sexism and do not make it a part of their relationships. Nonetheless, fujinkai

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20 The norms of the Japanese family that Japanese American elderly consider old Japanese tradition involve many inventive aspects. Yanagisako explains that the authority of the household head was an ideological product of the Japanese government in the Meiji era (1885-1912), “a blend of Western European and Japanese ideologies of family and polity” (1985:18).

21 The contrast between male dominance/female subordination and outside/inside spheres is not only particular to Japanese culture. As Rosaldo and Lamphere (1974) argue, it is a ubiquitous structural feature in human society. My point here is to draw attention to the popularity of associating gender inequality with the uniqueness of Japanese culture.

22 Tamura writes that “the Nisei rejected their parents’ view that the father was the ‘lord of the house’” (1994:180) and argues that “the disintegration of patriarchal authority was part of a larger breakdown of Issei ideas of family life” (ibid:181). During my fieldwork, I never have heard favorable opinions regarding Japanese male supremacy from any Japanese American.
members find their memories of gender-based discrimination worth telling, even though these memories are usually dark and sad.

Fujinkai members talk about their memories of Issei men because they are no longer subordinate or vulnerable daughters/brides, but mature women who have fulfilled their duties and obligations as mothers. Telling stories about Issei men in a retrospective mode is itself an expression of the strength and independence that they have earned in motherhood. Sharing the experience of being submissive daughters, fujinkai members collectively project their womanhood onto telling the stories by comparing and contrasting their daughterhood and themselves in the present.

Considering their experience of marital life as a significant transitional period from being brides to independent women, I examine how fujinkai members employ their memories of Issei men to further delineate their womanhood as mature plantation women.

Marriage is a significant turning point in the lives of fujinkai members. It is a moment of "epiphany" (Denzin 1989) in which they take responsibility for the family as wives and/or mothers. "Epiphanies are interactional moments and experiences which leave marks on people’s lives" and "alter the fundamental meaning structures in a person’s life" (ibid.:70). Referring to Turner (1986), Denzin also regards epiphanies as the "liminal phase of experience" in which a person is in a "no man’s land betwixt and between the past and the future" and explains that the meanings of this liminal experience are "always given retrospectively, as they are relived and reexperienced in the stories persons tell about what has happened to them" (Denzin 1989:70). For fujinkai members,

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23 I am aware that I am taking unmarried women out of this discussion.
marriage was an 'epiphany' or a 'liminal phase of experience' in which they interacted with the unknown marital world and "alter[ed] the fundamental meaning structure" that they had held prior to marriage. In other words, as they went through married life and mothering, they developed a new worldview, or a frame of thoughts as I discuss in Chapter One. Marital experiences led them to acquire mature womanhood. Today, when they remember and talk about their married life with other women, their past lives are relived and reexperienced, and given meaning within their altered worldview. At this point their collective gendered identity as wives and mothers is brought out and valorized.

Remembered interactions with Issei men is the starting point from which fujinkai members became conscious of culturally-based gender differentiation as they learned the role of women that required them to know their 'positions' in the family and to behave 'properly'. Their married life is a subsequent experience in which they actually played the roles of wives and mothers. They took responsibility for managing domestic tasks, including raising children, working for cash income, and maintaining relationships with family members, parents-in-law in particular. They also prepared food for community activities such as picnics and the bon dance. In labor union activities, they worked at the

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24 The Fujinkai Survey shows that ninety-four percent of fujinkai members worked after having children (Q26-1). They remember that it was taken for granted by both men and women that raising children (washing diapers, sewing clothes, and preparing food) was a women's task.

25 Fugita and O’Brien introduce Yanagisako’s (1977) argument that the strong kin network in the Japanese American community are carried on by women instead of men. “[Women] are able to perform this function much more unobtrusively and thus maintain the traditional Japanese interfamily connectedness while appearing to adhere to ‘appropriate’ American norms for nuclear families” (1991:77). This may be verifiable, but my data do not confirm it.

26 Although their husbands usually did not follow ‘old Japanese’ sexism, women had to deal with their Issei parents-in-law with whom they often shared the same household. 76.4 percent of fujinkai members lived with their parents-in-law during their married life (Q23-1, 23-2). These women remember that they obeyed their mothers-in-law homemaking instructions when they married into their husbands’ households.
soup kitchen during strikes for instance. Some fujinkai members state that participation in these activities, even though it was voluntary, was often taken for granted by others, including other wives, husbands, husbands' co-workers, and community members. They had to assume that absence from participation would result in loss of face for their husbands and families.

These relived and reexperienced stories exhibit fujinkai members' experiences as women started from interaction with Issei men. While fujinkai members define themselves as subordinated and vulnerable girls at the time they entered married life, they see from their altered worldview that they now have become experienced and independent persons who know the value of gaman. In other words, by revealing the experience of being subject to Issei men, fujinkai members articulate their confidence as full-fledged persons. This is the context of stories about Issei men in which fujinkai members express a shared understanding of their womanhood, pointing to their gendered identity.

**Silence and Womanhood**

From participant observation in fujinkai activities, I find that fujinkai members rarely express their opinions or feelings in mixed-gender public settings such as formal church meetings or informal chatting about church business. Silence in the public domain is a salient characteristic among fujinkai members, compared to both men and to younger Japanese Americans in the area. Silence in the public domain is a significant part of the socially and culturally gendered role that fujinkai members have naturalized in their womanhood.
Quietness is a common ethnic stereotype of second generation Japanese Americans that they themselves and many scholars believe is connected to Japanese culture, in spite of the fact that Hawaii's Japanese Americans, including Issei, were never politically quiet. For instance, their aggressiveness is seen in the 1909 and 1920 sugar strikes on the island of O'ahu, their class action suits against repression of Japanese language schools in the prewar period, the labor movement with the ILWU, and their advances into the politics in Hawai'i in the postwar period. Nevertheless, quietness is conventionally mentioned as a characteristic of Japanese Americans, the second generation in particular.

One fujinkai member comments on their quietness; “That's our Japanese nature” (Story #0614 Line 6-14). Many scholars who studied Nisei on the U.S. continent argue that quietness among Nisei is a ‘Japanese’ cultural trait passed on to them by Issei. Bill Hosokawa, in his *The Quiet Americans*, characterizes Nisei: “Their Japanese cultural heritage demanded... unquestioning respect of authority, a deep sensitivity to the opinions of one’s peers, a sense of group rather than individual responsibility” (1969:172). Kitano observes that “the most distinctive characteristic of Japanese [American] family interaction was, and still remains, the absence of prolonged verbal exchanges” and states that “verbalization, talking out and mutual discussion, were actively discouraged [in the family]” (1969:72). Nakano focuses on Nisei women as a whole and argues that “the Nisei female tended to feel more comfortable with consensus than with independent decision-making and she worked especially well cooperatively. Her ‘Japaneseness’, moreover, made it difficult for her to express strong personal opinions or act in a manner

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27 In this section I follow those scholars and use the term ‘Nisei’.
that might call attention to herself" (1990:106). To sum up, Nisei quietness is widely believed to be based on a “traditional Japanese personality” (Maykovich 1972:31-34) or on the cultural inclination toward non-verbalization and group conformity that Issei brought in and maintained.

I do not assume that silence among fujinkai members is a general Nisei characteristic, however. In this discussion I focus on their silence in particular public contexts, rather than relegating it to the domain of a ‘Nisei personality’. My analysis exclusively examines their silence in specific social milieus, separating it from essentialized personality attributes.

Although their silence probably has much to do with the gendered role that Issei women played in institutional settings, this does not explain why silence remains a salient feature, while other Issei cultural traits, such as male domination and a gendered kinship hierarchy, have been rejected. If speech, as opposed to silence, is taken as a critical cultural value in the U.S., it would not be surprising if fujinkai members as a whole actively expressed their own opinions and feelings in public.

When fujinkai members voluntarily hold themselves back in the public domain, it is in many cases because they are playing the socially expected role of Japanese women as exemplified by Issei women. However, they play this role with a different understanding than that of Issei women. As Hawai‘i-born and American educated

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24 It should be noted that this discussion is about women’s silence in the public domain. In the personal domain, fujinkai members do speak out their opinions and feelings. Among family members and close friends, they exchange their own stories about common acquaintances and local happenings. For example, gossip rapidly circulates in the informal network among fujinkai members.

25 Cheung writes, “When speaking of Eurocentric premises I have in mind primarily the social norms concerning speech and silence in North America, especially the premium placed on assertiveness in education institutions and in society at large” (1993:1, italics added).

26 Fujinkai members also ‘hold back’ because they believe that it is the way to establish social interaction. See my discussion in Chapter Five, "Cultural Perspective."
women, they respect equality and freedom and do not accept Issei women's attitude of acquiescing to male domination and gender hierarchy. To explain how fujinkai members view the role of Japanese women in community activities from their own perspective, I take into account Traise Yamamoto's (1999) literary analysis of Jeanne Houston's (1985) *Farewell to Manzanar*—a story of a daughter of an Issei woman.

Yamamoto introduces Houston’s interpretation of her Issei mother’s attitude:

She never confused her tasks with who she was. This concept of the inner self, which I have begun only recently to understand as a result of my attempts to rediscover my Japanese “roots,” allowed her to form her own image, distinct from the one in the exterior world. This ability to create a psychological privacy, inherited from a people who for centuries have had to create their own internal “space” in an overpopulated island, gave her the freedom, of which she was so deprived in her role as Japanese wife and mother. This was her way to survive and to succeed (Houston 1985:9, quoted in Yamamoto 1999:151).

Yamamoto interprets this passage: “What Houston’s mother teaches her are necessary *tools* for survival, strategies of masking, in a community and dominant society that constructs restricted spaces for Japanese/American women” (1999:151, italics added). Strategies of masking incorporate the image of Japanese women expected by the exterior world; an image based on submissiveness in demeanor and speech in which silence is acceptable in the eyes of the family, community, and larger society (von Hassell 1993). To exert these strategies is to create an internal space or ‘freedom’ in a living world in which “she was so deprived in her role as Japanese wife and mother” (Yamamoto 1999:151). In other words, Houston, from an ‘American’ perspective, *justifies* her mother’s submissiveness as a strategy for survival and success. Houston believes her mother was submissive because it is her duty to be so, but her mother as a person never loses her “inner self.” Yamamoto further explains:
After her father’s death, Houston realizes that for all his dominance within the family, she [Houston’s mother] had been the strong one. The structure had been created for him: but it was her essence that had sustained it” (ibid.).

To rephrase, Houston believes that her family was maintained because of her mother’s strength in tolerating male domination in the Issei family system.

Following Yamamoto’s interpretation, I lay out fujinkai members’ views of the role of ‘Japanese’ women in community activities. They play this role because it enables them to maintain their ‘power’, ‘internal space’ or ‘freedom’ in Houston and Yamatomo’s terms, within the institution.31 Even though they live in a community that consists of Japanese Americans who have abandoned Issei gender discrimination, their institutions still follow an Issei style of management based on the division of labor. Puna Hongwanji Buddhist church, which is the pivotal institution for the Japanese community in Puna, maintains separate roles for men and women participation in church activities. While men take administrative responsibility as board members and committee chairs, women as fujinkai members just follow the decisions made by men and rarely involve themselves in formal decision-making processes. Men are given various titles such as ‘president’, ‘vice-president’, and ‘chairperson’, whereas women are unlikely to have titles. It is evident in their institutional activities that women always work as a group under men’s leadership and do not have their individual names acknowledged on the

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31 By using the term ‘power’ I do not mean that fujinkai members are ‘powerful’ in exercising authority in the community, but suggest that they maintain power for dealing with social life and hold onto their womanhood and gendered identity. I agree with Yamamoto’s notes: “It would be easy to read this [Houston’s] recognition as nostalgically compensatory, as one that romanticizes women and mothers as the ‘real’ power in the house, when everywhere outside it they are denied freedom and restricted in their access to social forms of power. But such a reading gives short shrift to the dignity with which Houston’s mother negotiated the meanings of agency and powerlessness, containment and freedom” (1999:151). Although the situation of fujinkai members is generationally and geographically different from Houston’s mother’s, both women negotiate “the meanings of agency and powerlessness” and share the same complexity in maintaining power in all sorts of gendered relationships (i.e., relationships in marriage, family, community, and the larger society).
main stage as men do. This institutional 'division of labor' is taken for granted as a custom and hardly questioned by either men or women.

One fujinkai member tells me that they maintain separate roles because it is the way they have co-existed for a long time, but that they do not regard men as the boss as Issei women did before World War II. The division of labor is thus a custom that Japanese American elderly, both men and women, have naturalized into their institutional activities. Women stay behind male administrators and work as a group, not taking leadership. They also efface themselves in formal settings by not voicing their opinions or feelings toward decisions made by men. Japanese American elderly in Puna take fujinkai members’ silence as a part of their expected role, and their silence in turn contributes to their self-effacement, leaving their individuality unrecognized.32

The absence of overt individuality in the fujinkai functions to distribute power between fujinkai members and male church members. In other words, women’s self-effacement, rendered as silence, is seen as a tool for maintaining power in dealing with social relationships and sustaining their womanhood and gendered identity.33 On the one hand, in order not to lose power, fujinkai members remove themselves from the predicaments of church administration by not taking leadership. On the other hand, working diligently as a group, they not only acquire recognition as an essential part of the

32 Here I am not arguing that fujinkai members suppress their individuality. They have opinions and feelings toward other church members (including men) and do express their personal preferences that may include negative statements among close friends. For example, they talk to each other on the phone or visit each other’s houses.
33 Power in this case is a different form than power in Houston’s mother’s case: one is vested in collective silence and the other is in individual silence. Fujinkai members’ silence is a collective form of conducting power in social relations; silence is an expression of a group consensus. Dennis Wrong, pointing out the difference between individual and group possession of power, connects collective power to a solidarity that is “crucial to the survival and effectiveness of power-seeking groups that are formed by the voluntary association of their members” (1979:130-142).
in institution, but also avoid criticism as individual members. As long as each individual woman participates in church activities as fujinkai members, they are respected by others and are never subject to unjust treatment by the institution. When women need to make a motion to the institution, they voice it as a group through informal channels; it often becomes a powerful collective voice in making decisions.  

Fujinkai members perform silence in the public domain as a vital part of their gendered role in order to maintain power collectively and be treated ‘properly’ with respect. Their audience is thus the institution: the whole church organization, including the fujinkai itself. It is critical that fujinkai members themselves are part of their own audience in terms of reproducing their gendered identity. By performing silence with a positive interpretation of Issei women’s behavior, they reflexively internalize silence as an attitude of self-conducting. It is not a passive attitude of confining themselves to their inner world. As Yamamoto and Houston demonstrate, playing the female role requires strength, perseverance and determination. Fujinkai members know that they maintain silence because they are strong enough to play the role. One fujinkai member, pointing to the strength of Issei women, alludes to their possession of the same strength:

They [Japanese American elderly women and Issei women] don’t say much but it’s the way how to conduct themselves. It’s the attitude. That’s why, in my mother’s case, too, because my mother, she was a very sweet, quiet lady. She was a quiet lady, but there was steel in her character. Very strong center in her. Outwardly, you know, Japanese women are kind and don’t say negative things.

34 My standpoint toward women’s groupism is not the same as Nakano’s (1990). She argues that conformity among Nisei women leads them to consensual, rather than independent decision-making. However, I observe that fujinkai members strategically maintain harmony in the institution. Although I do not totally deny their conformity, there are female church members who refuse to join fujinkai activities because of the strategic groupism.

35 My argument here is that fujinkai members interpret silence by linking it with strength. I do not deny the possibility that fujinkai members may associate silence with the absence of assertiveness from a Western logocentric perspective, or with passive-aggressiveness in terms of American psycho-babble, or with shunning.
But old people led that kind of life. We saw this. So my generation, my sisters and myself would follow my mother more without us knowing. Without us knowing (Story #0622 Line 6-8).

Silence in the lives of fujinkai members is 'the way how to conduct themselves' and their 'attitude'. Silence, therefore, is an essential part of their womanhood.

No matter how they interpret Issei women's silence—as hate, scorn, sorrow, agony, coldness, apathy, respect, kindness, or optimism—fujinkai members regard silence as a part of their own gendered role in their present social lives. Silence is not a hollowness of mind, but a collective manifestation of strength embodied by playing the gendered role with perseverance and determination. Fujinkai members see this strength first in their mothers and then in themselves: "There was a steel in her character" and "My generation would follow my mother." Although Issei women never verbalized the meaning of their silence, fujinkai members articulate Issei women's silence with their 'conduct' or 'attitude'. As the story above indicates, fujinkai members lay witness to Issei women's silence and repeat that silence in their own lives "without us knowing." Only when they enact silence do they add their own meaning to it and integrate it into their womanhood along with their images of Issei women. Their gendered identity is, therefore, felt in the

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36 Silences are articulate(d). This is a critical point in understanding how fujinkai members connect their womanhood and gendered identity to silence. In her Articulate Silences, Cheung, as a literary critic, refutes "blanket endorsement of speech and reductive perspective on silence" and questions the "authority of language (especially language that passes for history)" (1993:3). She argues that second generation Asian American female writers "articulate—question, report, expose—the silences imposed on themselves and their peoples, whether in the form of feminine and cultural decorum, external or self-censorship, or historical or political invisibility; at the same time they reveal, through their own manners of telling and through their characters, that silences—textual ellipses, nonverbal gesture, authorial hesitations (as against moral, historical, religious, or political authority)—can also be articulate" (1993:3-4).

37 It should be noted that the images of Issei women drawn by Issei women themselves are different from their daughters' images. Von Hassell argues that "in issei women's lives, actions and perceptions of available power were frequently in contradiction with their self-presentation toward their daughters and others. Images of both power and powerlessness, conceptualized by issei women and by others about issei women, are historical constructs generated by the interplay of what is created and manipulated from outside..."
enactment of silence, and constructed though the continuity of this enactment from
the previous generation.

**Discussion: Gendered Identity**

In this chapter I reviewed stories of fujinkai members and discussed their gendered
identity. To outline their gendered identity, I explored their womanhood—what they
believe makes them plantation women—and demonstrated that their gendered identity is
represented in the image of Issei women, by telling memories of Issei men, and through
their silence. I conclude this chapter by discussing the womanhood of fujinkai members
from a viewpoint that focuses on power relations between genders.

Power does not simply dichotomize women and men into the ruling/dominating
and the ruled/subordinated by physical force or threat/pressure. Power is not “an
exclusive property of repressive apparatuses,” but manipulates a reality by infiltrating
problematic knowledge into people (Dirks et al. 1994:5). Dirks et al., referring to
Foucault, writes that “much of the problematic of power today is a problematic of
knowledge making, universe construction, and the social production of feeling and of
‘reality’” (ibid.:5). According to Foucault, people who act as men and women are not
merely performing functionally defined roles. Rather, “*these terms* ['men' and 'women']
define relations in which the parties, whatever else they may do, are constantly
negotiating questions of power, authority, and the control of the definitions of reality”
(ibid., italics added). This viewpoint on power offers an analytical perspective on
gendered identity in that the asymmetry between males and females in human society,
which Rosaldo and Lamphere consider a universal phenomena rooted in the “structural

the individual lives and the participation of those who are the object of the image” (1993:549). Fujinkai
members' characterization of quiet Issei women is thus their own construction.
opposition between domestic and public spheres” (1974:41), is attributed to the
culturally defined power relations between genders.

In the case of Japanese American elderly in Puna, it is also their knowledge of
womanhood/manhood that defines power relations between women and men as a reality.
With this knowledge they identify themselves as ‘women’ or ‘men’ in their relationships
and take one of the gendered roles, (re)creating sets of power relations at different
institutional levels (e.g., ‘wife’ and ‘husband’ and ‘fujinkai members’ and ‘male church
members’). Their knowledge, however, is not given and static, but inventive, dynamic,
and subject to experiences that include education, work, mothering/fathering, aging, and
interpersonal relationships with people in the family, community, and larger society in
the past and the present. Therefore, the division of gendered roles, which draws on their
knowledge, is also inventive and dynamic.

Japanese American elderly in Puna do not take on all the gendered roles that Issei
brought from Japan and maintained in Hawai‘i. For example, they reject arranged
marriages, the normative patriarchy, and male privilege at home. As a result, power
relations in the family/kin have turned less hierarchical. In institutional settings, such as
the church community, their power relations are also different from those of Issei,
although they maintain the Issei division of labor by gender as a way of running
activities: women take responsibility for cooking, flower arrangement, and cleaning,
while men do yard work, repairing facilities, and setting up tables, chairs, stages, and
tents for church events. Fujinkai members still play the same functional roles as Issei
women did at the institution. Nonetheless, they do it with their own understanding that is
based on a perspective different from that of Issei women. Knowing that they are
essential constituents in the institution, fujinkai members participate only as a group, maintaining silence so that they retain institutional respect. Therefore, the gendered roles of fujinkai members are not simply inherited from Issei women, but rather are an outcome of questioning and negotiating the meanings of ‘fujinkai members’ and ‘male church leaders’. It is their own knowledge that determines the acceptance of, resistance against, or overturning of culturally and socially expected gendered roles.

Over their lifetimes, Japanese American elderly in Puna have accumulated and transformed various kinds of knowledge by communicating with each other. Today, as mature persons, they have mutually established their own knowledge about woman/manhood. In the case of fujinkai members, their knowledge about womanhood is represented in both telling stories and keeping silent. In telling stories of Issei women, fujinkai members project their own womanhood by overlapping their origin and strength as plantation women with the symbolic image of Issei women. Stories about Issei men remind them of their maturity, emphasizing the transformation of gendered-based power relations. At the same time, silence enables fujinkai members to maintain their position within institutions. These are all representative of their womanhood and their knowledge of gendered roles that fujinkai members express through a shared frame of thoughts. These are rooted in their social and cultural milieux and embody an abstract ideas about the nature of women. From this, I argue that this representation is a discourse by which they naturalize an understanding of their womanhood in which “questions of conformity and opposition, of the potentials for stability and cohesion in the social order, and of the strength or fragility of the dominant value system” are dissolved (Dirks et al. 1994:5).
For fujinkai members, telling stories and keeping silent are both social productions of gendered identity.
CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Our knowledge of what is given in experience is extended through the interpretation of the objectifications of life and their interpretation, in turn, is only made possible by plumbing the depths of subjective experience (Dilthey 1976:195).

For Japanese American elderly in Puna, telling plantation stories is the most powerful means of expressing who they are and where they are from. It is a significant performance of “Re-membering” (Myerhoff 1982; see Discussion in Chapter Five) played for themselves as well as for others, demonstrating their values and qualities as plantation-raised Japanese Americans. Telling and listening to ‘good’ stories generate an intensity of emotions, vitality, humor, irony, and dignity as they create collective memories of plantation life and mutually negotiate the meaningfulness of their lives. At the same time, the messages in their stories move others to acknowledge their plantation background and their collective effort to commemorate the plantation community.

In undertaking a collective remembering by telling plantation stories, Japanese American elderly in Puna create compelling self-representations. The title of this dissertation, Storied Identities, suggests that plantation stories are self-reflexive texts used by the elderly to communicate with each other and intelligibly delineate their peoplehood. This is not to say that their stories are spontaneous self-characterizations meant to remind themselves of a common plantation background. I argue instead that storied identities are culturally elaborated representations of collective identities that are continuously and consciously reproduced and redefined within the social world of Japanese American elderly in Puna.
As I stated in Chapter One, plantation stories are highly contextualized narratives. Within them, these elderly explore their relationships with others in terms of nationality, ethnicity, class, generation, gender, localness, and specific ancestry. At the same time, they evaluate their current socioeconomic situation in comparison with their recollections of plantation life. In addition to these relational and situational aspects, their stories are processual in that various changes in their lives drive them to talk about their past.

Because of these complex contexts, one must keep asking the question, “What are the key social relations and social contexts within which their stories are produced?” The social relations from which their stories spring range from family relationships, to interpersonal bonds with close friends, and to institutional ties within churches (wives' clubs), neighborhood associations, senior citizen clubs, and plantation camp reunions. Plantation stories also exist within the context of broader audiences in Hawai'i, on the US continent, and elsewhere provided by mass media, although these are not fully addressed here.

In each social context they recall specific past events and reconstruct collective memories shared with other in that group. For example, specific ancestry such as Okinawan roots may be emphasized among family members, while male friends would talk about their military experiences. Church members would reminisce about Issei cultural influences on their religious practices and moral training. Plantation camp reunions are particularly important institutions within which participants establish a solid group identity by redefining and revitalizing plantation memories. In this exclusive social world, many Japanese American elderly in Puna, along with other elderly from
different ethnic groups, actively engage in reconstructing their plantation experiences and creatively embodying their own values and qualities as people with a shared plantation background.

The social contexts within which their stories are told are largely determined by these social relationships. In addition, talking in informal settings such as at home or in casual meetings tends to focus on personal matters in a frank exchange of opinions and feelings. On formal occasions, public speeches are made to address common interests or issues relevant to the institutional host.

The interviews and informal conversations that I instigated as researcher constituted an exceptional social context. In this context, I was not only an observer or a recorder of their conversations, but an active participant in their reconstruction of the past, as I described in Chapter One. These elderly, recognizing that I was an avid audience, took care to explain what they had seen, heard, felt, thought, and done in the plantation days. In these talks, they sometimes represented Japanese Americans in general and other times only themselves as individuals who had gone through specific events and circumstances. In either case, the relationship between them and me created narratives contextualized as a sort of apprenticeship for life, teaching me the processes by which their lives were made meaningful. This led them to freely shift viewpoints in speaking out about various events in their lives, presenting the relational, situational, and processual aspects of their stories. This social context resulted in my deriving much fruitful insight from these conversations.

As the title shows, this dissertation examines the multiple identities interwoven within their stories. Accordingly, I analyzed their stories in terms of ethnicity, class,
generation, and gender. Their ethnic identity is expressed as a 'Japanese' experience reconstructed from memories of direct interaction with Issei. Remembering Issei styles of conducting family/community relationships and inter/intra ethnic relationships, they re-create their ties to Japan. Their reluctance to speak publicly about their wartime experiences, by contrast, hinders inclusion of this subject within their collective memory. Their dissociation of Japanese identity from political interests and political clout is another feature shaping their ethnic identity. Selectivity in reconstructing their Japanese experiences thus characterizes their collective ethnic identity.

Their class identity centers on three themes: economic adversity, racial hierarchy, and the struggle for upward mobility. Remembering how everyone in big families worked hard under poor living conditions, how a Haole company ruled the plantation, and how they struggled to avoid manual labor in the canefield, they emphasize their subordinate socioeconomic position on the plantation as the starting point of upward mobility. Reconstructing the experience of subordination, Japanese American elderly in Puna point to their plantation origins and delineate their class experience according to their distinctive concept of 'work'.

Their generational identity becomes discernible when stories are told from the dual perspectives as 'Japanese' and 'American' or when they give way to collective nostalgia. Japanese American elderly in Puna present their own perspective that is rooted in both an Issei worldview and an American education and lifestyle. Overlapping the distinction between 'Japanese' and 'American' with the distinctions between 'traditional' and 'modern', 'old' and 'new', and 'those days' and 'nowadays', they reconstruct their experiences from both 'Japanese' and 'American' standpoints. These dual perspectives
differentiate them from other Americans and younger Japanese Americans.

Collective nostalgia, which appears as a reconstruction of the 'good old' Japanese community, also characterizes their generational identity. Romanticizing the active interpersonal relationships of the Japanese community in the past, they cherish a past community spirit and conjure up a sense of belonging or 'home'. Through these dual perspectives and collective nostalgia, they project their generational identity onto their images of 'our days'.

By telling stories about Issei women and men, fujinkai members reconstruct gender specific experiences and express their womanhood. They glorify qualities of Issei women to which they connect to their own characteristics as plantation-raised Japanese women. By symbolizing the image of Issei women as mothers revered for their physical and internal strengths as well as maternal affection, fujinkai members incorporate these values into their own sense of womanhood. By contrast, when telling stories about Issei men, fujinkai members depict themselves in retrospect as vulnerable daughters who have only become confident fell-fledged persons in the present. Looking back on their experiences as daughters, they describe how they learned culturally and socially expected gendered roles through the actions and statements of Issei men.

Silence also represents womanhood among fujinkai members. Quietness is an important part of their gendered role within institutional domains. This is not because they simply imitate the demeanor and actions of Issei women, but rather because they strategically use silence to establish and maintain their womanhood.

In plantation stories, I observed all three of the processes that I outlined in Chapter One: the process of creating a collective memory, the psychological process of
reconstructing experiences, and the inter/externalizing processes of telling and
listening to stories. Juxtaposing Durkheim’s collective consciousness and Halbwachs’
collective memory, I presupposed the importance of social milieu in remembering the
past and demonstrated a shared framework of thoughts among Japanese American elderly
in Puna. This shared framework comes about by a selectivity of memory that results in
commonalities in their images of plantation life, their interpretation of experience, and
the narrative structure of their stories.

My analysis indicates that their collective memory is a reflection of ‘a reality in the
present’, rather than that of ‘a reality of the past’. It is an interpretation of the past based
on shared knowledge of current and past social and cultural contexts. Plantation stories
reflect the present thoughts and situations of Japanese American elderly in Puna; what
emerges from their stories is a description of what they believe binds them together as
plantation-raised Japanese Americans—namely, their peoplehood.

Applying Halbwachs’ idea of the “localization of memories” (1992:52), I suggest
that telling plantation stories is a folk model of history-making, a culturally specific way
of explaining the past. Japanese American elderly in Puna distinctively reconstruct
plantation experiences, emphasizing relationships rather than relying on symbols. They
have no flags, no monuments, no historic figures, and no words or phrases that
specifically distinguish them from others. Marshall Sahlins, analyzing the Hawaiian
concepts of history in the early post-contact period, states that “history is culturally
ordered, differently so in different societies, according to meaningful schemes of things”
(1985:vii). Finding that the Hawaiian interpretation of the arrival and killing of Captain
Cook was based on a concept of history that was radically different from a Western sense
of history, he argues for the significance of *culture* in history-making. From this, I regard 'culture' as a 'shared frame of thoughts' and the way Japanese American elderly in Puna reconstruct their plantation experiences as folk history-making.

The inner process of telling plantation stories involves transforming the abstract past into concrete expressions of experience. I examined the culturally specific meanings of terms such as 'Japanese', 'work', 'Haole', ‘our days’, and ‘gaman’ in reconstructing the plantation experience. Each individual plays a critical role in producing and reproducing these meanings.

Bruner, referring to Frederic Bartlett’s *Remembering* (1967), explains how one’s individual mind generates and regenerates meanings to reconstruct experiences in relation to one’s social world. His first premise is that individuals remember the past as experience only after ‘framing’ or ‘schematizing’ the past into a “canonical representation of the social world” (1990:56). Otherwise past experience is either forgotten or highlighted for its exceptionality. He secondly draws attention to socially rooted ‘affects’ or ‘attitudes’ that direct the way an individual reconstructs the past and justifies that reconstruction:

In the actual effort to remember something, what most often comes first to mind is an affect or a charged “attitude”—that “it” was something unpleasant, something that led to embarrassment, something that was exciting. The affect is rather like a general thumbprint of the schema to be reconstructed. The recall is then a construction made largely on the basis of the attitude, and its general effect is that of a justification of the attitude. It [remembering] is a reconstruction designed to justify. The confident subject *justifies* himself (ibid.:58, italics added).

When each Japanese American elderly looks back on the past, they ponder over their lives as plantation-raised Japanese Americans and achieve a certain ‘affect’ or ‘charged
attitude'. This in turn becomes a sort of principle deployed in relating their experiences to key concepts and justifying their own values and qualities. This is the process by which the elderly 'frame', 'schematize', or transform the abstract past into concrete expressions of experience in accordance with the "canonical representation of the social world" to which they belong. As each of the elderly goes through this process, they generate and regenerate concepts that define the meaningfulness of their lives. The individual mind thus plays a crucial role in reconstructing the past, even though it is firmly tied to the social world.

Plantation stories are not created by certain individuals at a certain historical period, however. They result from a communicative process that takes place over the course of lifetimes in various interactive settings under the influence of different social trends. This communicative process plays a significant role in terms of both internalizing and externalizing self-understanding among Japanese American elderly in Puna. Internalization is observed when different individual Japanese American elderly reconstruct their plantation experiences in similar ways, emphasizing common values and qualities as central to their sense of peoplehood. The tropes of culturally specific meanings of words and phrases are a consequence of this process. Furthermore, the commonality of emotional expression, which I touched upon in discussing fujinkai

1 Linda Garro, discussing the cognitive process in remembering the past, also points out the significance of 'attitude' in Bartlett's term: "A theoretically central notion is that of attitude. For Bartlett, attitude is an orienting and permeating characteristic of cognitive activity and is at one personal and social. Motivation, interests, and values all interact with attitude to direct the course and determine the content of cognitive activities" (2000:277).

2 Concerning the term 'schema' in relation to remembering the past, I refer to Garro's explanation: "Schemas are dynamic interpretive processes mediating our understanding of the world. When individuals talk about their personal experiences, they do so within the framework of possibilities afforded by culture. Schemas provide organized setting for giving meaning to experience, and serve as resources in reconstructing past experience as well as linking the past with present concerns and future possibilities" (2000:309).
members’ stories about Issei women’s maternal affection in Chapter Six, may be attributed to an internalization of the phrase ‘for the sake of the children’.

Externalization is demonstrated in that Japanese American elderly in Puna use a variety of ‘pragmatic means’ to communicate certain meanings that are only understood with reference to specific geographic, temporal, and socioeconomic contexts. They use words, phrases, and stories as mediating devices to point to implicit meanings that index their understanding of the values and qualities of plantation-raised Japanese Americans. For example, a story of economic adversity, centering on ‘poor’ as the key word, conveys contextually defined meanings of events that infer shared understandings of frugality, bonds among working people, and responsibility for the family. The phrase ‘community spirit’ implicitly communicates an idea about Issei groupism and ethnically-based interpersonal relationships. The womanhood of fujinkai members is inferred in the telling of stories about Issei women. Finally, the most salient pragmatic means is found in the use of the pronoun ‘we’. In Chapter Two, I argued that ‘we’-remembering complicates the boundaries between the story and the audience by connecting them with specific sets of memories about plantation life. The pronouns ‘we’, ‘our’, and ‘us’ are implicitly understood as indexing persons who are ‘their own kind’ as opposed to others, even when these pronouns refer to specific family members, relatives, friends, or

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3 Stephen Levinson explains that pragmatics is the “study of the relationship between the structure of a semiotic system (notably language) and its usage in context, and, along with semantics, forms part of the general theory of meaning. Pragmatics is concerned especially with implicit meaning, with inference and the unsaid, and with the way in which language structure trades on this background of the presumed and the inferred” (2001:11948). Taking this definition into consideration, I seek the pragmatic means not only in indexical words but also in contextually specified phrases and stories. While in many cases pragmatic effects (inferences or implicit meanings) are found in indexical words, such as pronouns (‘they’, ‘we’), temporal words (‘now’, ‘then’), and spatial words (‘here’, ‘there’), I see the pragmatic effects of certain phrases and stories as evidence that they are the products of a communicative process. This is because inferences or implicit meanings are based on knowledge that has already been established in the previous communicative process.
community members. The meanings of these pronouns are never questioned in telling or listening to stories because Japanese American elderly in Puna have established a tacit understanding through externalization as well as internalization processes within their communicative circle.

Telling plantation stories is also a commemorative activity that, as an externalizing or narrativizing practice, imbues 'historical knowledge' and identity with a sort of 'authenticity'. In telling plantation stories Japanese American elderly in Puna commemorate their plantation experiences with the intention of preserving their memories in honor of their ancestors as well as of their own struggles for a better life. Stories about ethnic, class, and gendered experiences indicate this intention along with the pragmatic meanings of key words and phrases such as 'Japanese', 'work', and 'Issei women'. As a result of intentionally integrating their personal memories with their opinions about their current situations into commemoration, they commemorate the meaningfulness of their plantation experiences for their group identity and establish a shared belief in their own values and qualities. Moreover, through this routinized remembering, expressions of 'wholeness' (Nostalgia in Chapter Five), 'we-ness', and 'oneness' (Chapter Two) give rise to 'authenticity' based on an assumption of unanimous consent. Furthermore, the introduction of a plethora of individual and family names into their testimonials (e.g., Neighborhoods in Chapter Three) equates the specificity of description with genuineness. Public speeches or published texts are given additional credibility through institutional authority. The performance of commemoration thus
yields authenticity or persuasive power; it is a form of externalization that results in the acceptance of certain plantation stories as master narratives of ‘historical knowledge’. 4

Throughout this dissertation, I have discussed the significance of artistry in telling plantation stories. In Chapter Two, I briefly touched upon the determinant factors of ‘good’ plantation stories and pointed out the magnitude of artistry involved in their creation. I argued that ‘good’ stories emerge from an ongoing cultural process in which Japanese American elderly in Puna actively participate in plantation stories in search of concrete images and meaningfulness of their plantation experience. I use the word ‘participate’ because telling plantation stories is a specific mode of communication analogous to a ‘performance’ in which actors, audience, and the story all interact.

Through participating in telling ‘good’ stories, the elderly relate their personal experiences to performed events emotionally and re-perform the story as their own story. Walter Benjamin writes about the linkage between story and experience: “The storyteller takes what he tells from experience—his own or that reported by others. And he in turn makes it the experience of those who are listening to his tale” (1969:87). What is missing in this remark is consideration of the audience’s ‘participation’: whether or not the

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4 A story told in public has persuasive power. Karen Brison (1992) argues this from a study of Melanesian talk of death in which a sorcerer’s story constitutes a collective understanding of events and experiences as a social reality for the audience. Brison explains the process of how an audience comes to believe an unsubstantiated story as the truth: “Stories give people a framework for understanding ambiguous incidents, and so once someone suggests a plausible story about one situation people are inclined to use this framework to explain other related events” (ibid.:170). By providing a framework for interpreting unprecedented events or experiences, a story draws people’s attention to certain aspects of the situations and prompts them to ignore other things, sometimes even factual evidence. As a ‘plausible story’ provides a schema for perceiving events and experiences, it may seem events confirm the story (ibid.:172). Once people accept a certain story, the actual events come to fit into the story, even where there is no evidence to prove its legitimacy. Although I do not see fictionalization occurring in plantation stories as much as in Melanesian talk, this sort of performative effect is discernible among Japanese American elderly in Puna when looking at certain patterns in the contents of plantation stories and the styles in which they are told.
audience makes a story part of their experience depends on how much they empathize with it and incorporate it into their own life stories.

Japanese American elderly in Puna participate in ‘good’ plantation stories because artistry of expression moves them emotionally. As I stated in the beginning of this chapter, an intensity of emotions, vitality, humor, irony, and dignity of ‘good’ stories are all elements of artistry. Richard Bauman, who considers telling stories as “verbal art as a way of speaking, a mode of verbal communication” (1986:2), argues that the essence of spoken artistry is found in the poetic function, enacted in the performance of telling (ibid.:3). He explains the “essence of spoken artistry”:

I understand performance as a mode of communication, a way of speaking, the essence of which resides in the assumption of responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative skill, highlighting the way in which communication is carried out, above and beyond its referential content (ibid.).

For Bauman, a display of communicative skill is dependent upon the storyteller’s artistic ability to inspire the audience, rather than just the ability to describe an event. I argue that the artistry of expression in telling plantation stories lies in the poetic skill that evokes emotions from the audience. Artistry is an essential factor for a story to be ‘good’.

The plantation stories that I introduce in Appendix A are ‘good’ stories in terms of exhibiting the poetic function. Japanese American elderly in Puna express themselves in relation to others, drawing upon memories of their mothers, fathers, siblings, friends, neighbors, fellow workers, Haole, and people from other ethnic groups. By remembering interactions with others and situating themselves in various kinds of relationships, rather

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5 Artistic ability is required not only of storytellers but also of the audience in establishing a ‘good’ story. The audience should be able to appreciate the performed artistry of the storytellers.
than isolating themselves introspectively, they reconstruct plantation experiences into which their concepts of ‘Japanese’, ‘work’, ‘economic adversity’, ‘plantation hierarchy’, ‘gendered roles’, and ‘community spirit’ are projected. In short, their own experiences are drawn from images of others, and their ‘selves’ are delineated in relational contexts. The four kinds of identity of Japanese American elderly in Puna that I have demonstrated are ‘collective’ in terms of this relationality: ethnic identity is concerned with relationships with Issei; class identity is about family members, fellow workers, and Haole as rulers; generational identity is based on their interrelationships as an age cohort; and gendered identity is rooted in relations to the opposite sex as well as to Issei women.

In Chapter One, I introduced Polkinghorne’s idea that the self is understood as becoming, rather than as a substance or a thing. In the case of plantation stories, selves emerge from an act of becoming in which Japanese American elderly in Puna delineate themselves by (re)telling and (re)listening to stories about interactions with others. The meaningfulness of their plantation experiences is built upon continuous relationships that have been maintained over the course of their lives. In this particular way of reconstructing the past, artistry of expression plays a critical role in inspiring them to reinterpret their past and present experiences in different lights and to mutually make sense of their lives.

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6 An understanding of selves based on relational contexts may be a cultural feature of Japanese American elderly in Puna. Richard Shweder and Edmund Bourne (1991), asking the question, “Does the concept of the person vary cross-culturally?” identify two major alternative conceptualizations of the individual-social relationship: the egocentric contractual and the sociocentric organic. The egocentric and sociocentric views are creations of the collective imagination. They are premises by which people guide their lives, and only to the extent that people live by them do they have force (153). Sinobu Kitayama and Hazel Markus (1994) regard them as “cultural imperatives” and describe ego-centered persons as seeking and expressing internal attributes, whereas socio-centered persons prioritize fulfilling interpersonal obligations in ongoing relationships. This distinction between ego- and sociocentric views seems to fit the case of Japanese American elderly in Puna, although I do not intend to categorize their peoplehood as either individualistic (ego-centered) or collective (socio-centered) orientation because it is an exclusionary scheme.
Having discussed plantation stories from various analytical viewpoints, I argue that the stories told by Japanese American elderly in Puna are not just a reflection of their self-understanding, a testimony of what they experienced on the plantation, a manifestation of their sentiments for past family and community lives, or a confession of what they have kept in mind since childhood. They constitute instead a form of discourse that possesses power to affect their recollections of the past, examinations of their current situations, definitions of values and qualities, and ultimately, reconstructions of plantation experiences. In other words, once these elderly find stories that speak for their own values and qualities as plantation-raised Japanese Americans, the stories are no longer personal narratives about certain individuals but valuable knowledge about themselves that help delineate their collective identities. Plantation stories as discourse are not passive texts but actively shape and mold their tellers and audiences. Plantation stories integrate different kinds of identities—ethnic, class, generational, and gendered—into a collective ethos of this particular group. This is the focal point of this dissertation in my attempt to produce an ethnography of remembering among Japanese American elderly in a former sugar plantation community in the rural town of Puna, Hawai‘i in the twenty-first century.
APPENDIX A
PLANTATION STORIES

(As I stated in Chapter 1, here I present transcripts that include narrative units not only directly quoted in the Chapters but also relevant to the contexts of plantation stories that support my argument for the collective identities of the Japanese American elderly, although these extra portions indicate issues that are concerned with personal identities that I do not discuss in the text.)

LEGEND
#0000: Story Number
1, 2, 3... Line/Paragraph Number (reflects change of speaker)

Underline: _____ English translation of original told in Japanese
Italics: sayonara Japanese or other non-English words
Brackets: [good-bye] Original Japanese word or translated English word
Parentheses: (laughs) Supplementary descriptions or notes
Ellipsis: ... Silence more than three seconds
Blank: ( ) Indistinct utterance
Highlight: good-bye Portion quoted in Chapters
GK: Gaku Kinoshita, Interviewer
M: Male interviewee
F: Female interviewee

Story #0201 [M: age: 80s; birthplace: Kea‘au]
1 M: My father came from Okinawa in 1907. My mother came here a year after. Then, our parents had eleven children. Eleven children. Last week I lost my sister. Last year October I lost my brother, and December I lost my wife. So, it’s rapidly going... My mother was only fifty-eight when she went. My father was ninety-four. So, my father’s side, the genealogy, the life is longer... I was born in 1917 during World War I. I was born in 9 1/2 camp. When I was two and a half years old, all the camp people were looking around for me on one Sunday morning. They couldn’t find me in the camp. I was down the mill, two miles down, in the cane flume. The guy, named K.A, was the flume watchman. He saw the body, bouncing up and down in the water. So, he grabbed me and took me to his house. Then, I was cold. So they try to warm me up. The only way they can warm me up is to boil some water, put it in the bottle, wrap with the towel, and put them all over my body. But one bottle, the cork came out, and it burned right here [pointing to his upper leg]. When I was small the scar was only like... now the scar is this big. That’s why I got one mark here. That’s my birthmark. But, the guy told me, I was a good swimmer, I never drink water. Then eighteen years later I went to repair the flume after I graduate high school.

#0202 [M: age: 80s; birthplace: Pāhoa]
1 GK: Why Japanese people keep Japanese organization going?
M: As far as nikkeijinkai (Japanese American Association), yah, we have the cemetery to maintain, yah. Like many communities, they don’t have Nikkeijinkai, all the... according to... He (storyteller’s friend) told me once, “Eh, I go to Hamakua coast, many of the cemeteries are not maintained, all covered by the grass.” The worst is in Kea’au. That’s the forest. So, I think Kea’au they don’t have a nikkeijinkai or... Like Pāhoa we have nikkeijinkai, we maintain the cemetery, yah. People go to cemetery, always clean, yah.

GK: The Pāhoa Nikkeijinkai, does it include the Sansei (third generation Japanese Americans) and Yonsei (fourth generation)?

M: Oh, yes. They have many Sansei and some Yonsei.

GK: So, you don’t have to worry about your future.

M: Well, people say, “History repeats itself.” So that was the forest. So, it might repeat and become a forest, yah. But I hope not...

#0203 Source: Yakomaya 1995:D-I, 10

It used to be my father and mother’s watch repair shop and laundry. The building was at the end of town with the Christian church across the street, and another building to the left was the barbershop and the bakery where the best anpan sweet buns were made.

In fact all the things were the best.

The town was small and you could see the end of the town from each end. Everybody knew who lived where and how many in the family.

When I was about 3 years old, we used kerosene lamps. Once a week we had to clean the chimneys.

We had no concrete sidewalks and the road was unpaved, but that changed when Roosevelt was elected. The roads were paved to Kilauea because the president was coming to see the volcano.

Although my father was not an employee of the plantation, he always kept a sugar cane knife hardy because if there was a runaway fire in the sugar cane field, he went to help put the fire out. A wagon would come around and the whole town would go help put it out. The whole town depended on the sugar industry.

We never wore shoes except on the Fourth of July, when we went to Hilo, or on New Year’s Day when we went to pay out respects to the Japanese school teacher. The only time I really wore shoes was when I was drafted into the army.

We did not have any water pipe system like we do today and our water came from wooden tanks, which accumulated rainwater from the roof.

About two blocks from our house was a stable with about 200 mules. I used to help feed the mules sometimes. The mules were used to pull the wagons but a lot of the sugar went to the mill in water flumes.

It was about 1933 when one of the stores installed a refrigeration unit that made ice cubes in trays. They made ice cubes with syrup and water and sold a cube for a penny. Once a while my parents would buy us two cubes each. A great treat!

The army was good to me. I got to wear shoes and undershorts. I landed in Japan after General MacArther landed and my tour in Japan was an enjoyable one, but that is another story.
#0301 [M: age: 80s; birthplace: Kea‘au]
1 M: One thing you got to understand is multiethnic plantation. All different nationality, we all stick together. Plantation brought all these different nationality, they separate the camp, you know. Portuguese camp, Puerto Rican camp, Japanese camp, Filipino camp, all separate, yah? Why? Because they didn’t want to have co-mingling. So dividing us was the biggest mistake they did. When they go to school, every nationality going to school. They didn’t separate them, you know. That’s why we became very close among different nationality. Because of school. Plantation cannot make Filipino school, Portuguese school, Japanese school. They cannot because they don’t have money. If they had money they would do it.

#0302 [M: age: 80s; birthplace: Kea‘au]
1 M: Well, what we usually do is we take this (lunch box) in the field you work, yah. Then, interesting thing, yah, we are all different nationalities, yah. The Portuguese get own food, yah. We get our own food. Filipino get own food. So, everybody put all their food in the center. Everybody go help each other. It’s picnic everyday. Filipino and other nationality, they like Japanese food, they grab all the Japanese food, we go grab the Portuguese food. Just like picnic everyday. See, like us, we don’t know how to make bread, and Portuguese all get bread, yah. So, we grab the bread. And they take the rice, yah. But no more this kind can... this kind.

#0303 [F: age: 70s; birthplace: Mountain View, M: age: 80s; birthplace: Mountain View]
1 M: Nowadays, all the intermarriage, too, you know.
2 F(wife): Hawai‘i already, pretty soon, not many pure Japanese. At our church, all they were all Japanese but now it’s hapa (ethnically ‘mixed’ in local term) already. (They go to Puna Congregational Christian church.)

#0304 [M: age: 80s; birthplace: Kea‘au]
1 M: We start having our kids, we had four boys. Because of their Hawaiian blood, all went Kamehameha school. So, every two years they away from home, so that much less headache for us. And those days, you know, our age folks know, to marry other nationality was not easy. My wife is Hawaiian, Chinese, English, Irish. She get four bloods. I get four great grandchildren. They get additional more. They get Filipino blood and Spanish blood. Portuguese blood, too. So, they have a melting pot in our family. Twelve my grandchildren went Kamehameha school. Four more grandchildren, they’re going, opposite my house, Kamehameha school (that) goin’ be 300 areas there. Those kids are waiting, so they can go to the school. They get a lot of blood, they can.

#0305 [M: age: 90s; birthplace: Kea‘au]
1 M: But those days, English school, we couldn’t speak English, we spoke only Pidgin English, and when we are out in the yard, we speak only Japanese to our
friends. And Portuguese are speaking Portuguese. And only in the classroom we spoke English, whatever English means.

#0306 [M: age: 90s; birthplace: Kea'au]
1 M: And we had a train, everyday nine o’clock. The train passed here to go to Hilo. You see all the way to...
2 GK: Nine o’clock.
3 M: Nine o’clock. Train at nine o’clock. We used to... We spoke nothing but Japanese those days, you know. Easy, Japanese. And then we come back on the train at three o’clock. Three o’clock, it passes Kea’au. Then Saturday, they had special, six o’clock, going to Hilo.

#0307 [F: age: 80s; birthplace: Kona]
1 GK: Your mother, did she speak English?
2 F: No, no, those, our days, no one speak English. I didn’t speak English, also. When I came to Pāhoa, it’s mostly Japanese people...I didn’t speak English. I learned English, Pidgin English.
3 GK: So, you didn’t have to speak English in Pāhoa?
4 F: No, no. Even some place, you know...all those people...There are many many...Pāhoa was mostly, like Japanese community when I came.
5 GK: Just before the war, right?
6 F: I came in 1938, so...but now...that...you don’t see too many...mostly...even our age people, many have died. So, these days, all among Japanese, so we used to speak Japanese... But Japanese, you know, older people, earlier people, who came from Japan, they came from Japan, they don’t speak fluent Japanese, you know, because the area, prefecture.
7 GK: They had dialect.
8 F: Yeah.
9 GK: Strong accent.
10 F: Yeah.
11 GK: When you came here, everybody spoke Japanese, not only Issei, but also Nisei?
12 F: Yeah, Nisei, yeah. I think, ten years or fifteen years older than I, people are...they don’t speak much Japanese, like Mrs. T, very educated person. She cannot speak fluent Japanese.
13 GK: The only time you speak English is when you are in school?
14 F: No sense speak English. My parents don’t understand English. That’s why. But those days Japanese wasn’t like Japanese language we speak today. Like...because my parent used to speak Kumamoto...
15 GK: Kumamoto dialect [ben].
16 F: Yeah, you know. I see...sometimes you know, they speak Kumamoto-ben, yah. Oh, it sounds nostalgic [natsukashii].

#0308 [M: age: 70s; birthplace: Pāhoa]
1 M: This is the theater (pointing to a map).
GK: Did you see Japanese movies?
M: Oh, used to go see.
GK: But no sound, right?
M: There used to be a narrator [benshi]. And then, you know, I used to like the samurai, Tange Sazen.
GK: Of course, the speaker, he speaks Japanese, right?
M: Oh, yeah, and he was good.
GK: Can everybody understand that Japanese?
M: Yeah, because we understand, we’re Nisei. We speak Japanese at home. Now I can hardly speak Japanese...All you know, this happen.

#0309 [M: age: 90s; birthplace: Kea’au]
M: Each camp, other nationality, like Portuguese and Filipinos, they didn’t have...they were not organized, but as far as Japanese goes, each camp had camp organization. And our camp was known as dōmeikai (association), 9 mile camp dōmeikai.
GK: Is that different from kumiai?
M: It’s something similar to kumiai, but a little different.
GK: So, dōmeikai has nothing to do with wedding and funerals, while kumiai manages funerals.
M: Yeah, but they assist, usually if there is a funeral, they will have dōmeikai. There’s a plantation clubhouse and we had funeral there.
M: We go to Japanese school, but only one hour. You can ( ) too much. Of course most of us went to school because our folks let us go. We have to learn, see. We used to have a night school [yorugakkō]. Those who are in the 30s to about the 40s, young adult, used to teach us at the night school.
GK: Over here?
M: At camp all the students go. Of course it’s not mandatory, I mean, I don’t have to go if I don’t want to go, but those who want to learn more go to yorugakkō. They will teach us.
GK: What kind of subject?
M: School books, school.
GK: English school?
M: No, no, Japanese school. Japanese school. But English school we had older boys who know English, taught us English, English school study. And I remember Y.I was Japanese school, yorugakkō teacher, and H.I was our English school.
GK: These teachers were volunteers?
M: Volunteers. So, once in a while my mother would bring tea and candy. Candy that you have with a tea. So, it was, dōmeikai was big help for us because we used to...because we don’t speak English at home. Only time we speak English is in the classroom, in the schoolyard. At home we speak only Japanese. Now is opposite. We won’t speak Japanese at all, the only time Japanese is when
people from Japan or somebody come and talk to us, then, I speak Japanese. But otherwise I don’t speak Japanese.

15 GK: Your first language is English.
16 M: My first language is English, period. Japanese, not so much, a little.
17 GK: A little.
18 M: There’s no chance to learn. Nobody speak Japanese. I don’t speak at all. My wife speaks nothing but English. She was a English school teacher. She knows a few Japanese, and many Hawai‘i people cannot distinguish the different between real Japanese and Japanese prefecture’s accent [ken no namari].

19 GK: Accents...Hiroshima-ben, Kagoshima-ben.
20 M: Are you...you Tokyo?
21 GK: Yeah, I’m from Tokyo.
22 M: Tokyo-native [Edokko].

#0310 [F: age: 80s; birthplace: Kea‘au]
1 GK: So, he (father) didn’t speak Uchinanchu (Okinawan language)?
2 F: No, he didn’t. He spoke Uchinanchu only with my mother, only when it is secret, you know, the two of them talk Okinanwan language. When they say “Shizuko (her first name),” or “Tomi (her sister’s name)” we know they are talking about us. But what they say, we don’t know. We don’t know because he never taught us. Oh, only we used to listen to...when we have guests or friends, he says, “こまんかい, こまんかい [come in, come in].” And when he serve a tea, he says, “ちゃミソル, チャミソル [have a tea]” That’s why when we were children, we play house, saying “ちゃミソル, チャミソル” But we never was told to speak Okinawan.

3 GK: What about other Okinawan family? Same thing?
4 F: Yeah, those who live in the plantation camp, they were very good, they could understand, you know, because parents continued to speak Okinawan at home. But my father and my mother spoke only Japanese. In fact, my father was very, very careful about...Okinawan “さ, し, す, せ, そ [sa, shi, su, se, so]” is not said as it is said in Japanese. It is pronounced “しゃ, し, しゅ, しぎ, そ [sha, shi, shu, shye, so].” The Chinese character “心” is not pronounced “こころ” [kokoro],” but “くくる [kukuru]” in Okinawan. And “まつ [matsu]” in Japanese changes to “まつゆ [matsuyu]” in Okinawan. If we use Okinawan pronunciation in Japanese conversation we are laughed at by Japanese people because at that time the discrimination against Okinawans was harsh.

5 GK: Even in the plantation?
6 F: Even in the plantation...We had plantation exclusion [haiseki].
7 GK: Oh, yeah?
8 F: Yeah, because I think...historically, Okinawans were supposed to be last immigrants to come from Japan. The rest, all came before that. That’s why, whether you’re Japanese, Italian, or Irish or whatever, if you’re the last to come, exclusion is harsh because of the different way of doing things. Especially in Okinawa, because they’re not part of mainland Japan, they’re separate islands,
they had their own kingdom, they had their own life. Japanese from the mainland do not understand this, and they used to ( ) Okinawan people. Okinawan people are very smart people, but Japanese from the mainland do not understand that. And those Japanese outnumbered Okinawans, so we lost. That’s what happened. Okinawan immigrants are all farmers without education. That’s why my father was very, very strict on the use of Japanese language. My mother used to use a little Okinawan pronunciation. My father would say, “That’s not correct, it’s supposed to be this, you’re going to be laughed at.” So, he correct my mother. So with that, my mother, toward the end, she forgot sometimes Okinawan words. I asked her, “How do you say it in Okinawan language?” But she would say, “I wonder what it was...” because she doesn’t use it. And so, that’s how it was back in the plantation day. Discrimination was so harsh. Japanese refused to allow their children to marry Okinawans. Oh, there was a big fuss, you know. Okinawans were insulted, but it could not be helped because it’s, it’s a small group, last one to come... But my father was very, very strong. He was a community leader, so he make sure that we learn to speak standard Japanese. He said, “Never mind Okinawan language.” “You don’t have to learn it, but you have to master Japanese.” “You cannot do business with Okinawan language.” That’s the main, you cannot do business. That’s true. And we started only Japanese, we did everything in Japanese. Even the New Year’s celebration was not Okinawan style. It was Japanese style, the noodles, seaweed, all the ornaments... and that kind, because Okinawan New Year’s is a little bit different. Anyway, so, I remember when I was a little girl, once a month we used to go to 9 1/2 mile community hall. You see, almost every camp had a small community hall. Plantation made for that club house. At the hall, the Okinawan children, one by one, have to go up and either sing a song or give a speech in front of the others. You have to do something.

9 GK: Is that Okinawa kenjinkai (prefectural association) or something?
10 F: No, that’s not... Maybe it was kenjinkai...I don’t remember the details. Only Okinawan people, not any other people...and so, once a month, they used to have this thing. The idea was to begin the children into learning how to stand in front of people and to do these things. You see, our purpose was to eat candy after it was over. My father used to teach us “Kōjō no Tsuki.” (The Moon on the Abandoned Castle, a Japanese song). I have to learn it. My father taught me that, and other songs, various songs. You have to learn or have to read story...yeah.
11 GK: Sounds hard.
12 F: It was. And all the fathers and mothers, as they listen to their children’s performance, they applaud, to give them confidence. Not only that, my father was so concerned with the way we pronounce Japanese words. So, the young adults’ association...used to gather...I don’t know where it was... My father called the young adults, and he used to teach them how to make a speech. At the beginning, you know, you don’t, you don’t come out. First you introduce yourself, and he tell them how to turn your eyes on the audience.
13 GK: Speech technique, huh?
14 GK: How many people children did you see?
F: At the hall? At that time, every seminar had average ten children. Ten children including my older sisters.

GK: You mean five families got together?

F: No, no, many, many families came. Some father, mother don’t care, you know, but one who cares, they send the children.

GK: In the 9 mile village, how many Okinawan families?

F: In the village, business people, there’re only three. O.I’s grandpa was a bus driver, Uncle S.A had a cleaning shop, laundry shop, my father was a shoe-maker. And my own sister got...we had laundry, too, cleaning shop. So, there’re only three families. So, business people, even if they come together, even business people come together, they don’t talk Okinawan. They talk Japanese. But Okinawans from the camp, Okinawans visiting us from the camp, they all spoke Okinawan language. My mother start talking Japanese, she talk Japanese, “Come in, come in,” but after a while, as people speak Okinawan language, my mother speak it.

#0311 [M: age: 70s; birthplace: Pahoa]

GK: Kumiai (neighborhood association) and church, what relationship do they have?

M: About church, all, almost all Buddhists. Some Christian, but almost all Buddhists. Young ones may be Christian, but almost all Buddhists. And there is the YBA hall in Pahoa, every month, a service is held. We used to have funerals there before. We had any kind of things at the YBA hall. We tore down the old building and built a new one. It was affiliated with different Buddhist temples, Hongwanci, Taishoji, Higashi-Hongwanji...but everybody went together. People in Pahoa were all close, but nowadays it is different.

GK: How different?

M: Old days, Pahoa was all Japanese. There was one Filipino market run by that butcher. There were many restaurants, Tsubota restaurant, Toma restaurant, Iwata restaurant...There were two bakeries, Toita bakery, Iwata bakery. There were two theaters, too. Tsubota and Akebono. There was also a pool-bar and three bars, Tsubota, Miura, Hara.

GK: Big town.

M: Big town. People were hanging out there until late at night, yeah.

GK: How big was it? Bigger than Kea’au town?

M: Bigger than Kea’au town, more stores. Kea’au town had fewer stores. Pahoa had Haru store, Momita, Shiigi, and Yamaguchi, Miura General Merchandise, Bar and Liquor. Tsubota had restaurant and theater and the bar. Momita grocery store. Iwata bakery, it also provided saimin noodles. Toma restaurant, Sueshi store, Kawamura restaurant, there were all kinds. At night, fishermen used to stop by and eat saimin noodles on the way back to Kapoho. They were all Japanese. Even in the school classroom, among twenty-seven classmates, we had only maybe one Filipino, one Chinese, one Portuguese...In Pahoa, there was only one Chinese family, about three Portuguese families, and maybe two haole families. All the rest were Japanese. Filipinos were, at that time, all single. And then they
started to bring their wives from the home country, starting about 1955. But before that, they were all single men without a wife.

9 GK: Filipinos, did they have their own.
10 M: Filipino association, they had, the Catholic church was it. They had a social hall at the church. Filipinos these days are like Japanese were in those days. Filipinos work hard. They do their best to work without any playing around. Japanese were like that. They took days off only on July 4th and New Year’s.

#0312 [M: age: 90s; birthplace: Kea’au]

1 M: Old days they don’t have radios, they don’t have any TVs, they don’t have much entertainment. They had a big theater, Taniguchi theater, that’s all. And before that was Nisshin-za.
2 GK: Nisshin-za.
3 M: I don’t know ( ). ‘Ola’a was a big town. Did you know we had three hotels?
4 GK: Over here, three hotels? I didn’t know that.
5 M: Three of those. One was Ikeda. Ikeda’s downstairs was a restaurant, shokudō, upstairs was a hotel. And there, there was Yamagata hotel. That’s between Puna road and this way (pointing to a map). Yamagata, and then, Fujisaki. Three. Because people, salesmen come from Honolulu. They come to Kea’au and they stay one day in Kea’au, and take care of all these different stores. Because we had stores, see, stores in each camp. 8 mile camp didn’t have a store, but 8 1/2 mile camp there was a store, 9 mile camp had a store. My father used to run this store. Mill camp had a store, Shishido. And 9 1/2 mile camp, Fujikawa store. This village, all stores, older days, because nobody had no such thing as shopping center... So, there was a big Chinese store.

6 GK: Chinese store.
7 M: Hong Sheng Chow.
8 GK: Hong Sheng Chow.
9 M: Hong Sheng Chow. We used to pronounce Hon-sen-cho. That was a big store.
10 GK: You had a Chinese store. That means, you had a lot of Chinese people.
11 M: No. Only Chinese was...the meat market was run by the Chinese, Wong family. And there was a restaurant, coffee shop run by...not Shin...There were three Chinese families.
12 GK: They were shopkeepers.
13 M: Yes. And then we had two photographers.
14 GK: Photographers.
15 M: Koga and Kumamoto. We had two and then, we had two taxi. Sumi and Mukai.
16 GK: Taxi, is that the same as sampan bus (a bus altered from a small truck)?
17 M: No, they had regular passengers. Sampan bus came later. Sampan bus was run later by Fujimura and Oyadomari. And we had many stores. We had medicines [yakuhin].
18 GK: Drugstore?
M: Yeah, drugstore. Yamayoshi and Nakamura. And we had two bakeries, Mishima and Ikeda used to make bread...And all up and down, all small shops, many. And Nisshin-za was made by 1x12, not this T&G. They call this T&G, but all rough one inch thick and twelve inch wide, Nisshin-za. And, and we didn’t have electricity. Then they connect the wire, and then we have movies and plays [shibai]. Theatrical troupes came from Japan, naniwabushi (Japanese narrative storytelling genre). Now naniwabushi is gone. It’s a lost art now.

GK: Yeah, almost it’s gone.

M: Yeah, all the ( ) I remember because my dad used to enjoy entertainment. So, all the shibai, all the naniwabushi, we used to go there. My dad take us.

GK: So, that was before the war?

M: Before the war, and we were kids...And road was all up and down, all dirt road.

F: People in the countryside used to buy ice because they didn’t have a refrigerator. So, they have to buy ice, yah. That’s what they used to sell...block ice. We used to see they’re carrying the ice.

GK: So, they buy ice everyday?

F: Everyday. I’m sure, yeah, because they need it, Kapoho, Pāhoa, they need ice. The Nakaharas run the ice supply. Next door was a tofu shop. The Yoshizawas run it, a tofu factory.

GK: Tofu factory, what did they make?

F: Tofu, fried tofu [age], processed starch [konnyaku], and all kinds. They used to sell...We used to go buy ( ) next door was a steak house, the Ikedas. ‘Ola’a steak house, started by Ikeda family. ( ) Then, Ikeda-san sold it to Ogata. Ogata-san runs the steak house after that. Ogata-san retired, yah, and sold it to Nagakura, he ran the steak house.

GK: How much was a piece of steak?

F: Gee, less than five dollars...three dollars, I think it was...Hoo, the steak was really good, big steak, prime rib. It was very good, popular for all those steak goers. People used to eat, you know, they eat it.

M: Well, I goin’ tell you something. One of reasons why Japanese Nisei went to school, we went to Japanese school. All my life twelve years I went to Japanese school. The way they used to teach us was...Mrs. T [okusan], strict, really disciplinarian. She used to tell us...You know what Buddhist teaching?... “Help, help, help” not “Take, take, take.” That kind of teaching, which I thank Mrs. T taught us.

GK: What about a crime in camp? Did you see any crime in camp? Fighting, drinking, break-in?

M: Oh, as far as fighting goes... You mean young ones? Old people?
GK: Ah, in general...for example, 9 mile camp, did you see any social problems?

M: No, I think we’re very behaved. Monday through Friday, school. Learn, learning. Saturday, we call moral education [shūshin], that’s when the teacher was saying it’s wrong to use bad language, and you have to respect the older people and teachers. And as I said, Mrs. T, she was only a teacher, actually she was the principal. Reverend (Reverend T, the teacher’s husband) was principal only name. Mrs. T, as I said, (she told us) no aidagui (snacks between breakfast and lunch, lunch and dinner) you cannot eat anything between meals. And we cannot stand it, on the way to school there are many guava trees, you know, which guavas are sweet one, we used to eat. (But) Somebody (tipped her off), Saturday we get punishment [batsu].

GK: What kind of batu, punishment?

M: You have to go pull grass in the yard for one hour.

GK: After school?

M: Yeah, after school. And if you’re ( ), two hours. And sometimes if it was really bad you have to go in a room, there were two rooms, the teacher will look, you stay in the room, standing against the wall, that’s all. And sometime the parents will come, and they say, “Our son, Shoichi, hasn’t come home yet, what happened to him?” (The teacher answers) “Batsu.” Then, teacher [sensei] say, “OK, you can go with the parents.” And you go home you get another batu. Bang! (with a gesture of spanking) Very strict. I don’t believe. And you cannot buy...now they buy ice cream, sodas, all kinds. Not our days. And teacher T [sensei] (tells us), “The Japanese are the Japanese, completely different from Portuguese and Filipino. The Japanese must be real human beings [mainingen].” Mainingen, she used to tell us. And then, “If we have even only one bad student in ‘Ola’a Japanese school, even only one bad student, it is shame. It is shame for the whole Japanese people.” She say this. I didn’t agree too much, though. Shine shoes, boys shining shoes, you see, some people, Filipino children, Portuguese children, they shine shoes. They get ten cents or twenty-five cents. She say, “Japanese children should not do such things, that’s...”

GK: That’s not a decent job, that’s what she meant?


GK: Strict.

M: Yeah, very strict. And many bad children used to be sent to Kea’au, Puna Hongwanji’s Boarding School, to change to good boys and girls.

GK: Discipline.

M: The kids used to say, breakfast is miso-soup and Japanese pickles only...But they were paying ten dollars something a month. Cheap.

GK: Including everything. So they came from all over the island?

M: All over, yeah. Some from Hilo, some from Puna, some from ( ). They used to send only children.

GK: What about children of other nationalities? They didn’t go to any school after English school?
M: No. They didn’t go. But later, before the war there were some Filipinos and some...And there was one Korean family, the Ks. His older sister used to come to Japanese school.

###0316 [M: age: 80s; birthplace: Kea’au]
1 M: I was a Hongwanji member from elementary school (Japanese language school). I used to...I used to be the batsu king. You know what batsu is?
2 GK: That’s Japanese punishment.
3 M: I was the king of the batsu. Well, I’m hardhead, hardhead, you know. Not conforming, you know. They tell me what to do, but all I opposed, you know. I was not conformist. I’m a batsu king. Everyday I used to get it after school because of that strict teacher.
4 GK: Mrs. T.
5 M: She was strict, oh...Aidagui, (she would give) batsu, yosasobi [play at night], (she would give) batsu. Then, when you’re walking on the street and if there’re old people, if they across you, you go on the side and let them past. And when the teacher find you’re not the way, disciplined, you get batsu...Me, I get batsu everyday. When I go home late [having batsu at school], my father’s waiting [to give me another batsu]. So I was disciplined from that young boy, you know. But that kind of discipline, they don’t have in English school. I get it only in the Japanese school. What I became I am today is because, I believe, righteousness, tell the truth, help each other...When you write “人,” (He writes the Chinese character for ‘human being’ on a piece of paper), you cannot stand alone. You have to help each other. I learned that in Japanese school. This is one thing I got to remember, what a human being is. Human being is not, not like “/” or not “\.” I learn that in Japanese school when I was learning all the kanji (Chinese characters), hiragana, katakana (the two Japanese syllabaries).

###0317 [M: age: 70s; birthplace: Kapoho]
1 GK: In Japanese language school, what did you learn?
2 M: Mostly those days...they had this value kind of teaching, what they call ‘shūshin’, katakana, hiragana, all kind of writing. Mostly that about ( ) because it’s only after English school was over, then, we went to Japanese school for about one hour or so. And Saturday was a half-day, I guess.
3 GK: Do you think teachers at Japanese school were strict?
4 M: Yeah, because we had ( ) teacher who was in charge. teacher M [sensei]. Yeah, he was strict.
5 GK: Did he hit students?
6 M: Ha had a... he carried the stick with him, but you know, mostly, he put it on the table. I don’t think he hit anybody.

###0318 [M: age: 70s; birthplace: Kapoho, F: age: 70s; birthplace: Japan]
1 GK: Why did people need a Buddhist church?
2 M: Because it’s Japanese, at that time most of villagers were Japanese, yah. And then, the only people who could relate Japanese would be the Buddhist priest.
They were the only ones that were actually educated because they knew how to read, they knew how to write. And Issei that came, a lot of them, came very young, so not many of them knew how to read and write. So, I guess they respected the Buddhist priest. That's why the Buddhist priest, they started Japanese school. I guess it was, I guess the relationship was there because of language and cultural things. I think in Hawai‘i Japanese culture never changes. It never changes because it remains the same Meiji era.

GK: I think, to build the church they needed a lot of money and manual labor. How did they manage that?

M: I think, they were pretty, what you call, I think people who started the system were really smart because they would go, I guess they would find out who's the leader of the community and they would go to them and sort of get the commitment donating money to the church. And they would publicize this, you know. Even Bon dance time when you donate something, they put down the name, how much you donate, and a lot of time people come and they would look and see, "Oh, so-and-so gave this much." "Well, I should donate this much because he gave that much." "I donate as much as they do, maybe I should do this." That type of...So, so far the way they did it...sort of...people make commitment according to how much they thought they should give. So, most of them, even if they had a hard time, would give something, depending on what they publicize to the community. I had more money than that person, then, I should give more money than that person. If you have much less than this person, you shouldn't give more than that. You know that, this kind of thing. But then, I think each person made a commitment to give according to.

F(wife): Japanese pride and vanity [iji and mie].

M: Yeah, I think so. And that worked because...really worked. So, later on, when second and third generation started to take over, especially, Bon dance like that, they say, "Do away with putting down the name." You know, you give what you can, what you want to give, without comparing to other people.

GK: Yeah, always we have people who like showing off.

M: Before...That's why they make sure, they put down, sometimes it's big paper, and they can ( ) when they donate pledge. They always bring the book and always look at the book and compare, "So-and-so gave so much, maybe I should give so much." That kind of.

GK: Good strategy.

M: Yeah, it worked.

F: age: 70s; birthplace: Kea‘au

GK: When you had a reunion, did you mingle with other nationalities?

F: Yeah, you know, time changed. Not like old days. I thought it was scary. I didn't want to go to Filipino camp, Puerto Rican camp. But the world changed, we grew up. So now, we talk story, you know. But before the war, not so much. We don't know, we live with immigrant parents, so we do not understand English. The culture was strictly Japanese, and I guess then, Filipino want to put ( ). But today, intermingle, it is opening up, goodness.
M: When I was growing up, a very few Korean, you know, in plantation camp. I don’t know where they disappear, but they weren’t there, you know, plantation camp. Japanese the most, yah. Filipino next, you know. Japanese was first, and Filipino plenty came later days, outnumbered Japanese. We had Puerto Rican, we got Portuguese, very few Hawaiian working in plantation, very few. These were the different nationality. We got Puerto Rican camp, Japanese camp, Filipino camp, Portuguese camp, all different camp. The reason why they (the company) make separate because they didn’t want the workers get together... when they get together, we’re gonna negotiate, you know. But mistake they did was all the kids like me, we got to go English school, whether it’s Hawaiian, Chinese, we had very few Chinese. We never had Chinese workers in our plantation.

After the war, the population of this plantation was Filipino and Japanese mostly, right?

We got along. And they had weddings, they would invite Japanese because they’re working together. All they are friends. We went to many Filipino weddings and Filipino baby shower.

We had some, but, I wouldn’t say exclusion [haiseki], but there was a little discrimination. Japanese ( ) Filipinos were not as good as Japanese [nihonjin].

We had a little discrimination. And then I know one family, married to a Filipino boy, the girl from our camp. Hoo, the father disowned her. (He said) “You never step in my house again!” He say, father say, “I’ll consider you are dead.” But, when the first baby was born, as you thought, the first grandchild was so dear to the grandparents, they went see. They forgive (the daughter). Then, another sister married Japanese, then when parents came old, good care of parents...Filipino. That Filipino boy was the most caring to the parents. And another one, another girl married Caucasian [hakujin], he was a soldier, he was at KMC, Kilauea Military Camp. She was working at hotel, Volcano Lounge (Volcano House). They got married. Oh, her parents got mad...See, they said, “Our daughter married gaijin [non-Japanese], why couldn’t she marry Japanese?” Oh, they were mad. But the same thing. When the baby was born, hoo, it’s cute [kawaii], yah. A grandchild is dear to its grandparents. Then, they came good. Many are like that. So, don’t oppose it too much.

What about Portuguese?

Portuguese, all the nationalities, Portuguese nationality, to me, they don’t care. They don’t care. And there’s no such thing as “We Portuguese must do this.” They don’t have such feelings. They don’t have it, and.
GK: But Japanese.

M: Japanese, "If you are Japanese, you shouldn't do it because otherwise it will bring shame to all the Japanese." Only Japanese think that way, I think. The old ones. The first generation of Japanese...second generation and older their generation, maybe. But younger third generation and fourth generation don't.

GK: That's interesting. Only Japanese stick to nationality, the spirit of...

M: Yamato spirit [damashii], yeah. My father say, "Don't do what Portuguese do."

GK: What's that mean? Portuguese behavior?

M: Well...Uhmm.

GK: They had some kind of stereotype about Portuguese, yah?

M: Not exactly stereotype, but Portuguese kids, they usually go to fifth or sixth grade, then quit. They quit and then start working. And especially, when they wear their clothing, they don't care what kind of clothing. Japanese, even though clothing is not nice, at least clean. You have to be clean and you go a bath [furo]. You say, "Japanese go to furo every night." See, and you ( ) "You don't do what Portuguese do," like, Portuguese take a bath once a week.

GK: Is that true?

M: Yeah. I don't prove that. I think, Portuguese, I don't know, but before they used to smell because I guess they don't bathe like Japanese. And clothes, maybe they don't wash as often as Japanese. Even though clothes are not clean, I mean, they are not fancy, Japanese wash them clean and iron them. All they used to iron before. Portuguese sometimes they don't iron. They just wear.

GK: They don't care about it.

M: They don't care.

F: Our community, not so much because Portuguese have their own celebration, Filipino have their own celebration, Japanese have their own celebration, yah. But not as community.

GK: What about July fourth?

F: July fourth, kind of different, yah. See, like Japanese association, Japanese...Oh, yeah, like village. OK, we have a village picnic that we go to the beach. But ever since picnic started, only ( ). They don't want to go already. It's kinda disappeared. They go on their own. Community spirit has disappeared...a lot of them moved away, new people come. Then, subdivisions came out, you know. They have their own, so, and you know, mostly it was centered on our own camps and they weren't there. That's why...no more the closeness in our place. Everybody is on their own.

M: Well, 9 mile camp, supposedly this is 9 mile camp (pointing to the map). Front portion was all Japanese, and last two rows were Filipinos. Filipinos were in the back, and, this is the village, 9 mile village.

GK: That's where you lived?
M: No, not village. And this was the main camp, Hongwanji is here. This was the biggest camp, 9 mile camp. And I think 8 1/2 camp was big, too. These two were the biggest.

GK: Mostly, Japanese were here?
M: Not all. (They were in) 8 mile camp, 8 1/2 mile camp, 9 mile camp, and New camp. New camp was a hundred percent Japanese. 9 1/2 mile camp, on the back side, Filipino mostly.

#0325 [F: age: 80s; birthplace: Kea'au]
F: 9 1/2 mile camp, over here, people were very, very close. Japanese live in this house, Okinawan live in that house, Filipino live that house, mixed up. Since all mixed up, everybody is close to the others. Filipino and Japanese all were close. In 9 mile camp, Japanese are Japanese, Filipino are Filipino, all separated. And we had Portuguese camp.

#0326 [M: age: 70s; birthplace: Pāhoa]
M: In the camp, very few Japanese because we were not employees of Puna Sugar, we all had own houses. Very few Japanese live in the camp. In the camp mostly Filipinos, I'm sure. And there were some Japanese living in the camp, but they all eventually moved out.

#0327 [M: age: 80s; birthplace: Kea'au]
GK: Do you know any Japanese who got married to non-Japanese [gaijin]?
M: Very few, very few. My age period no more.
GK: That's because parents opposed it? They don't want their children to marry gaijin?
M: All Japanese, all Japanese, they never like you to marry gaijin, yah. The people came from Japan. Because of different language, different customs and everything. But then, Kumamoto-ken girl, her name was T.N, she was the smartest girl in class. ( ) introduced me to her, see. That's when I fall in love with her. But when she tell me that her mother says, "Don't get married to Okinawan," well, that's the end of it because if I get married to you, you gonna get split from your family, yah. But I never forget that, though. Never forget that.

#0328 [M: age: 90s; birthplace: Kea'au]
M: Hawai'i, as you know, has more Hiroshima-ken than other ken. Then, it comes Yamaguchi-ken, then, some Kumamoto-ken. So, Hiroshima would say, "はい ぎょうさんみかんがなってる [Oh, there are many oranges hanging on], ぎょうさんが [many]." Kumamoto would say, "いさぎいい [a sporting spirit], "はいったいなはれ [come on in] あったちはいつもていなはれ [come on in over there]." Yamaguchi say, "ぼーわたしもうかえるや [I'm going home already], "Me, いんでる."  
GK: いんでる.
M: You think she's gonna come back? But, no, no, she's going home.
4  GK: Right.
5  M: So many Kumamoto, Okinawa people have accents. They cannot say “つ [tsu]” or “はう [chau].”

#0329 [F: age: 80s; birthplace: Kona]
1  F: I’m Kumamoto, and then my parents used to say, “Kumamoto-ken のみくだおれ (Kumamoto people like to drink and eat) Hiroshima-ken でがんす (Hiroshima people like guests to leave).” You know what that means? They come to the home... We go to the house... (Hiroshima people would say) “Come in and have some tea.” When you say, “Good-bye,” they say “come in,” when you leave the house. That’s why でがんす. When you “でる [leave]” and say good-bye, when you start to go home they (Hiroshima people) come out. (On the other hand) Kumamoto people welcomes you with food and drink until you fall down. Kumamoto people don’t make a success.
2  GK: Yeah. (Kumamoto people has) too much hospitality.
3  F: Yeah.

#0330 [M: age: 80s; birthplace: Kea’au]
1  M: You know, my mother used to raise a pig, yah. She used to collect all the pig food in the village here. She used to carry ( ) in the container on the ( ). She used to go up and collect all the feed from 9 mile camp and village here. When we raise the pig, we can sell them, or we can give them away, so we used to... We had six Okinawan families in the camp. When I was growing up, my parents don’t speak Japanese to me. They talk in all Uchinanchu (Okinawan language). When I go to school, I go answer back [to them] in Japanese. They understand, but they cannot speak. I go talk to them in Japanese. There were six families in the camp, all of them were the same thing, they don’t speak Japanese. They speak only Okinawan. So, when they socialize these Okinawan families help each other. So, we get extra cabbage we distribute, when they get extra Japanese radish [daikon], they give us. We share all we have.

#0331 [F: age: 70s; birthplace: Kea’au]
1  F: Kenjinkai (prefectural association) wasn’t so strong. I mean, not within this community. But since Hilo started it, and like here is second generation, yah. But Hilo ( ) work...Kumamoto kenjinkai...like us... Well, we are Kumamoto kenjinkai. But we don’t...we aren’t...I don’t like it that much, you know. For me, I don’t like it.
2  GK: But you know, Okinawa kenjinkai? It’s particularly...they are strong.
3  F: Oh, yeah. They are strong.
4  GK: Why is it?
5  F: Okinawan pride.
6  GK: Okinawan pride.
7  F: Because when they were growing up, they were kind of looked down, yah.
8  GK: Because they came here later?
9 F: No...because they are different. They were the kind that kill pigs. They raised pigs. That's dirty [kitanai] kind. And I guess, Japanese always treat Okinawan as second class citizens, yah. Now, you know...Well, my father always say, Okinawans are Okinawan, you know. No matter who that is, even he is no good, they still back up Okinawans. See, that there's one thing Japanese. Instead of getting the unity, they get jealous. If one person is successful, instead of being behind the person, they tear down. My father always say, that's the weakness of Japanese.

10 GK: I think so.

11 F: But father used to mention that Okinawans, very supportive.

#0332 [F: age: 70s; birthplace: Mountain View]
1 F: But wartime, Jap, Jap, Jap...everybody, Jap, Jap, Jap...discrimination during the war.

#0333 [F: age: 70s; birthplace: Kea'au]
1 F: The church (Puna Hongwanji)...it was martial law. We could not have any gathering. So, nobody could come to church. And then, no more minister, too...You know, the soldiers were in Japanese school, stationed...And the blackout, yah. We have, one time, and you know, we used to see soldiers' marching...And one night, bang, bang, bang. This was a spy, spy in the tower (of Puna Hongwanji). My father say, “There’s no spy.” (The soldier says,) “No, somebody’s flashing the light.” It’s still on the blackout. So, my father say, “No, there’s nobody there.” The soldier insisted, so my father says, “That’s columbarium you know, where their ash is...” “No, there’s a spy up there.” So, they went up, found a mirror.

2 GK: Reflection.

3 F: Yeah, the light, moonlight, see. This was right after, you know, the bombing (Pearl Harbor). Everybody was scared...but after that no more espionage.

#0334 [F: age: 70s; birthplace: Mountain View; M: age: 80s; birthplace: Mountain View]
1 F: During the war, we couldn’t speak Japanese. And I know my father throw away all to burn up, Japanese ( ), the books of Japanese emperor and queen like that. All he burned. So, MP, Military Police in the war just walk in a house anytime, then, they used to inspect your house. If you have anything, you know, Japanese flags or anything...So, I know during the war my father throw all the things away. That’s why, you know, the way we Hawai’i Japanese, we cannot speak that well. We don’t know too much about Japan...During the war we couldn’t do anything about Japan.

2 M(husband): You know, at the time of WWII, when Pearl Harbor was bombed, that very morning they took my father. They lock him up. Oh, soldiers came to my house, police came, pick him up and lock him up.

3 GK: 1941 December.

4 M: That very morning.

5 GK: That’s too quick.
M: We didn’t know, but they were keeping track of all the Japanese.

GK: I think so.

F: And you know why? He used to write to Japanese consul, you know, all the paper. ...That’s why his name was ( ) consul. And then he used to teach Japanese school and community leader. He was the first one they interned.

#0335 [F: age: 70s; birthplace: Mountain View; M: age: 80s; birthplace: Mountain View]

F: Ah... whole Filipinos they had this Hawai’i Rifle. They used to get all the Filipinos, all kinds. This was too much to watch, and Japanese all ( ) through. When they find something, they come and pound the door. And say, “Turn up all, everybody!” They were arrogant

GK: Filipinos.

M(husband): They were arrogant.

#0401 [M: age: 70s; birthplace: Kapoho]

M: The successful present life they have today. If they live miserable today, if it’s very poor and struggling, no home, no TV, no food, I don’t think they look back their past and think it was great. They’d think it was terrible. But because they have things good today the past looks good. I think that’s human nature. My friends and I, my close friends and I keep saying, we are very lucky. Living in the best time of mankind, if you look in history, we live the best time of mankind. For instance, my house, we get three people and three automobiles. Three people, we have four TVs, you know. We have five, six VCRs, you see. If you call that materialistic expense, then...I visited Japan in the past forty, fifty times, partly it’s business, but I enjoyed it. I love fishing. I did fishing everywhere in the world all my life, you know, not only on this island, but many places in the world. Mexico, New Zealand and you name it... Alaska. So, I think because of that, you know, ( ). That’s my opinion. If you really think about it, you know, like I always say, we started poor, we had no running water in the house, of course no flush toilet, things like that. Water was very precious commodity, rainwater and very small reservoir, tanks that keep it in...I used to love to read, I still do, but I used to read about more than anything I’m doing in school, you know. I stay up until two o’clock in the morning and get up four o’clock in the morning to go school. I did this with the light of kerosene lamp. Single small kerosene lamp. If you look at it, it’s inconvenient. I used to have clothes, two pants, and two shirts. I didn’t have other underwears until I went to army, yah. One good fun thing I have nowadays, once in a while, I look at towels in my bathroom, you know. Three bathrooms in my house. We all have our own bathroom, yah. And we have at least five, six of towels, a big bath towel, washing towel, and one more hand towel. And I look back just other day, I was thinking, gee, I had one towel, that thing was kind of brownish, you know, reddish, you know...you used to see it anywhere. And you know, like I said, [if] it was miserable today, if I still live in that condition, I probably would have had very different memories of time, the past. Now we live in the very best time of mankind, and very best country in the
world of that time, and even in the country we live in the best part of the country. Now even we live on the Big Island.

# 0402 [M: age: 70s; birthplace: Kapoho]
1 M: City people are different, you know. We never had electricity until I came back from army. In fact, it’s much later. We had no refrigeration. So, I like salt beef.
2 GK: Salt beef...What?
3 M: To begin with, we had very little beef or meat. Let’s say chicken. We raised our own chicken.
4 GK: In the back yard, right?
5 M: Yeah, no fence. Then, we fed them in the evening so they stayed around the place. But there was no fence, only thing is...We put orange boxes with a blue roof on top...Only time we ate chicken was when somebody, guests come, my father would kill chicken, you know. Chicken hekka (cooking style), you know, we never know sukiyaki (Japanese beef dish), that’s after the war terminology...Anyway, that’s meat. Dried fish, that’s most common source of protein, yah. And pork. If some of the neighborhood kill it, they would sell it to you. They, you know, too much for them, and then several people bought it. ( ) Then beef. In Kapoho no more meat market. From Pāhoa once or twice a week they would come, they take an order, then next time they bring. Like us, we live away outside of county, they never even used to come to our place. So, there was an old Hawaiian guy, he had a rifle, then he would shoot wild cattle. So, every time he shoots one, he packs for us in the rice bag. Everything...rice came with 100 pound bag...we made the clothes, we made underwear, undershirt and everything. That’s the way, putting it in the bags, and hang up to sell them. It was ten cents a pound. If I would buy fifty pounds, it’s just five dollars. And he would give you extra because he has a lot of meat...the liver, the tongue, like that. My father ate that stuff and I love liver, too, to this day. Liver, you know, you cannot salt, so you fry it. And you heat up the thing, you know, you refry it everyday until it’s gone. Maybe it takes four days to eat the thing everyday. The liver, you know. And the meat, most of them salted.
6 GK: Salted.
7 M: You know what kame [an earthenware pot] is.
8 GK: Yeah.
9 M: ( ) salted down, put the cover on. Those days no more saran wrap, only you wrap it up with rice bag.
10 GK: How long does it last?
11 M: Indefinitely, you know. It’s real salty. You take out a little bit, wash it up, cook it with vegetable. You never eat the whole thing, like a steak or stuff like that. We didn’t know a steak...You know, corned beef and Vienna sausage were a big treat.
12 GK: A big treat?
13 M: Oh, yeah.
14 GK: So, all the canned food was a big treat?
M: Spam can, oh, that’s, it’s a real special treat. Pork and meat...we never had bread.

# 0403 [M: age: 70s; birthplace: Pāhoa]
1 GK: What about New Year? How did you celebrate it?
2 M: Mostly each family on their own, I guess. I guess that’s when once a year I have good food...Chicken and stuff like that.
3 GK: Chicken was special?
4 M: Yeah, only special occasions, yeah, chicken. Because fish... because we live close to the ocean, not close, but fish was available. So, my father used to go fishing all the time. Fish and...
5 GK: Rice and fish, those kinds of stuff were staple food.
6 M: Yeah, yeah, mostly Japanese style cooking.
7 GK: In special occasions you had chicken. What about pork?
8 M: Yeah, pork, once or twice a year because you raise your own pig, then, half a year, you know, it is big enough, so kill the pig and distribute to the neighbors, once or twice a year, I know we used to.
9 GK: What about beef?
10 M: Fresh beef, we didn’t have meat market in Kapoho. So, not so often, yah.
11 GK: You mean, nobody raise the cattle.
12 M: Well, we had cattle crowd. But...I think Lyman had some cattle, then...I know father used to work for railroad and then sometime the train would hit the cow, and then, they would have to get it out and they give you, bringing the meat home, you know. But I think we survive mostly fish and pork and chicken, stuff like that. Most of the pork like that, we didn’t have refrigerator until later on, so, mostly they salted. Fish, dried fish...and can goods, corned beef, sardine, codfish and stuff like that. Afterward Spam, Vienna sausage.

#0404 [F: age: 70s; birthplace: Kea’au]
1 GK: Everybody’s barefoot.
2 F: Yeah, everybody’s barefoot, no more shoes, no can afford shoes. Shoes, oh, you wear shoes, it’s special occasions. Not like today.

#0405 [F: age: 80s; birthplace: Kea’au]
1 F: That’s a plantation hospital, so, we don’t have the right to go there. Village people no more right, we have to pay cash when we go there. You cannot...plantation people, they used to go...I don’t know how many beds they have, but they had plantation people. And I remember one time I went up there to see the doctor because I played house and ate something wrong.
2 GK: You got a stomachache.
3 F: So, my mother go ask Mr. Taniguchi. Taniguchi theater’s uncle was a little bit like a pharmacist. He tried something, but it didn’t work. So, my mother had to take me to the hospital. But they didn’t want to go because they had to pay money. We tried not to go to hospital. When my younger sister was two years old, she had a burn because my mother dropped her into the boiling laundry. My
mother took her to Taniguchi and was told that the best way to heal a burn is to apply cow’s dropping. So my mother did it, and my sister got well.

4 GK: It works, yah.
5 F: It worked. You know, Cow’s droppings are clean because they eat grass. That’s why she says it’s clean. So, she took. I never forget that she put it on.
6 GK: Sound like you had a lot of wise persons.
7 F: Yeah. When you have no money, you think what to do. When you cannot see a doctor, you have to think what to do. Nowadays, everybody goes to see a doctor. Old days, we cannot do it. You try to fix yourself. So, you learn a lot of things, what you can use. People in old days had no education, but wisdom.

#0406 [M: age: 70s; birthplace: Pāhoa]
1 M: My family was six girls and two boys. Old days, all big family.
2 GK: Eight brothers and sisters.
3 M: Yeah...that’s why, all families were poor in those days, yah. But everybody, that’s why everybody work hard, see...because we have seen it, us, we have seen it...But Pāhoa people all used to have side businesses before, in those days. That why our income per capita was high. We had a poor lifestyle, but we had money. Family was big and expense was big, but we had various income sources.
4 GK: A lot of kinds of incomes.
5 M: Yeah, like when I was working plantation, I had like, three acres of canefield starting from half an acre. I had three acres of canefield, but I quit raising sugarcane because it didn’t make money. So, I had 150-acre ranch with four hired help, and I raised cattle. I never bought meat. And I did oranges, but the season is only once a year, that’s why I quit it. Anthurium is monthly income, you can harvest every week. So, I raised more anthurium and stopped growing oranges and sugarcane. I kept the ranch for 20 years and quit. I did a lot of things.

#0407 [M: age: 80s; birthplace: Kea’au]
1 M: Those days families are, gee, average was at that time, maybe (10) or more because my family had twelve.
2 GK: Twelve. Parents and children were living together in the same house.
3 M: You know, they really work hard because, besides raising a family, they had to work in the canefield. They all had their own canefield. We had 13 acres, close to thirteen acres. That’s why it was good because if you have income from the canefield, at least the store know you have canefield and they would let you charge, you know...They were nice enough to wait until we harvest the cane. When money come in, we go to pay, pay off to the store. The monthly income you made was barely enough just for...to take care of family needs, yah. That’s not enough but somehow we were able to...We had a rough time, you know. My mother did a lot of sewing.
GK: Plantation workers, they had some kinds of entertainment, like baseball teams and basketball teams. What about women? For them what kind of entertainment was available?

F: Gee...only work...raise families.

GK: I’m interested in women’s life in sugar plantation.

F: They work hard.

GK: Work hard.

F: They wash clothes.

M(husband): They raise children.

F: Raise children, big families. All those families had plenty of children. Like Higa [family], they had eight children. Asato [family] had about nine or eleven. [Another family] got eight, big family.

GK: Typical plantation houses have three bedrooms or four bedrooms, yah. So, how did you use the bedrooms?

F: Everybody has to sleep together, even we had only three bedrooms, but seven of us, my mother, my father...

GK: In your house where you have seven family members, you cannot all have beds?

F: No, no, no. In fact we didn’t have beds, only my father had a bed. We all had to sleep on the sleeping mat [futon], on the floor. Lining up, all five of us, and my brother used to sleep with my father.

GK: What’s your favorite thing to do in those days?

F: Favorite thing...I wish I had learned how to dance. But we have to pay to learn, yah, we couldn’t afford it. So, I have to just sit down and watch them. But I learned how to dance, because of just watching, because I was fast learner, too. But I couldn’t dress. They are all dressed, but we couldn’t afford to do that. But that was a part of growing up, those days, yah. But favorite thing, I say, we were taught not to play, we were taught not to waste time, we were taught to work because we had many children...And so, the first time I went Europe, I went three weeks, four weeks, but the second week I wanted to come home. I was tired of playing, I couldn’t...When I went to Venice, I got tired, “Eh, I want to go home, work, I don’t want to play anymore.” You say, “I paid for the whole day, you better stay around.” But I’m not used to just sitting around. That’s why, still now, when I’m on a trip, I’ll always take handicrafts or something, something to do.

GK: What’s the difference between people in ‘Ola’a village and people in plantation camp?

F: Actually, the lifestyle is not much different, I think. Our schedule is different because we’re not ruled by plantation. A gong at the stable was hit early in the
morning, four thirty or five o’clock to wake up everybody. It is a wake-up call. Then, at six o’clock, it sounds again, telling people to start working. We used to have that, but we were not controlled by that. We had our own schedule...But, people were not different, because there were no rich people in those recession days. Only theater people were rich.

GK: Theater people, you mean actors?

F: No, no, no. The people who own the theater. They were considered as rich people because they had a piano, they go to a bank once a week to deposit money. I used to envy them. We didn’t have that kind of money. At that time it was recession, I think, we lived the same kind of life...Life was very at hand. Many grow vegetable, you know. We leased land somewhere, so all of us...and laundry and everything, we have to wash by hand, everybody in plantation. Only around 1938 when my sister started the laundry, we had a little money, so, my mother bought a washing machine. We were the only one with a washing machine. And 1927, not too many automobiles, my father bought Chevrolet, 700 dollars.

GK: Plantation people didn’t need any cash for grocery shopping, right?

F: We charged at the plantation store...But Akiyama store, Oto store, Suzuki store, we had store like that. So, we can go there and charge. Village people, we can go there and charge. So, we used to charge, all the time. And then, the end of the month, my mother have to pay the bill. For example, if she has a 200 dollar bill, she cannot pay 200 dollars, she pay only 100 dollars. You don’t have to pay all, you know.

GK: But you’re going to pile up the debt.

F: My sister told me, the one passed away just before, “We’ve had such a hard time.” When we had New Year, my mother didn’t want us to go buy at Akiyama store because we have so much debt. Then, Akiyama’s grandfather came to tell us, “H’s (interviewee’s maiden name) mom, you have many children, come buy stuff and get ready for New Year, you can charge.” People those days were really kind. Oh, my mother she go cry and cry. So, that’s how the merchants were at the time because my mother couldn’t pay enough to everybody.

M: This 8 1/2 mile camp...folks...You grow up in the plantation, camp bath [furo] is like a communal bath. So many families use the same bath. You cannot go in the furo, it’s boiling from the bottom. You take the pan and you wash, and then you come in...The same thing, it’s a communal toilet. A big cesspool, then, big ( ) on top. You go down there to make shi-shi (urinate) or doo-doo (defecate), then, you wipe and throw it inside there...smelly, yah, because all the... Each camp never had the kind of drainage, yah. They got a ditch. So, if you mother cook something in the kitchen, throw them in the drainage, then they go down that way. All it’s open, no more sanitation. The plantation, the way they kept the plantation workers... 1x12 houses. The manager’s house...But all the work men’s house...The way workers were treated in the plantation, it’s hard to believe, you know, they were animals. Portuguese were lucky. Some of supervisors were Portuguese. I never see one Japanese supervisor. The plantation top guys were
all Haoles, OK? But trade guys, like carpenters, mechanics, machinists, were mostly Japanese.

#0412 [M: age: 80s; birthplace: Pāhoa]
1 GK: You were working for the company?
2 M: Yes, yes, I was full-time on this plantation.
3 GK: What was your job?
4 M: Oh, I work 46 years and nine months for this plantation. The last 19 years I was a harvesting supervisor. Before that, I was cutting cane, you know. They say hapai ko, load cane on that, on that plank, used to call hapai ko.
5 GK: So, you were using harvesting gang.
6 M: Yeah, yeah, last nineteen years. So, I was working full-time, and then, I used to raise cane. Of course, my family used to, my wife and my father used to have all cane [to grow sugar cane as a side crop].

#0413 [M: age: 80s; birthplace: Pāhoa]
1 M: But because Pāhoa people, they, most, about ninety percent, they used to raise sugarcane. Because of that, they were able to own their own house, yah. And they were able to build the Japanese school, they were able to get this new building, you know the YBA hall. Because of that they were able to...Pāhoa was one of most prosperous communities...Most of residents, they used to raise sugarcane...Sugar was extra.
2 GK: Extra...what is the main income?
3 M: They work for the sugar company.
4 GK: As an employee?
5 M: Yeah.
6 GK: So, some people are machine operators and the others people are manual laborers for harvesting?
7 M: Yes, yes.

#0414 [M: age: 70s; birthplace: Pāhoa ]
1 M: K.I, he was a big grower. But when the volcano came, lava covered this place, so he moved out.
2 GK: That's K.I, right?
3 M: K.I.
4 GK: He died already.
5 M: Yeah. In Pāhoa they have G.M. He was big, too. He had his own land. I don’t know how he got the land, but he had a lot of land. And he sold it and they have more in subdivision. Who else? Pāhoa, G.M...Plenty growers, you know. They did all different jobs. In fact, Pāhoa used to be all Japanese community before, and per capita that was the richest town in the whole state of Hawai‘i because everybody has extra work, oranges, sugar...those days orange and sugar and anthurium. And eventually papayas. That’s why people didn’t have a break, raising sugarcane and other things.
6 GK: Always working.
M: Everybody’s working. That’s why people from Japan kept working until they died. No more vacation, no more holiday, no more such thing, vacation. Even after retirement they work on the yard, making flowers. That’s why they are healthy.

#0415 [F: age: 80s; birthplace: Hilo]
1 F: Yeah, yeah, competition. We had other stores, like Suzuki store... at my time. There was Hara store, too... We were busy.
2 GK: Busy?
3 F: Busy! Small little items we used to sell, yah. Especially, New Year time, yah, fish cake [kamaboko], raw fish [sashimi], deep fried food [tempura], and stuff like that... and fish eggs [suzuko]. All those things we used to wrap up. Before opening the store, we write Happy New Year on the goods. And we deliver them. We used to hire men to deliver them. We used to go all the way to 16 mile camp, 14 mile camp, 9 1/2 mile camp, 10 mile camp, 11 mile camp, we put customers’ names and addresses on the products, and we used to deliver.
4 GK: How did you get an order from them?
5 F: Oh, we have to go and take the order in the morning, and afternoon we deliver. So, we have to make the order in that day. That’s why we were very busy like New Year. One day we used to work about thirteen, fourteen hours, you know, a day. Yeah, no kidding.
6 GK: That’s much longer than plantation workers.
7 F: Yeah, we work hard.

#0416 [F: age: 70s; birthplace: Mountain View]
1 F: Many of them, because the family is so big, the older ones, all go to school only ninth or seventh grade, then they help the family. Old days, the older one...I’m telling you about Mayor Kimura. Oh, his older brothers, all didn’t go high school. Only maybe seventh grade and they start helping their family. To help support their family, many of them didn’t go to school, you work hard.
2 GK: So, they just keep working hard. Can’t they afford to have any dream?
3 F: Yes, oh, no dreams. That’s why they work as hard as they can. They made young boys go to school. That’s what Kimura’s brothers did. His older brothers only went to ninth grade. You have to go to school until you’re sixteen, yah. Once you’re sixteen, they start working in the cane field, like that.
4 GK: But I guess some boys wanted to run away from the plantation.
5 F: Oh, yeah. But many of them, filial piety [oyakōkō].
6 GK: Oyakōkō... So, they stayed on the plantation. Do you know anyone who ran away from the plantation?
7 F: Few... About our age, oyakōkō, you help your parent, whole family. You help support your family.

#0417 [M: age: 90s; birthplace: Kea‘au]
1 GK: You didn’t do any plantation work?
2 M: I work summer time, hō hana (hoe work).
GK: Part-time job?
M: Summer time. I got fifteen cents a day. Fifteen cents a day. All ours, maybe
nine or ten years old, fifteen cents a day. Then mother say, “Your lunch costs
more than fifteen cents.” Then, you have to buy a raincoat, boots...

GK: For equipment.
M: I wanted to go because everybody go to work. And then, if you work hard,
every week you get free movies. And at the end of summer, we go to the beach,
Onekahakaha beach with the plantation’s truck, a picnic. That’s all the job we
have, those days. So, I work fifteen cents a day. And all the boys fourteen or
fifteen, they have twenty-five cents a day. A day, not an hour.

GK: Those kids came from these camps.
M: Yeah, all the camps.
GK: Not only Japanese.
M: Yeah, gaijin, too.

#0418 [F: age: 70s; birthplace: Pāhoa]
F: We went to, you know, during the war, Friday and Saturday, you have to go to
canefield. And summer time we went to the canefield. They call it school gang,
like, hoe hana. And then, the contractor measure how many people get so many
cents.
GK: So, the school gang, they make kozukai (their own money, allowance).
F: And then, when we go to cut cane, we used to make many bundles. Then
trucks went down, they scale it, then, credit us.
GK: According to weight.
F: Yeah.

#0419 [M: age: 70s; birthplace: Pāhoa]
GK: How did you get involved in this church?
M: I’m a member because my parents. But I was in...I knew I was a Buddhist,
but I don’t know when I became dues paying member. Late...you know.
GK: Late.
M: Yeah, because our life is only work, yah. Work and family, you know what I
mean? ...By the time I was fourteen years old, I worked for plantation, you know.
Work on Saturday. My spending money was, I earned it myself. Every
summertime I work. I was self-sufficient, we have to.

#0420 [M: age: 80s; birthplace: Pāhoa]
M: At the time of harvest, they deduct all what you borrow from them.
GK: But still, you can have profit, right?
M: But, many times, like, I used to raise some field in Pāhoa, mountain side
[mauka]. That tonnage was low, many times...don’t balance. I have to pay.
GK: So, you went into red.
M: Yeah, red, yes.
GK: So, profit wasn’t guaranteed?
M: No, no, no...like this (pointing at his book), my profit was only 203 dollars for six acres.

GK: So, working on this field for two years, and then, the profit was 200 dollars?

M: Yes.

#0421 [M: age: 80s; birthplace: Kea'au]
M: He (father) died when he was ninety-four. All his life...He work hard to keep 11 children alive. I tell you what the secret is. You got to touch diet everyday. All his life, he touch diet everyday. So, secret is you got to touch diet, you live long.

GK: You mean farming?

M: He’s working on plantation field, yah, canefield. Then we used to raise our own cane, used to sell it to plantation, yah...I go help him, cut the cane and everything, plant the cane and everything. When the cane grow, we sell the cane to plantation...Work, work, work.

GK: So, until what age, did he work?

M: My father worked all his life.

#0422 [M: age: 70s; birthplace: Pāhoa]
GK: When you were small, did you see any discrimination?

M: Well, we didn’t know if it was discrimination, but we know that luna, the boss are all white, yah, you know what I mean? Then, later on, harvesting area we had Japanese luna, yah. That time, getting up Japanese, but Portuguese, white, you know...But we just accept them, we don’t think it’s as...we don’t know what prejudice was, basically, you know what I mean? That age.

#0423 [M: age: 70s; birthplace: Kapoho]
GK: Like you said, Oriental people value hard working. So, Oriental people are good workers in that sense, if you compare to...maybe Haole?

M: Yeah, you know, physical workers, Haoles are bosses, they don’t have to work. A few Haole we have over here, either land owners, or bosses, or supervisors...Nobody [i.e., no Haole] works in the field in our days. Today is different story. If you are talking about Japanese now.

#0424 [F: age: 70s; birthplace: Mountain View]
GK: So, what about discrimination among the worker? Did you experience any kind of discrimination?

F: As a whole, I think they got along. I think they got along.

GK: Even with Haole members?

F: Well, I don’t think the Japanese associated with Haoles too much because Haoles are way up there...Like Japanese, Chinese are all way down here.
#0425 [M: age: 80s; birthplace: Kea’au]
1 M: I gonna tell you something. Plantation, yah, only the guy will get the credit is the white man, the top man in the department. Workers like us, we get nothing...we don’t get no credit, we are on the bottom, yah.

#0426 [M: age: 80s; birthplace: Kea’au]
1 GK: When you say discrimination, what kind of discrimination are you talking about?
2 M: Well, in our plantation, white men rule, yah?
3 GK: Like a manager?
4 M: Everything. They get more money, they get better house, everything the plantation provide, the white men get the first one, we get all the junk ones. But when we maintain the factory, we all take care of our workers, yah. We don’t make anything for the Haole. We make for the workers. When we get our work so updated, when we have nothing to do, we make them (cooking knives and hatchets) privately.

#0427 [M: age: 90s; birthplace: Kea’au]
1 M: Japanese went all strikes before because Japanese got cheap, gaijin got better pay. But plantation say, “Japanese eat rice, cheap. Gaijin (non-Japanese) eat bread, which is more expensive, therefore there’s three dollar different.” Workers say, “No excuse. We’re doing the same work.”

#0428 [M: age: 90s; birthplace: Kea’au]
1 M: Pay for Japanese, and pay for Caucasian [hakujin], they have double standard. They won’t get the same. Like in government, if you are a postmaster or second officer, you get second class, postmaster. Japanese, so, Portuguese, so, Haole...
2 GK: Doesn’t matter.
3 M: Doesn’t matter, but in plantation, double standard.
4 GK: Racial standard.
5 M: Yeah, that I know.
6 GK: Even if it’s a manager, they have double standard?
7 M: Sure. And you, a head bookkeeper, bookkeeping’s top man, hakujin. Japanese different pay.
8 GK: It’s shocking.
9 M: Double standard. All the plantation, and many places, the boss, it’s in name only. The work was done by Japanese.
10 GK: They are just sitting.
11 M: Yeah. Like, for instance, my nephew, he has good hands. Only he doesn’t have a degree because he went only through high school and community college. No more bachelor’s degree. And he work for this ( ) company. And superintendent is hakujin, but he’s the number two man in the factory. And he come home ten at night when they’re working twelve-hour shift. Ten at night he (the superintendent) say, “Hey, Y, the machine is broken, come and fix.” Why doesn’t he fix? He’s the boss, superintendent. He has to go and fix. And two in
the morning machine stop. The factory cannot move. Look, how many people working, and they sit down and cannot do anything. He has to go and fix. That guy is only name. And he retired last year. Now they're overhauling the machines. They called him.

12 GK: Because they don't know what to do?
13 M: Hakujin, useless, only name. They have the engineer's, mechanical engineer's degree.

# 0429 [M: age: 80s; birthplace: Kea'au]
1 GK: What's the difference between Haole and Portuguese?
2 M: Well, plantation, I gonna tell...Portuguese and Haole, they were the field supervisors.
3 GK: Luna.
4 M: Luna, he was a luna. No more Japanese luna, all Portuguese luna...Down the mill, garage, all the Haole supervisors.
5 GK: No Portuguese?
6 M: No more Portuguese because Haoles are more educated. They become the department head. Japanese...carpenters, mechanics, blacksmith, machinist, all the trade jobs were Japanese, because Japanese smart, yah.
7 GK: So, no Portuguese blacksmith?
8 M: No more.
9 GK: I didn't know that.
10 M: No more Portuguese machinists, no more. All, all Japanese [nihonjin].
11 GK: No more Portuguese carpenters.
12 M: No more.
13 GK: How come?
15 GK: But, Portuguese, they could've been carpenters?
16 M: They no more skill, yah. Very few Portuguese went to high school, very few. Japanese all high school graduate.
17 GK: That's why they got trade jobs?
18 M: Because I took accounting at school, I took business math, I know how to type, I know how to use the calculator. All these things I learned in school. Although I went to plantation, all those things already, you know, I don't have learn, yah, because when I work in purchasing warehouse, that's accounting, yah? I learned that all in school.
19 GK: So, Japanese boys went to high school because their parents told them to go to school?
20 M: Most of Japanese plantation workers, they send their kids.
21 GK: They sent them.
22 M: Yeah, they sent them because even though my father was working only a dollar quarter a day, he got eleven children, all my family boys went high school. Girls never go, but all the boys graduated. We had six boys all graduated high school even though my father was making only a dollar quarter a day and got to
feed eleven children. All did, not only the Uchinanchu, all Naichi (Japanese from mainland Japan) parents, they sent their kids.

23 GK: But Portuguese, they didn’t do that.

24 M: No. Portuguese, they get good job, you know, supervisor, you know. They get better pay than us, yah.

25 GK: But they didn’t send their kids to school.

26 M: No, no. I don’t know why...Portuguese no go to high school.

27 GK: After graduating intermediate school, Portuguese just went into the company?

28 M: Yeah.

#0430 [F: age: 70s; birthplace: Mountain View]

1 GK: So, what’s bad about plantation life?

2 F: The living was very...

3 GK: Living condition?

4 F: Living condition.

5 WH: If my father was living, he knows the prices and...because he was working for the plantation store.

6 F: The plantation, I guess they wanted control. So, they gave them ( ), they gave them kerosene, they gave all. The plantation store. They were just...Without plantation, these people couldn’t make a living, yah. So, it’s just like control. But Japanese are too smart, yah. They come here and opening their own business. And they’re going on their own, especially Chinese and Japanese. They couldn’t control too long. As soon as contract is over, they, “Oh,” and they start over business. Chinese start laundry, chop-suey house. And Japanese start store and all that, yah.

7 GK: Not like Filipino.

8 F: Yeah, yeah.

#0431 [M: age: 80s; birthplace: Kea’au]

1 M: I’m very active for Democratic party. Today democrats have state control, the legislature. And reason why the Democrats ( ) because without them all the benefit that you folks have, you’re not gonna get it. Because the Big Five control, they’re only thinking about own money...This is what you guys have to understand.

#0432 [M: age: 90s; birthplace: Kea’au]

1 M: When I was in school, we learn how America was born. They fought for freedom, freedom of choice, freedom of religion, freedom of education. So as far as ( ), I’m just as good as Haole. Then, if Haole say, I’m not as good as them, I fight.

#0433 [M: age: 70s; birthplace: Pāhoa]

1 GK: Did you have ethnic conflict in the company?
M: No, no more conflict. Once in a while, a little thing. No more conflict in Hawai’i. No more conflict. I mean, Puna Sugar. Not too much conflict because I treat everybody equal, everybody equal. ( ) Get along, everybody, get along. No more prejudice.

GK: What about Haole people?

M: Haole people, at that time, no more Haole. That's why very little.

GK: What about executives?

M: Executives, yeah.

GK: Did they have any prejudice against other.

M: Haole people, oh, yeah, they...when you go ( ), they keep themselves, they don't invite you...But when I used to work, the Filipino used to invite me, sometimes I used to go Filipino party. But Haole different.

#0434 [M: age: 90s; birthplace: Kea’au]

M: In 1932, when they had the election, Roosevelt was elected, and Republicans for the capitalists, Democrats for the workers. And I didn't like the plantation because the plantation was Republicans. And you know, the road down the Milo street, they had a gate, and election time, nobody can go down there.

GK: Why not?

M: Because they don't want democrats to go and vote, and they tell you to vote for Republican. I didn't go. By democracy, I'm against Republicans. And when Democrats grab the power, I was in Hilo, I was just out of high school. So, I joined the Democratic Party.

#0435 [M: age: 90s; birthplace: Kea’au]

M: Plantation office manager is only in name, but Japanese are the ones who actually work.

#0436 [M: age: 70s; birthplace: Kapoho]

Talking about managerial staff at the company (not Puna Sugar) he worked for

M: Boy, I mean, they are no managers in a real sense.

GK: Were they Japanese?

M: No, all Caucasian [hakujin]. See, this, this is the part of it. They were real lucky that they had a Japanese bookkeeper, controller. That was very strict, he's still alive, Mr. N.

GK: So, you think Japanese are good workers? If you compare to.

M: In those days? Yeah, all through, all the time, even...Only recently...Japanese, Orientals...Japanese, Chinese were considered as a cream of the...

#0437 [M: age: 70s; birthplace: Pāhoa]

GK: What's difference between Japanese and American cultures?

M: Well, I think, basically, the way I see, you know, it's the way we associated with other people. When you talk about Haole style, Haole style basically is about yourself, you know. Self-perpetuation, you know. I mean that's the image
we have. They come first. Japanese style, we think of how other people feel before we do certain things, before we speak out. The main thing, we hold back. That's the way we're brought up.

GK: That, your parents taught you?
M: Yeah, we don't talk better, but some other children, we keep it within ourselves, that's the way we're brought up. American is not that way. I would never know. I'm a high school counselor. Those kids are aggressive, you know what I mean? And they are vocal...Now those things, we thought, basically approved. The way...you know, so, we do have, our age people, we do have prejudice in a sense. They don't care for their behavior, you know.

GK: Very interesting.
M: That's true. I work with Caucasian, white, many of them. I'm sure that many are nice people, and they like to impose their value on you. Their values would be different from us. They won't respect our values, but just like, they're saying their culture is better than ours. “So, you better be more like us.” “How can we?” My color is this (pointing to his arm). That's what we say.

#0438 [M: age: 70s; birthplace: Pāhoa]
1 M: I went army, three years.
2 GK: Is that common?
3 M: Yeah, those days, so poor, yah. We want to get away, you know. I didn't want to work in the plantation, you know what I mean?

#0439 [M: age: 90s; birthplace: Kea'au]
1 GK: For children on the plantation, did they have any choice other than becoming plantation workers?
2 M: They had a choice, yes. But, plantation try to keep them on the plantation. And this plantation mill's superintendent, J.M, this Italian, his wife was a supervising principal...the head of island's public education. And 14 1/2 from Hilo, they wanted to make high school. That's Mrs. J ( ) so that kids can...they wanted to make this an agricultural school.
3 GK: Agricultural school.
4 M: So that they could stay on the plantation. But Department of Education never approve.
5 GK: Why not?
6 M: Many objecting, I'm objecting, too. We're really against making high school way up there. High school should be here, where plantation is. And they used to force the Future Farmer of America. They all said, boys should take that course, join the organization, you know. That's a school organization so that they become future farmers. Future farmer of what? Sugarcane?
7 GK: Did you take that course?
8 M: I didn't. I took commercial, Hilo ( ) commercial. I wanted to be, I wanted to go college actually, so I changed my subject to science and math. And I wanted to go the university of Wisconsin to take a...engineering, electrical engineering. See, I take electronics. ( ) My idea was, because I can take
wireless, to work on a boat after I graduate university. Working on a boat for
two years, all over the world, and then settle. And I was going to settle down...
where, not in Hawai‘i because I know two boys that went to America and they got
a B.S. in electricity. And one boy say, “Oh, eventually you can get a good job.”
But what, he is selling refrigerators and washing machines. He is an engineer,
electrical engineer...No chance. I say, “No, I’m not going to stay in Hawai‘i.”

#0440 [M: age: 90s; birthplace: Hilo]
1 M: You know, plantation life, a lot of people come down, mass employment,
with no education, see. Because a lot of workers come down here, I wouldn’t say
non-educated, but, you know, regular workers, they didn’t...educated, cane cutter
or.
2 GK: Was there any discrimination among workers?
3 M: That day, there was no so-called...there were more Japanese anyway, and
quite a few Portuguese, yeah, Portuguese people. But I don’t think, as far as I
know, you know, those persons who have education, you will be supervisors, see.
4 GK: Like M.N?
5 M: M.N, that one is second generation. Second generation Japanese, it is
education. They go up high school. Because Japanese, because M.N, he has
better education, it helps...People have education, they have better chance.
6 GK: What about L.K?
7 M: L.K, look at that fella. He went...He was a plantation manager. I think he
went down to Maui.
8 GK: Lahaina Luna.
9 M: And then L.K...He worked for me a little while, carpenter help, those days.
And then, he say, he wants to be a foreman. So, I told one of supervisors there,
Lefty wants to move up. So, they put him in the middle. From there, he
started...He had a brain, he was very aggressive.
10 GK: He was aggressive.
11 M: Yeah. From there, he...he wanted to be different, you know. He became a
very big manager. He had education, yeah.

#0441 [M: age: 90s; birthplace: Kea‘au]
1 GK: You didn’t want to be a plantation worker?
2 M: No. I had an idea, I’d never be plantation worker.
3 GK: What about your friends? They thought that way? I mean, they don’t want
to be plantation workers?
4 M: No. Some of them, they don’t care go to school. So, as soon as they finish
eighth grade, they work for plantation. Many of them.
5 GK: Many.
6 M: Yeah. And particularly, Portuguese. Sixth, seventh grade, already they quit
school and go to work. And Portuguese children, their parents were not interested
in education too much. They don’t care.
7 GK: They don’t care.
8 M: But Japanese wanted education as much as possible. Therefore, most Japanese went to high school. My class, there were many Portuguese but only one went to high school. F.L, that’s the only one went to high school. All the rest, they quit and they work for plantation.

9 GK: How many classmates in your class?

10 M: Well, our time, classes were big. We had two eighth grade. Two eighth grade. Half 8-A, 8-B. 8-A, only one flunked. And 8-B, only three graduated, the rest had to stay back.

11 GK: How many students?

12 M: Oh, we have twenty-two or twenty-three graduate, 1927.

13 GK: Mostly Japanese?

14 M: Mostly Japanese.

#0442 [M: age: 90s; birthplace: Kea'au]

1 GK: Many Japanese students went to high school. After graduation, what happened to them?

2 M: Many went to work after high school. At that time, those who graduated high school, if they went to plantation, they went to the office, if they have an office job. If no more office job, they won’t go. They went to Hilo, worked in Hilo, or went to Honolulu. They won’t come back to Kea‘au.

3 GK: Why not?

4 M: Because no job.

5 GK: Even on the canefield?

6 M: If field, you have a job. But you graduate high school, you don’t want working on the field. High school graduates, they want an office job. And 1947... during the war, many people who have good hands, they work for the construction, you know, making road and.

7 GK: For military?

8 M: For military. So many of them didn’t come back. After the war ended, they work for contractors. So they didn’t come back. So they have to get Filipinos. 1947... I think... Many Filipino came to Kea‘au.

#0443 [M: age: 70s; birthplace: Pāhoa]

1 M: Three boys, yah... When I was high school senior, my two older brothers were, they were gone to Honolulu, yah, those days. After World War II, many of them went to service. I would say ninety percent of... high percentage of us, we all went to service. Draft was still on, you know, people my age, seventy years old, World War II, Korean war, Vietnam war... State of Hawai‘i, high percentage of people went to service and high percentage of casualty during the war, World War II, Korean war, Vietnam war.

#0444 [M: age: 70s; birthplace: Kapoho; F: age 70s; birthplace: Japan]

1 GK: Can you see the difference among students in different ethnicity?

2 M: Well, I think Japanese [Issei] really put a lot of emphasis on education for their children because they didn’t have... For example, my parents, my father went
to up first grade, my mother sixth grade. My father, first grade and he had to go to work. So, he thought, for his children to go beyond that, you know. So, they place more emphasis on education. I guess even if they sacrifice comfort, they wanted their children to go to school. So, I think, I guess children, sort of, can sense that..."To be successful, I got to be educated." You try to go as far as you can. Yet, if you come from a big family, you know even you wanted to go more, you cannot because you got to start working as soon as...to start to support family. ( ) But I think plantation children with plantation background, you know, that you can go to a certain point, and then, you got to start helping the families, you know. You cannot just continue to become a professional student. So, in my case, I was thinking, "Oh, I have to finish school as soon as I can, so I can start working as soon as I can." Whatever chance you have, you have to take opportunities to go to school, you know, like, those summer school to get a number of credits and try to finish as soon as you can.

GK: So, when you got a job, how much did you support your family?
M: Because, in my case, I'm the oldest in the family, and then, we lived together for a long time with my parents even after we got married.
F(wife): I used to give his paycheck to his mother, every month to his mother. We never change our own check. I don't think anybody take that.
M: I kept only what I need for myself.
F: The rest of it goes to his mother. Five years he did it.

[M: age: 70s; birthplace: Kapoho]
1 M: Actually I got out after 16 months. But you got to figure, now I'm just 20 years old. I come back, I had GI bill alive, you know. You go to school free those days, not that partly paid. But, I come home, I'm twenty years old, my father is seventy now. So, those days seventy years old, you're a real old man, you know. Physically..compare to nowadays. Seventy years old, I'm seventy-four years old now, you know. I don't feel like..compare myself to him, I'm about fifty. So, I said, "Well, forget school." I'd like to go to school, but I got to support my family. Like I said, my mother's working physically...I decided to go to work. That's my story.

[M: age: 70s; birthplace: Kapoho]
1 GK: Old days students from Japanese families were more diligent than other students, is that right?
2 M: I guess they had a feeling that they had to succeed in education.
3 GK: What about today's students?
4 M: I don't know, today...Like Filipino group is pretty motivated right now, just like Japanese group. I don't know...Because there're quite a bit of intermarriage. Our days, not much intermarriage, yah, and then I guess you grew up in your own values, Japanese values. But nowadays I guess because of a lot of intermarriage and changing ways of thinking. I guess not that much motivation is there. The way of thinking is different.
5 GK: You mean, not only students, but also parents?
M: I think so because now is the time about fourth, fifth generation. I'm third generation, my children are fourth generation, and their children are fifth. So, I think society has been changing really rapidly. I guess it's Americanized...too liberal, you know, no more traditional...the culture we brought up with. I guess we could endure more than, we had to endure more than other people because we were poor, we know that we had just one chance to succeed, yah. So, you try to make the best of it. So, I guess, the way of thinking, it's, it's really changing with us. Like, our days we set the goal and we try to go at that goal. Then, whereas nowadays, I don't know if they have a goal. They just keep on going whatever they stand, and then after a while they think, "OK, it's about a time to settle down," which is right, but it's different.

#0501 [M: age: 70s; birthplace: Kapoho]
1 M: Recently Pāhoa fujinkai resolved...Pāhoa fujinkai to be part of Puna Hongwanji fujinkai, which is good, I think. Like before, I think because distance-wise, because not convenient, you know, the roads were bad...before long ago, they didn't get along, you know, Pāhoa and Kea'au, all that, they had separated fujinkai. But now is community close together, generation is changing. Thinking has been changing. So, organizations become one with the main, I think that's a good idea because you need to be closer together, otherwise, you know, always, "Oh, Pāhoa is there, Kea'au is here." We still hang onto so many old fashion tradition, I guess.

#0502 [M: age: 90s; birthplace: Kea’au]
1 GK: Why did you give up going to college?
2 M: Because Hawai Mainichi (Japanese daily newspaper). And then, I want to get out (of Hawai Mainichi) because I cannot put on weight. I was only 150, 160. I said, this is ( ), I gonna get sick. (Reading the Morse code) twenty-four hours, 356 days a year, that's too much. So, I made an agreement with the president of Hawai Mainichi. He say if I train somebody I can get out. So, when I was twenty, I applied for the University of Arizona, the University of California, and the University of Wisconsin. But, in the meanwhile, a college in Illinois gave me free scholarship for electrical engineering. And then, Milwaukee School of Engineer gave me free scholarship. But, I was not too ( ) going to these two schools. Kind of small, I wanted to go to the University of Wisconsin. They told me to send all the credential. High school, high school sent credential. And they told if you are not B class or above, don't apply. Yes, then, they sent credential. See, I was accepted. I was going, then, when I was ready to go, this boy had a fight with his father and he ran away to Lanai. The boss said, "Mr. H has gone to Lanai, now only you are the only one who can work. You must stay." I said, "No. A promise is a promise. I trained." The agreement was, I train so I can go. I trained. If you (the trainee) went, that's not my fault. But, they went to see my father. He [the president] say, "(storyteller's name) doesn't listen to me, so please change his mind to stay on the job." I told my father, "No, a promise is a promise, if I didn't keep a promise, then, it's my fault. But I carried it out." I say,
“I’m going.” Then, the editor and the president went to my father and said, “I’m sorry, but I beg you.” Then, my father told me, he say, “It is important to keep a promise, but giri and ninjō are more important for human beings.” And, “If you go to college, Hawai‘i Mainichi cannot be maintained.” He say, “Not only Hawai‘i Mainichi, but also hundreds or thousands of subscribers will be troubled. If you do this, how can I walk on the street, facing those people? If you have Japanese blood, you have to think and rethink about this.” Oh... So, I say, “Then, one more year I stay here.” So, one more year, but nobody wants the job because you work 365 days, long hours. Nobody wanted. So, two years, three years pass. Oh, then, I say, “I give up.” Then, I trained somebody and left. Then, I work Fujimoto whistle company, bookkeeping. Then, I already had application, as I said you before, either post office or other government jobs.

3 GK: Your father said giri and ninjō.
4 M: That I have to give up (college). But Japanese giri and ninjō, that’s important, too. I know.
5 GK: How do you explain giri and ninjō in English?
6 M: There are many words that you cannot, you can explain, but there was no [English] word that you can express the same meaning. In Japanese, what is bonbu? That’s Buddhist word, but.
7 GK: An ordinary man.
8 M: And oyakokō.
9 GK: Oyakokō.
10 M: See, in English, filialty [sic; filial piety]. But it doesn’t have deep true meaning of kōkō. So, there are many words that you cannot truly express the real meaning. Japanese have more deep meaning... I think. English words are barely surface only, no more the deep meaning. Of course there may be some, but.

GK That’s because cultural difference?
11 M: Yes.

#0503 [M: age: 70s; birthplace: Kapoho]
1 GK: What about kenjinkai (prefectural association)?
2 M: That is much bigger, yah... like Hiroshima kenjinkai and all that. Sometime, I don’t know, I’m not a member... To me, it’s unnecessary. They sent a membership, you know, flyers. But, I don’t see any use for that kind of organization. Wherever your ancestor come from, Hiroshima or...
3 GK: Mostly members are second and third generation?
4 M: Yeah, I guess, there are some second and third. Second and third... I cannot see any use of that kind of, you know, it’s just... I guess, I don’t know when I quit. Maybe at a certain time it might be have been useful, you know. It’s been useful organization, but I don’t see any real good use for that.

#0504 [M: age: 70s; birthplace: Kapoho]
1 GK: You lived together always?
M: Quite a while after we got married. She wanted to live by herself...independent. The biggest thing, the social security was the biggest thing. She’s got survivor’s benefit. She was living in this senior citizen apartment. And social worker come and see, and tell her, “Why don’t you get welfare? You know, food stamps.” She said, “I don’t need. My son bring anything I like. He bring fish, he bring sashimi...I get TV and tape player and radio. Plus I get money I can buy my own food, he give me so much...I don’t worry.” So, this lady, social worker, kept saying, “But you know, you deserve it, you work hard for your life. Your son and your daughter, they’re paying for it, you know, their taxes. You go buy extra things, if you want.” You know why she took it? She like to give something to her grandson. But before that she ask me, “If it is all right? Isn’t that shame to take it?” It’s her mentality, yah, these people. Really that old...maybe other old people are not like that. But it bring you the way they talked.

#0505 [M: age: 70s; birthplace: Kapoho]

M: When young one say something, they don’t agree, “No.” They say it all Japanese style. Young ones, they have their own say. You have to listen. When they have some good things to mention for, if it’s good things, you accept that. If no, you have to tell them the reason why you say no. It’s not just you to say “No, no.” And another thing is...when the child make good grades, you tell the parents, “It is nice that your kid made good grades.” But the parents respond, “We wonder what our kid is doing.” See, that’s Japanese. I say if the child is doing good, you say, “Oh, I’m proud of it, continue to be good.” When Reverend I.G was here, his daughter was on the honor roll. So, I tell the Reverend, “Oh, I’m happy to hear your daughter made it.” He said, “That’s good, but I don’t know.” I said, “That’s wrong, did you tell your daughter that you’re proud of her?” He say, “No.” I say, “You tell her.” He say, “Japanese style, my child knows that I’m proud of her.” I say, “No, even she knows, you have to tell her you’re proud of her.” He say, “No.” I say, “Don’t say that. Your child would think, ‘Oh, I’m doing my best and made an honor, but my dad thinks I’m doing lousy work, wasting time.”’ Psychologically no good, old Japanese style. No, it’s no good.

GK: Right.

M: And they tell, “Children must listen to and obey what parents say.” I say that’s wrong. When you grow up you have to listen to your children. My father used to say, “You must not talk back to me, that’s unnecessary.” I used to argue with my parents. Yeah, when I’m right, I tell them, “That’s wrong.” They say, “You have to listen to us.” I say, “No.” He say, “It’s American style, no good. You must obey your parents whatever it is.” I say, “No, you told me long ago that when you are young, you obey your parents, but when you are old, you obey your children.” He say, “Shut up.” Well, that’s true. You have to listen, you have to accept them as adults.
#0506 [F: age: 70s; birthplace: Mountain View, M: age: 80s; birthplace: Mountain View]
1 GK: So, in this area (Mountain View) old people and new people are all mixed up?
2 F: All mixed.
3 GK: Do they get along well? I mean, newcomers and old ones.
4 F: Yeah, they don’t bother, I don’t think... Not like old days, they don’t go
to party to neighbor, everybody went out to all party, party, party... Nowadays people they just mind their own business. They hardly
know their neighbors already.
5 M(husband): Old days, Japanese emperor’s birthday, tenchousetsu, all they
celebrate. All the Japanese get together, yah. And those days, mostly Japanese, yah, so funny, big party, you know.
6 F: That time, they used to make their own sake, yah. Oh, they used to get drunk,
drunk, drunk.
7 GK: People had a party, where?
8 M: Japanese school.
9 GK: Japanese school.
10 F: Those days, all the community party.

#0507 [M: age: 70s; birthplace: Kapoho]
1 GK: What was the biggest holiday?
2 M: Maybe the 4th of July, yah. Of course for Japanese, it was New Year. But
the Fourth of July, summer time, the whole village go down to Mauna Kea pond. You
know they have this in Kapoho, they have this pond. We used to call Mauna Kea pond. The 4th of July the whole village used to go there.

#0508 [M: age: 80s; birthplace: Kea‘au]
1 M: When they shut down the church, all the Buddhists, all the Japanese name
organizations, like Hinode (baseball club)... all everything shut down. Hongwanji
shut down. Christian church was kept alive. So, I got married under Reverend Sagawa, Christian church in 1943. And Reverend Sagawa was Japanese, but he
was Christian minister, government never close down the church. Those days any
individual, you can congregate not more than twenty-five. I got a special
approval from the government, so we had attendance over 300 at the church. The
whole ‘Ola’a people were there.
2 GK: Of course people came from Kona, yah? Your wife’s relatives.
3 M: No. My wife’s family disown her because she marries a Japanese boy (She
had Chinese and Portuguese ancestries). They isolated her. Not one, not one her
family side came to our wedding. Only community I was brought up, 9 mile
camp, I was brought up in 9 mile camp, see, all the people in the camp came to
our party.
4 GK: Most people were Japanese?
5 M: Yeah, mostly Japanese.
6 GK: No Haole?
M: No more Haole. Those days, you know, they no trust Japanese, the Haoles. Pearl Harbor was bombed December seventh 1941. I got married 1943, yah...the war.

GK: So, you didn’t have any company executives, ‘Ōla’a Sugar executives?

M: There was Sakamaki family. He was working at the main office. Sakamaki family was there. They were Christian, yah, so government never isolate them because they are Christian. So, all the Japanese who are Christian, government never isolate.

#0509 [F: age: 80s; birthplace: Kea‘au]

F: I don’t know what the difference is between ‘Ōla’a and other plantations. They say that...when the good reputation of ‘Ōla’a people’s successful camp reunion reached Pepeekeo, one person asked me to help with their camp reunion. I said, “Sure, you get about four or five men to organize.” But three months after that, there was still no response. I said, “What happened?” The answer was, “I can get only two to get help.” They cannot get enough people to help. That’s what I was lucky. (When we had a reunion) I was the leader, Noboru was the leader, we both work. Noboru, we need a chairman for this, we need a chairman for that, so we go. I go this side, you go ask them for help. “OK, OK, that’s good,” all came up to work. I didn’t have to beg. They were all willing to help. I think this is the difference between us and the others. I think the community as a whole is very close because especially our age, depression years, we have to be close each other. When they have something extra, they come to give you. And that was our way of living. That makes a big difference, I think. And when you’re nurtured in that kind of caring, giving kind of life, yah, you carry that life.

#0510 [F: age: 80s; birthplace: Kea‘au]

GK: You had this sense of community.

F: Yeah, strong sense of community, very strong. So, plantation workers had something else over the village people. Plantation workers, they had furo, community bath, firewood used to come, you know. Like us, we have to buy firewood. But water, we didn’t have to worry about, because we village people used to help put out the fire on the canefield with cane knives. In return, when we were short of water, we could get water from the plantation in our water tank for free. So, village people and plantation help each other. With plantation employees, we work together.

#0511 [F: age: 80s; birthplace: Kea‘au]

F: Big job...you better believe because Japanese aren’t difficult to get along with. Somehow, Japanese socialize with each other. At funerals, everyone comes out and they see each other. Caucasian [hakujin] different. Hakujin and Portuguese, Portuguese have a lot of fights among siblings. That’s why there are many cases of “I don’t talk to my sister.” But Filipinos, mostly, just like Japanese. When somebody dies, they help each other...so that was easy.
F: Hawai‘i, any kind, hippii, we call it. No matter what family you come from, everybody is related as relatives in Hawai‘i.

GK: Story about Issei women. what do you remember? Your mother is Issei, right?

F: My mother is Issei. My mother, I think, I explained to you in the previous interview, but she barely had education. But my mother was, she was a strong woman, actually, you know, character-wise as well as health-wise, she never got sick, I never saw her sick. Yes, she never got sick. My father was a weak man, he had various kinds of diseases. But my mother, I remember that without education, everyday, after we finish doing the chores, we clean up the kitchen, all the girls get together, we have chores to do, my mother take up her notebook. This I remember very clearly. And she takes up her notebook and writes what she bought today, like sake or ( ) in hiragana (Japanese syllabic characters). All purchases were paid, not in cash, but a charge. That is why everyday she put down how much she’s charged.

GK: She keeps records.

F: Records. Although she was not used to writing, and her hands were rugged, she writes everything, how much to pay for charge in hiragana.

GK: Everyday...

F: Everyday she used to do that. That I remember. That I remember. And my mother would never sit down to eat with us.

GK: Why?

F: She always stood by the stove, doing something for all of us.

GK: Taking care of you?

F: Yeah, my father is the headman. Yes, there were twelve or thirteen people in my family, it was a big deal. Not this kind of chair (pointing to her chair), we had a bench.

GK: Bench?

F: Bench. And the table is a long table at which everybody sit down.

GK: It’s like a school cafeteria.

F: That’s right, that’s right. And my father and my brothers, all...And then, my mother would not sit down. No more room for her. My father say, “Come sit down.” My mother answers, “Yeah, yeah, later.” And she would not sit down. She sees everybody eat before she eat. That’s...She always taught us, when you serve rice, the father first.

GK: The father first.

F: Yeah, then brothers. Men first. And then, us women, we serve ourselves. My father was very strict, my mother was strict with that.

GK: Mother? Your mother?

F: My mother, too. The order.

GK: The order.
F: It's the hierarchy of the family. How do you say it? Patrilineal in English? You know that, don't you? That system. That we have to maintain since then. That is why, we never ask the order (how to line up before the altar) whenever we have family services at the Buddhist temple with family members, even though it has been years since both my father and my mother passed away.

GK: Never...

F: We never have to ask. My brothers go first, then my sisters. All in order. Men first. If my oldest brothers were not there, next brother, and next brother, then my older sister...

GK: The oldest one first, according to your age.

F: From the oldest. You don't have to tell. We go by our age, by seniority. That's how we're trained... from my father and my mother.

GK: Japanese style, huh?

F: Real Japanese style. That's what it is. Because of this style, you never get lost. You don't find, "Oh, who is next?" We don't have that, you know. It is in order all the way.

GK: In that sense, Japanese style is not that bad, huh?

F: No. The certain cultural aspects, yah. I regret that people are losing it. I don't... I believe in traditions, you know. I believe in tradition. The certain tradition, the certain part of Japanese culture we can do without, yeah? But, you show respect to a person or to our ancestors, I think this kind of tradition we should maintain.

GK: Ob, yeah? You should maintain?

F: Yeah, you should maintain.

GK: So, what do you think your mother thought about it?

F: My mother was not, as I told you, not very educated person and because she has so many children to take care of, I think she didn't have much time to think of cultural things. She would live daily, she provided the family with enough food on the table. She sees that all had clothes to wear, stuff like that... But she was not the one who would participate in dance... she didn't do it. But she was very subservient. The way... Japanese women should be. So they respect their husbands. My father was an intelligent man, so she depended a lot on him to lead the way. So, she always followed him, and he would teach her many things, too, yah, because he was an intelligent man. He read a lot. He bought a lot of books for us and everything. But my mother would followed him. However, because of this kind of training she had from my father, when he passed away she didn't crumble. She was a very strong person. She was the "rock", yah, in the family... Even after, like what... just after birth of my son, I was about twenty-eight years old, my father died. Because she didn't have education she couldn't even write her name in English. She had none of that because she depended everything, she left it to her husband in those days. So, now without the husband she has to be the strong one. So she did. She continue to work because my father had provided her with flowers and things like that so that she can get income from. So, she worked hard to get, continued business from my father, and that kept her enough income. That is why, since then, she started to learn how to
write her name because now check come on to her name. So, when she could not sleep at night, she used to take out the paper and practice to write her name. So she could write her name on the checks, and she started to... a little more beyond, following my father. Now she has to be the leader of the family.

33 GK: The head of the family?
34 F: Yeah, but she depended a lot on the children to lead the way, too, because she didn’t have that background. Business-wise we were... my father trained us in business, so she followed us all the way through.

#0602 [F: age: 80s; birthplace: Kea‘au]

1 GK: In your impression, your mother was always doing something?
2 F: Always, always, yeah. She never just sat around, and she never went to movies.
3 GK: Never?
4 F: She never went to... That is interesting. This is my shop, my house. The theater was right across the street. But my mother never went to movies. I told her, you know, “When Chūshingura (Japanese classical play) opens up, let’s go see it.” No. She doesn’t want to go. “That is fake, not authentic. It is stupid to pay to see it,” she says. She doesn’t want to see. So, to her, it was not the true thing. So, she didn’t want to have any part of that.
5 GK: Oh, yeah?
6 F: Yeah, but I think basically, she didn’t go because she didn’t have money. That’s what I think.
7 GK: So, what did she do for having fun?
8 F: To tell the truth, she didn’t have that much time to have fun with. Everyday she has... Ten children... it takes a whole day just to wash clothes. I know, my sister and I would have to do the laundry the whole Saturday. From seven o’clock in the morning to five, six o’clock at night we used to wash clothes. That long we used to do, you know. Not only our own clothes, my mother used to go to single men and bring their laundry back home.
9 GK: Filipinos?
10 F: Filipinos. And then she would wash and take the nice one over, then, she brings dirty clothes home again. That was her secret savings [naisho kin]... She wash clothes. So we had to help her with that. Nowadays you put clothes in a washing machine. Not like that, you know, you have to soap it, soak it, and you have to boil it, you know. You have to boil it.
11 GK: Because of dirt?
12 F: Yeah, because it’s very, very dirty, so you boil it and it take so long to do that. Then, you have to make starch.
13 GK: Starch.
14 F: Starch [nori]. And then you make that because in the old days, all clothes were made of cotton, no more such thing polyester. It’s all cotton. So, you have to starch the clothes. Kimono (Japanese dress) and anything we have to starch. Only thing is diaper and stuff. Sheets and kimono dresses, everything else we starch it.
GK: Then iron it.
F: And then we iron it, you see? So you can imagine how... That, that itself...
GK: Hard labor.
F: Hard labor, yes. So we have to help mama. She cannot do it by herself.
GK: Plus she did cooking, right?
F: She did cooking.
GK: Three times a day?
F: Yeah, yeah... and about four o’clock in the morning, probably four o’clock. I think, she would wake up. You see, my father had canefield and we all had to go help my father in the canefield, so she would get up about four o’clock, then she cook rice. About... how can I say... a measuring cup that we use today, about twelve times of rice.
GK: Twelve cups of rice!
F: Twelve cups. And with a large pot [hagama], and firewood, you cook four in the morning. And she always had babies. It is still cold four o’clock in the morning, so, carrying a baby on her back, she had this jacket [haori] on top, then she would cook in the morning, and have lunch boxes [bento] ready for us. So by five, five thirty, we go to the canefield. That was our job to go there to work on the canefield, to help my father bring in the money. But her, she had to stay home for all other chores.
GK: And in the evening she does the same thing, right?
F: Yeah, she prepare for dinner. So, she actually didn’t have much time because... chores are finished... I don’t know, probably at nine o’clock at night. That’s why she doesn’t have very much time. Maybe she sit down for a little while and she think about anything, yah. Because of the lack of education she could not read very well, you know, she could not read more than hiragana [Japanese syllabic characters], she didn’t have any books. But she used to love to listen to us, ‘talk story’, yah. Even until she die, when all our brothers and sisters get together for dinner, even though we are talking to each other in English, she sits with us, drinking her tea. We say to her, “Mom, you must be tired, you better go to sleep,” but she says, “No, I’m fine.” She doesn’t understand what we say because we all speak English. But she sits there. And I think somehow she could sense what we were talking...I think.
GK: She had some idea...
F: It was about everyday things, she would sense, yah, what the story is about. But she used to sit there until we go home.
GK: She wanted to be there, she wanted to be with you.
F: That’s right. She wanted to be there. So we told her, “You are tired. Go to bed.” But she says, “I’m fine,” and she sits there. She doesn’t understand what we are talking about. But... she...just the feeling of having her children around her until she was gone.

#0603 [F: age: 80s; birthplace: Kea’au]
F: Issei women in the old days suffered a lot [Issei no onna tachi wa tottemo kurō sita]. I don’t think... We cannot even imagine their hardship [ano kurō]. Maybe
we can get a little bit of idea because we are the children from the Depression Era. So, we went through all, a lot of things...My mother had a hard time...In those days, soy beans were cheap. Soy beans. My mother used to buy that by pounds, by the bag. And she would put the soy beans in a bowl, I still have it, you know, what she put soy beans in, that bowl. I have that bowl. Very thick and heavy one...And she would cook, I don’t know how many pounds, but she would cook it with sugar and soy sauce. She would cook. We had it many, many times (for a meal). We just had the soy beans and home-made pickles, not the pickles from the store. This (pickles), you bring radish home and salt. That’s the only thing we had...and rice and miso-soup. Many times that’s our family dinner. There were thirteen children, thirteen mouths, how can you afford to get meat and fish? You cannot.

2 GK: Sometimes you had only soy beans and pickles...even no rice?


4 GK: So you ate soy beans as a main dish [okazu].

5 F: Okazu, okazu. Once a while she tells us to go get meat. There was a meat market owned by a Chinese family. And she says, “Go to the meat market and buy one pound of meat, get a good part.” Then, I go there and say, “Mr. Wong, I want a good kind of meat.” He says, “OK” and sells me the meat at a good price. That we bring home, that meat, one pound. She slice it real small. That’s because my mother had to think how she can go stretch the family budget. Without money, she had to feed the mouths of thirteen children, she had to figure out how she can make us full with whatever...So, she would slice the meat, make it real thin, that is the broth. Then, she would have big cabbages because they are cheap, cabbage. Then, she put them in with salt. That was okazu.

6 GK: Cabbage soup.

7 F: Then, little kids pick out only the meat, they single it out, you know. Then, my father tells, “Stupid, don’t single out the meat. You have to pick up the things that you put your chopsticks on first.” Ho, he used to scold... That is how it was, because there was only a little meat, everyone wanted to pick it out. But we wouldn’t have that, he used to scold... That’s how my mother had to do. And what people call okara (residue from tofu-making) in Hawai‘i, she put miso in okara and she makes okazu. And we put rice on it. It is delicious. That’s all I had. But considering that it comes from soy beans, it get plenty of vitamin inside there.

8 GK: Nutritious.

9 F: Nutritious! We didn’t know. My mother didn’t know, too. But that’s how she can stretch okazu...She was very innovative, yah? She had so many ways to stretch the food. When she had fish...I try to make one time, but never turned out good, I don’t know how my mother did that...The fish, she would smash in a mortar [suribachi] because you can get only a few pieces if you cut it. That’s why she smash in the smashing bowl and makes it hash. Then, she puts crumbs, seasonings, and vegetables, and she would make fishcake. She stretch that one pound or two pounds of fish. That’s what she used to do.

10 GK: Smart.
F: She was very innovative, yah? She stretch the food for all of us. The purpose is to make the children full stomach. Whatever we eat, it is fine, although it tastes bad, but you have to have enough.

#0604 [F: age: 80s; birthplace: Kea'au]
1 GK: She (storyteller’s mother) was strong physically.
2 F: Physically.
3 GK: Mentally, too, right? How do you explain her mental strength?
4 F: I think... You can... The best example is when my father died, until then, my father was the leader, so she followed all the way. Saying, “Yes, yes, yes,” with a vow, she had been doing whatever my father told her to do. She had no mind of her own, just she followed her husband and this is the old Japanese way. Since the old days, it was a woman’s duty to follow the husband. Now all of a sudden, she was fifty-six years old...
5 GK: She was fifty-six years old?
6 F: She was fifty-six years old. Yeah, my mother was fifty-six years old, OK? when my father died. Before she died I was talking to my mother, “Mom, you were only fifty-six years old at that time? I already passed fifty-six,” I told her, you know. And I say, “Why did you think you were so old at the age of fifty-six? You were still young.” She laughed and said, “I just felt old.” She said she felt like a very, very old lady. However, she also said, “In hindsight, I was very young.” Because ninety-eight years olds, she died, you know... At that time, if she was a mentally weak person, she would crumble. She would crumble. But my mother kept going and she finally understood what my father was trying to teach her. And she continue business that he started for her and she worked with business people. Of course, we helped her, you know, and she continue to survive and support herself. So, when you think of it, mentally she was a strong person, otherwise, if you were very weak, you crumble like that. She would go whining to the children. She would have depended on her children for everything. She didn’t do that. She was on her own. Not that we ignore her, we help her as much as we can, because we know that she didn’t have this proper background. So, we help her as much as we can. But we would like her to get over the grief of my father’s passing away and create her own life.
7 GK: Did you hear your mother complaining about anything?
8 F: She came from the very destitute country. Okinawa was very, very, very poor. And they were living in frugal life. And she herself didn’t come for that life. So I told her “Gee, that’s sure the mental power that she had.” She say, “Every day I have to go to the cane field and work. And every day I have to put the cane on top my head.” They had a basket, to put on their head. They have to bring the sugarcane back home to make sugar. “I thought I had to spend this life forever.” She didn’t like it. She didn’t like the idea of spending her life doing that. So when she was offered to go to Hawai‘i to get marriage, she grab the chance. So I said, “You knew father?” She said, “No.” She knew of his name, but did not know him personally. She didn’t know him. But she knew who he belong to,
what family he come from, because he is from the same village. But she said, I’ve never met him.

9  GK: She grabbed the chance?
10  F: Yes, she grabbed the chance, she said. Because from...young girl, she didn’t like that life that they had. It was so poor, she hated to spend that life forever. She didn’t like it. She wanted to get out to someplace else...So I told her, “You were very brave to come to Hawai’i where you didn’t know the language, you didn’t know the person whom you would marry, you didn’t know the country, and you didn’t know anything.” I told her, you know. She said that she truly hated her life in Okinawa and wanted to go somewhere else, at any cost. She never thought about going back to Okinawa at all once she stepped on Hawai’i...Meanwhile, she had children. Life is joyful when you have children...Then, all kinds of...And then, as we grew up, she was able to take a trip to South America and all kinds of places with children. And she said, “America is a good place, I am glad that I came to Hawai’i. I am happy.”...I took her to Japan 1974. My mother say, “I have a sister in Japan. I want to see her once,” so I said, “OK,” then took her, and then, we went to the village, her village. We visit here and there, you know. We went to her natal home and parents’ grave...I asked her, “Mom, what do you think? Do you think it was good to come to Hawai’i?” She answered, “It was good to come to Hawai’i, it was good to grab the chance.” She was so happy that she came to Hawai’i. When I asked, “But you had a very hard time [kurō sita] when you came to Hawai’i, didn’t you?” She said, “I did have a hard time [kurō sita].” But she say, “Such hardship was nothing.” You see. She was determined. She was going to live in Hawai’i, not in Japan.

11  GK: So, you never heard her complaining.
12  F: I never hear her complain. But she gets tired. She would say “Oh, today was hard,” because she was hardworking. You don’t blame her. But she never complain that she didn’t like Hawai’i. Never, never, never.

#0605 [F: age: 80s; birthplace: Kea’au]
1  GK: How do you characterize Issei women? Images of Issei women as a whole?
2  F: As a whole...frugal [shisso].
3  GA: Shisso.
4  F: Yeah, frugal people, and sacrifice.
5  GK: Sacrifice.
6  F: Yeah, that’s my opinion. Issei women are shisso, very thrifty, very frugal. But they did without many things for the benefit of the children.
7  GK: For the children.
8  F: They sacrifice...for the children. Most of them, husbands, too, you know...As women, we have to be giving...the choice between the husband and the child, I go for my child, you know. That child, it is my womb, it’s my blood and flesh...So I would go for the child. And our mothers I’m sure they feel this way. Issei women, so many of them did without...sacrificing things that they wanted. She might have wanted to see a movie. My mother, only she says “That is fake,” you
know, she tells things like that, but maybe she wanted to see movies. When
she’s going to fujinkai meeting, she might have heard other women talking about
the movie and wanted to go see it. But she come from this kind of family, she
cannot...even having a theatre right in front...she never, never did. So when you
think about those things, Kinoshita-san (the interviewer), Issei in the old days,
sacrifice, very frugal, very, very frugal. They did without things for the sake of
their children. For the sake of children [kodomo no tame ni]. That’s what I think.
This is the general...There were a few rich Issei women, like Mrs. Y. She was
very fancy. She...even used to ride a horse. But such Issei women were very rare.
But as a whole, if they were Issei, came as a picture bride during...between 1910
and 1920, that age, those people suffered because they came as immigrants [imin].
There was a depression before they were used to life in Hawai‘i. When the
depression was over, the war broke out. That’s why those women had to send
their own sons to the war. All women, they suffered. They suffered
because...why they have to send their dear sons...Soon after they came to Hawai‘i,
ye gave birth to children, the children to live for. And then, from there on,
when things were getting easy as the children grew up, they entered the
depression. 1929 depression. To eat was a problem. When they were about to go
though the depression, in 1941 the war started. In the meanwhile, their sons were
reaching 19 years old. They cannot do anything about it. They had to send their
sons.

9  GK: That’s very unfortunate.
10  F: Very, very...That’s why...Their hardships were various. In the beginning, they
struggled to feed their children. But in spite of the scarcity of food, somehow
they managed it and raised their children. And then, their concerns changed.
When their children grew up and it started to seem a little easy, they entered this
Depression [Era]. The mothers again survived it one way or another, then the war
broke out. Now you have to send your sons to war. It is the hardest for the hearts
of mothers. The hearts of mothers. Fathers would accept sons’ going to war,
saying, “Perform great exploits,” and “Don’t bring shame to the family.” “Don’t
bring shame on the parents.” While fathers send sons to war with such words,
mothers’ hearts must have been hurting.

#0606 [F: age: 70s; birthplace: Pāhoa]
1  GK: Issei women in general, how do you characterize them?
2  F: Tough.
3  GK: Tough?
4  F: Yeah, that’s what they were. I think that’s a really good word to use for them.
You know, mentally, internally, emotionally, they, they really sustained the
family.
5  GK: Sustained the family...
6  F: You know, because husbands go out. Pretty much I think women raise the
kids, you know.
#0607 [F: age: 80s; birthplace: Kea'au]
1  F: She died early, she died sixty years old.
2  GK: Too young.
3  F: Too young, but no can help because all those years she was a slave, yah.
4  GK: She worked too hard.
5  F: Yeah.
6  GK: All those mothers in plantation camp, are they all the same? Do they work too hard?
7  F: Yeah, they work hard. But nobody work more hard than my mother because my mother raised pigs and she used to wash clothes for Filipinos. Those days, wash clothes, no more washing machine, you know?
8  GK: All by hands.
9  F: You put them in the container with boiled water. Then, you take out all the mud and everything, yah. After dry, she got to use the charcoal, iron...Oh, then, she got to get food and got to prepare, feed the children. Oh, my mother went suffering.

#0608 [F: age: 80s; birthplace: Pāhoa]
1  F: My mother gave birth to fourteen children. Two died in infancy. She raised twelve children. My mother gave birth one year and three months, so, during first ten years she gave eight children, see. My sister above me was born in March eleventh, 1918. My sister, eighth one in the family was born in March eleventh, 1928. So, that exactly ten years. She gave birth to eight children.
2  GK: Your mother was strong.
3  F: And during those days, they had to wash the diapers by hands, yah. My mother, she gave birth one year and three months apart, yah, so many times she had to wash diapers for two kids, yah.
4  GK: And even she was pregnant, she had to work.
5  F: Yeah, yeah, I remember one, when she gave birth to my sister, number 10 in the family, she work in the canefield until the day she gave birth. She worked during the day and during the night she gave birth, you know.
6  GK: Then she took a rest for a couple of days and then starts working...
7  F: Yeah.

#0609 [F: age: 80s; birthplace: Kea‘au]
1  GK: Japanese women don’t talk much.
2  F: Yeah, they don’t say much. But it is their attitude. It’s the way they conduct themselves.
3  GK: Conduct themselves...
4  F: I think this talks instead of (pointing her mouth).
5  GK: A mouth.
6  F: A mouth. They don’t say much but it’s the way, how to conduct themselves. It’s the attitude. That’s why, in my mother’s case, too, because my mother, she was a very sweet, quiet lady. She was a quiet lady, but there was steel in her character.
GK: Steel.
F: Steel. Very strong center in her. Outwardly, you know, Japanese women are kind and don’t say negative things. This is the thing that Japanese women are known for. They are subservient to her husband and everything. Nowadays, of course, we’re not subservient. I tell him, I tell my husband what to do, you know. But old people led that kind of life. We saw this. So my generation, my sisters and myself would follow my mother more without us knowing. Without us knowing. You know we respect our husband. We fight like dogs, yah, but that’s not the whole story. There is a portion that I respect my husband, I think.

#0610 [F: age: 70s; birthplace: Pāhoa]

1. GK: What do you find mother’s greatness?
2. F: I think, you know, just surviving.
3. GK: Surviving.
4. F: You know, because it’s so easy to say, like, “If we go through this life, just I give up,” right? But no, she took care of us. I was really spoiled, I think, because I never used to do laundry, I never used to wash clothes... My mother used to do it. You know, we have no washing machine, she does it all by hand, you know. It’s just inner strength. It’s just do it because it has to be done. And no whining.
5. GK: No whining.
6. F: No whining, you know. I never heard her complaining.
7. GK: Never.
8. F: You know, like, saying, “Oh, I wish my folks were here, I wish I had more money.” I never heard those things. She took care of us, you know, there was... I don’t know what you call... the role, I guess.
9. GK: A role of mother?
10. F: Yeah, the role of mother. She took it very seriously, yah. But that’s how all Issei women were. That... I don’t know my father, because I was only two when he died. But I know Japanese men, very difficult to deal with. M (her husband)’s father is Issei, yah. They weren’t mean to his wife, but they’re not nice, either. You know what I’m saying? They are self-centered, everything is supposed to be for them, right? You know, you have to take care of your husband first, and never mind you get seven kid, you know, they’re hungry... I wouldn’t accept American men like that. I say, “Good-bye, sayonara.”

#0611 [F: age: 80s; birthplace: Kona]

1. GK: What brought you here?
2. F: Shinpai, shinpai.
3. GK: You mean, shinpai marriage (arranged marriage)?
4. F: Not a love marriage.
5. GK: Who set up the shinpai marriage?
6. F: Mr. K and Mr. Y in Kona.
7. GK: Those guys are go-betweens?
8. F: Go-betweens, and they were good friends of H (last name of her father-in-law). I was H before (she has been remarried after the first husband’s death), you
know... They were go-betweens. It was so sad to come to a strange place. It was country, you know.

9  GK: You mean, this place?
10  F: Yeah. You know, the road coming to Pāhoa, houses on the side... Yeah, I was thinking... Oh, that was really country.
11  GK: You never came here before?
12  F: No. This was a strange place because I was living Kona. It was more country than here because I was way up in the mountain, but you know, that was my home. I like country, yah, but when I came here, strange place, it was so lonely. I look around, but I don't know which side is Kona.
13  GK: So, these K and Y, go-betweens, how did they set this up?
14  F: Y was Kumamoto-ken and K is Hayashi side, Hayashi's friend. And Y is our friend. That's how we got together.
15  GK: Y talked to your father and K talked to...
16  F: H (her father-in-law), yah.
17  GK: And then, what happened?
18  F: I don't know because I ran away.
19  GK: You ran away. But you met this guy?
20  F: I used to see him at sumo [wrestling]. He used to be a wrestler, see. His name was Hayaguruma [his wrestler's name], see.
21  GK: Hayaguruma.
22  F: I knew him, you know, but personally I never talked to him. But sumo tournament time, you know, my father took me there. That's how I saw him.
23  GK: That's the first time you saw him.
24  F: Yeah.
25  GK: Then when is the first time you talk to him?
26  F: I think after the marriage (laughs).
27  GK: So, you had no choice but marrying him.
28  F: No choice, no choice. My father gave me away.
29  GK: Oh... Do you have any sisters or brothers?
30  F: Yeah, I have two sisters and three brothers.
31  GK: All those sisters, they got this shinpai marriage?
32  F: No, my older sister was... they knew each other. My younger sister was go-between. Only myself and my younger sister shinpai kekkon (arranged marriage).
33  GK: Those days, shinpai kekkon was common?
34  F: Common, yeah. You know, you have to get married. So, when Y folks came to my house, I went to Honoka'a where my brother was.
35  GK: You just ran away.
36  F: But they came after me. Y was a taxi driver, see. They came to pick me up.
37  GK: Where did you have wedding?
38  F: One is at my house Kona. Before I leave my house, all the community, all get together. And then, one is H's house. And you know, those days it was three days, you know.
39  GK: Three days.
40  F: Three days celebration.
OK: Three days celebration.

F: What they call it wedding, they call it, I don’t know if you understand, they call it “manaika arai” (‘washing the cutting board’ in Japanese, ‘partying’ in local slang)."

When you entered the H’s house, there must be his father and his mother. How did you deal with them?

F: Mother-in-law and father-in-law, two brother-in-law and one sister-in-law altogether. But my father said, “Once you as a bride go into groom’s family, never come back and step in my house, even they fire you. Even though they cook you or fire you, don’t come back. So you have to devote yourself [tsukusu] to the family that you got married.” That thing was...those days, yah? I cannot answer back to father.

OK: You cannot answer back to your father?

F: No, no.

OK: So, he had absolute power.

F: Not like these days, yah. Just like old Japan, I guess.

OK: In H’s house you cook for everybody?

F: Oh, yeah. I’m up three o’clock in the morning.

OK: Three o’clock in the morning, every single day?

F: Because my brother-in-law was going to plantation, my mother-in-law was going to plantation. Before, they used to hole-hole (hoeing), you know, the cane, all the (*) before the harvest. That’s why my mother-in-law was cutting cane. So, after work they come home about three o’clock, then they all have dinner.

Early in the morning you wake up and make breakfast and lunch boxes.

F: Firewood. No stove, yah. It’s hard, you know. And even the laundry, yah. You know, the big tub, I don’t know before if they had soap (*). (*) put in the pot, and that dissolves, see, and put the laundry inside. Then, firewood.

F: Firewood?

F: Firewood, you cook the pot because you know, the cane, it comes black and sticky.

OK: So, you did it by yourself?

F: Yeah, because mother-in-law, she didn’t work too long, because my father-in-law was raising vegetables...I don’t think anybody can do it today. I cannot.

OK: All those house chores, men never helped you?

F: No. Men don’t do it. I used to chop firewood, you know. This redwood in the forest, I cut it like this much...I don’t want people to see I’m doing that. Men don’t, I’m doing the chopping. I used to chop it for years.

#0612 [F: age: 80s; birthplace: Kona]

GK: You have four boys and two girls. You raised them over here, right?

F: Yeah, oh, it was a hard time. I lost my husband at the age of thirty-eight. My oldest son was only seventeen years old and youngest daughter was two and a half years old. Six children.

GK: Six children.
I used to raise coffee and avocado. But I didn’t make money on coffee because when I started to harvest the coffee, the price was nothing. And I used to raise tomatoes. Tomatoes made good money.

Basically you made money from farming.

Oh, just make a living, no extra money. But flower is the one. That’s the reason why I cannot give up the flower. Flower is the one, I raised children.

Anthurium... It’s a long story. So many things I cannot remember... too much suffering, yah.

It must be hard, raising six children.

Oh, yeah. I don’t have... I never go to the church, I didn’t go to the restaurant. No time.

No time.

Six children.

You did nothing but working.

Working, working. I had, at Pāhoa, one acre. Sometime my son takes a car to Hilo. I had to walk from here, you know, to the forest. You know Pāhoa school? I walk there, come home, take off my dirty working clothes.

And feeding children.

Yeah.

Gaman and oyakōko, in what way are they important for your life?

Everyone has to go through... a period of life where you wonder if you can really make it. You wonder if you can make it. You confront hardship on top of hardship. So, you would say, “Gee I wonder if I should give up already.” But if you have strong conviction and strong sense of security, you can have a strong sense of gaman, too. So, the spirit of “overcoming it” [kosu] comes up.

You mean, a fighting spirit?

What can I say... to overcome spirit, overcoming spirit. Not only the fighting spirit. Whatever the problem is, it’s how I solve this problem, overcome it. I can hang in there until the problem’s solved. If you give up half way, that is it. But I think a person who has a strong sense of security, can have a strong sense of gaman, too. You have to have the security first. So, when you have the gaman, you hang in there, stick to it, and gaman to overcome whatever the problem.

That sense of security comes from the family, right?

I feel that way. Not only from the family, but from community. Like I told you, we had this little box, in that we all support each other and have boys and girls, more children. And that develops, develops, and develops until it becomes part of you.

For Japanese women in general who grew up in this area, what’s the advantage and disadvantage of being Japanese women?
2 F: You know, I may be prejudiced in a sense, you know...First of all I'm really thankful, I'm really, really thankful I'm an American. I wouldn't want to be Japanese national or native in Japan. But I'm prejudiced in a sense. I think that Japanese have, we have very good values. Our families really are important to us. And we think about them first before we think about ourselves. And I think it characterizes a lot of Japanese women. Some nationalities, you know, I'm not going to name them, men go drinking. I wouldn't go drinking, but M (her husband) went when kids were young. Somebody has to stay home and be sober, you know. I think those values are things that make me happy I'm Japanese. I wouldn't want to be Caucasian or any other nationality. I'm happy with my nationality, the way I feel about things, you know. Does it make sense to you?
3 GK: Yes, it does. So, what about the disadvantage?
4 F: The disadvantage was when we were grown up, we were very, very inhibited.
5 GK: Inhibited.
6 F: You know how Japanese, they don't talk?
7 GK: Yes.
8 F: We were like that. We never wanted to be called on. Now you go college, you think, “Please don't call me, I don't want to talk in front of...”
9 GK: Class?
10 F: Yeah, you know. And we never voice opinions. We just wanted to be quiet, silent person in the back. I'm talking about when we were young, OK?...When we went college in Honolulu we didn't want to say much, you know, we stay in the back. I didn't want to be in the front, I didn't want to be called on.
11 GK: Why is it?
12 F: That's our Japanese nature.
13 GK: Nature.
14 F: Yeah, Japanese don't say much. They're very quiet. We're not noisy, like other nationalities, you know. They voice their opinion for everything, yah. But I must say as we go older we get experience. And you find out you got to speak up sometimes, you know. I'm a teacher, you know, as you get to be one of old teachers, you know you have more experience, yah, so, you learn how to speak up and voice opinions. Not like people push over their ideas, you know. But I'm really thankful I'm Japanese. I'm very comfortable in my skin.

#0615 [F: age: 80s; birthplace: Kea'au]
1 GK: What do you think about Issei women's contribution to Japanese community.
2 F: How can I say...I don't know...If, I think you can say, it's cultural, too. Yeah, cultural maybe...You know why? If it wasn't for the Issei women, I would not know how to sew kimono (Japanese dress). If it's not for the issei women, we would not continue Japanese culture. Of course, because of intermingling at our nationalities, marriage, it's a little bit diluted, but still we're maintaining certain degree of our Japanese source. Not only that, I think without them knowing it because they don't speak that much...I think Japanese women taught how to conduct themselves, taught the children what is right, what is wrong. Therefore,
until the Nisei, Sansei, you don’t hear many crimes. If my son causes a murder, the name come up in the newspaper, and the whole Japanese community would be shamed. “Don’t you bring shame.” Like when my son went to San Francisco for school, I told him, “You can make any kinds of mistake, but don’t make a mistake that you get in a jail. Whatever it is, don’t make that kind of mistake that you get in a jail because when you get in a jail, you’re not going by yourself. You take two other people with you. I’ll go with you and your father will go with you. So, you’re not alone. You bring all of us to a jail. So, think before you do.” That’s what we teach him. And without Issei women knowing this, they passed it on to Nisei women. So Nisei women, now it is our job to teach that to Sansei and Yonsei.

#0616 [F: age: 80s; birthplace: Kona]
1 F: My parents, my mother, wanted me to get married because they don’t want, my parents don’t want...not because they want to chase you out of the house, but they don’t want their daughter stay home, like an old maid, yah. About certain age they like daughter to get married, see.
2 GK: Like what age? Early 20s?
3 F: Before, it was early. Teens...eighteen...because when I came to Pāhoa, I was only nineteen years old, and when I was ( ) I had six children. Today you have one child and they say, “Oh.” I had six. You have to work. I’m a dirt farmer. If you don’t have education, only thing you can do is farming. But I’m glad I have a farm, yah.

#0617 [F: age: 80s; birthplace: Kea‘au]
1 F: For him, education is No.1 requirement. I don’t know about other parents, but my father was very strict. My friends used to dread to come my house. They used to get scared of my father. Even when we have dinner together, we are sitting on the bench and listening to his lecture...And we have to talk each other Japanese. For example, when I say, “I dropped when I was walking,” he says, “Who drops when walking? Stupid.” “It should be “tripped and tumbled down.”
2 GK: He corrected your Japanese.
3 F: Yeah. And he used to say, “A bride who says something wrong is going to be returned [まちがったこと言うた嫁にいったら戻される].” His famous words, “A bride who says something wrong is going to be returned.” And when you go to a bath (juro), too. My father takes a bath first, and everybody follows him in order, you know. And finally my mother last went to a bath because she got to close up the bath. But then, he always told us, “A bride should be careful, if she takes a bath before the father (father-in-law), she is going to be kicked out.” He used to say it.
F: I was in business from ninth grade, because my older sister had laundry business. I used to collect and deliver clothes. I went to a certain camp in my father's truck, with him driving, while my older brother and sister had another camp. We had two trucks. My brother used to drive for my sister, and my father was with me. This is what I did, and I was doing business from ninth grade.

GK: By that time your father quit his job?

F: My father kept working until he died. Doing shoemaking, he had to feed nine children. We had many girls, and girls are good at washing clothes. That's why we started the laundry business. We had many girls, that's why... In the meanwhile, when I was still in fourth or fifth grade, we had a cane field, too. So, I used to work on the field weekends, yah. That's why even when I was sewing something, I had to finish it soon, and I come home, change clothes, go to the cane field, and work until five o'clock. But I used to wish for heavy rains so that I could go home, you know. I don't want to work... you don't blame.

GK: Did you work for the company, or you work for?

F: My father, my father was a sharecropper [kosaku]. He leased the cane field. Sugarcane belongs to him, but the land was owned by a Portuguese man. It is risky. When you are short of money before the harvest time, you go to the company to get an advance. After harvesting, the company figures your balance and pays you after making a deduction.

GK: How big was your cane field?

F: We had two places. One place, we had fifteen acres, the other we had ten acres.

GK: Altogether twenty-five acres, that's big.

F: That's why we used to... summer break, no more such thing. No break on the cane field. Since we were little, we've never been playing. We had many siblings but we had nothing but working. Nowadays we can afford to play at this age... But I cannot, you know, I cannot just sit down. Only when I'm sick, I do that. Otherwise, I'm doing all kind of stuff.

GK: You got to keep doing something, yah.

F: Yeah, I have to keep using my head. My children tell me to slow down, but if I slow down, I'll be dull. You got to keep... My father say, "Human beings must keep studying until they die, once they are born." He taught us that, and I always remember it.

GK: So, your father was doing a shoemaker, a cane grower, and he also helped your laundry business.

F: Yeah.

GK: He did three things.

F: He used to be the old Man [oyaji]. That's why he control everything, actually. But we do the work. You see, my father was weak, so he cannot do that kind of work. So, if he goes to cane field, he accompanies my older brother to tell what to do. My father tell my brother what to do. That's how it work. But he was a very smart man, even though his body was small.
F: About a bathing [furo], you don't change water every time. You know, everybody goes in the same water. You have to wash clean, just like Japan, when you go to hot springs. You have to wash clean and then soak and go in, see. Everybody goes in the same bath tub [furo], but you have to clean outside.

GK: When you take furo, men first, right?

F: Oh, yeah, women... like over here wasn't too bad, but my father was strict. He said, you know, women don't go in furo first. My father has to be the first because it will be defiled [kegareru] if women go in first. And he was a carpenter, he don't want any women to walk over the tools. And you know, the sharpening stone, he said, "It is going to crack when women step over it." Very strict. Over here, father-in-law wasn't that strict, but I had that habit already. Women don't go in furo first. I used to go the last and the last person has to wash; so I have to do that.

GK: You drain the water and clean up.

F: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

GK: What time is it when you finish that cleaning?

F: Only about six o'clock, you know. Those days eight o'clock bedtime already.

GK: Eight o'clock bedtime.

F: Morning time you have to get up early, yah.

---

1 At this time, the storyteller's siblings were married and independent.
2 Shinpai is a Japanese word, 'to be concerned.' Presumably, parents and other family members were concerned about the future of single young adults and arranged marriages for them.
3 Having no washing machine, women washed clothes by hand with boiling water in a tub. They used hot water to wash off sticky dirt from the canefields.
APPENDIX B
FUJINKAI SURVEY

Date: 4/14/2002 Place: Puna Hongwanji Mission
Puna Hongwanji Fujinkai Meeting
Attendance: 51
Response: 49

Additional Response: 2 (different date)
Matrix: 51

QUESTION 1. Where were you born? Please be specific. For example: ‘Ola‘a, Pāhoa, Kapoho, Mountain View, Hilo, Pu‘unene, Honolulu, S.F., L.A., Tokyo, etc.

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<thead>
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<th># of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>Pāhoa, Puna</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hilo, Hawai‘i</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kapoho, Puna</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kona, Hawai‘i</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honokaa, Hawai‘i</td>
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<td>Pepe‘ekeeo, Hawai‘i</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pāia, Maui</td>
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<tr>
<td>Okinawa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yamanashi, Japan</td>
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Total 51

Q2. What is your birth date?

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<th># of Respondents</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
Total Answers: 51  Average age: 75.3 years old.

Q3, 4. Where was your mother born? Where was your father born?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parental place of birth</th>
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<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother/ Father: Japan/ Hawai‘i</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

Q5. How many brothers and sisters do you have?

<table>
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<th># Number of Siblings</th>
<th># Respondents</th>
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</thead>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Q6. When you were a child, how many family members were in your house?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># in Family</th>
<th># Respondents</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Average: 5.4

Q7. Did you go to Japanese language school? If Yes, how long did you attend (from what grade to what grade)?

Yes: 50
No: 0
No Answer: 1
Total: 51

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th># Respondents</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q8-1. Did you work for cash income after you completed school (including either a part-time job or working in your family business)?

Yes: 24  
No: 22  
No Answer: 5  
Total: 51

Average: 6.8 years

Q8-2. If Yes, what did you do?

Clerical job, sales clerk, retail, office work, various jobs, teaching, sewing, pineapple canary (summer job), maid at restaurant, family business.

ABOUT ISSEI WOMEN
Q9-1. Do (and did) you know any "picture bride" personally?

Yes: 12  
No: 27  
No Answer: 12  
Total: 51

Q9-2. If Yes, Who are (were) they?

Mother (5), aunt (1), mother-in-law (3), acquaintance (2)

Q10. Have you ever lived with Issei women?

Yes: 39  
No: 8
Q11-1. Have you ever heard stories about Issei women undergoing hardship during the plantation days?

Yes: 40  
No: 3  
No Answer: 8  
Total: 49

Note: Three Hawai'i-born women answered 'Yes' to Q11 and 'No' to Q12.

Q11-2. If Yes, who told you these stories?

Mother (9), Father (2), Both parents (6), Grandmother (4), Grandparents (1), Issei woman (1), Older people (1), Friend (1), School (1), Reading (1)

Q12. Did the stories include any of the following points?

Physical hardship (working hard inside/outside the house)
Yes: 33  No: 1  No Answer: 17  Total: 51

Poverty (money problems, debt, little income)
Yes: 29  No: 1  No Answer: 21  Total: 51

Inequality between men and women (unfair treatment)
Yes: 16  No: 9  No Answer: 26  Total: 51

Discrimination against Japanese nationals
Yes: 18  No: 8  No Answer: 25  Total: 51

Q13. How do you feel about Issei women's experiences or Issei women's stories? Please put down any words that pop into your mind.

"I admire their courage in coming to live in a strange foreign land."
"Appreciated their hard work."
"Hard working — save money to go back to Japan, but never did."
"They were courageous, strong, and held to their religious beliefs."
"They were hard working, but were always at home for meal cooking."
"I thought they were very brave coming to unknown place."
"Thrifty. Worked physically hard."
"Interesting and worth remembering what they went through — younger generation should know."
"Kodomo no Tameni Ganbaru [I struggle for my children]"
"Women had lots of hardship."
"Always positive minded."
"Work very hard."
"Sacrifice."
"Children -- well behaved."

Negative points
"Still followed old ways and didn't question the male viewpoint."
"They never had fun things to do/ no car/ no TV."
"They were secondary to their husbands -- some were abused because of husbands' frustration -- one came to our house to hide from her drunken husband."
"Shikataganai."
"Never negative."
"Get paid very little."
"Hardship."

MARRIAGE
Q14. You are:

married (28), unmarried (5), widowed (15), divorced (3)

Q15. If you are or have been married, was it a love marriage or arranged?

love marriage (36) arranged marriage (8)

Q16. If your marriage was a love marriage, how did you meet your husband?

Classmate (4), co-worker (4), childhood friend (3), YBA (1), set up by friends (5)
Other (12): siblings' friend (2) college (1) blind date (1) met at a dance (1) hometown friend (1)

Q17. If you are or have been married, within what religion was your ceremony conducted?

Hongwanji (29)
Daijingu (3)
Shinto (3)
Christian (1)

Q18. Where did you have your wedding ceremony (a church or at home)?

Shinto Shrine (3)
Buddhist church (26)
Home (1)
Q19. Did you wear kimono or a wedding gown?

Kimono (8)
Wedding gown (25)
Both (1)
Neither (2)

Q20-1. If you are or have been married, have you ever lived with your parents-in-law?

No: 9  Yes: 31

Q20-2. If Yes, how long did you live with your parents-in-law?

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<td>6 months</td>
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<td>46</td>
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<tr>
<td>until their death</td>
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Q21. If you are married (or have been married), who is responsible for a family budget: you, your husband, a parent-in-law, or has it been flexible?

Self (wife) 11
Husband 13
Husband's mother 1
Flexible 11
MOTHERHOOD

Q22-1. Do you have children (and grandchildren)?

Yes: 44  No: 0

Q22-2. If Yes, How many?

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<th># respondents</th>
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Average 3

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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average 4
Q23-1. Did you work for cash income (including part-time or in a home business) after becoming a mother?

Yes: 34   No: 2

Q23-2. If Yes, did you use a babysitter?

Yes: 22   No: 8

Q23-3. If Yes, who was (were) babysitter?

mother-in-law (5), your mother or father (6), other relatives (8), professional baby-sitter (1) other (7): friend (2)

Q24. Did you send your children to Japanese language school?

Yes: 27   No: 12

Q25-1. Do you know what "naisho money" is?

Yes: 28   No: 10

Q25-2. If Yes, did (do) you save naisho money?

Yes: 5   No: 21

Q25-3. If Yes, do you remember your mother saving naisho money?

Yes: 14   No: 12

JAPANESE WORDS
Q26. Have you heard of the following Japanese words?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gaman [to endure]</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oyakōkō [filial piety]</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shinbō [perseverance]</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>erai [hardship]</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q27. Do you see any importance in these words?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gaman</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oyakōkō</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shinbō</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>erai</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q28 What do you associate with the word gaman?

"No Gaman."
"Gaman -- stay in a marriage for the sake of the children and to save face. Double standard for the husband to have time to socialize and have "outside interest."
"Different background."
"Tend to be quiet, accommodating, kind, gentle, very hardworking, reserved."
"We gaman oyakōkō, shinbō, etc."
"Japanese have what they call gaman."
"Cultural."
"Japanese women think of ancestors and gaman in everyday life."
"Way of acting + thinking definitely - to be reserved and not to be a nuisance and make trouble - to behave properly."
"Exhibition of oriental women."
"Japanese women do gaman."
APPENDIX C
FIELD LOG

1999: From mid-May to mid-August stayed in Hilo
2000: From mid-May to mid-August stayed at Puna Hongwanji. In July visited Kauai for a week.
2001: From 3/20 to 8/9 stayed in Hilo. From 8/20 to 12/6 stayed at Puna Hongwanji.
2002: From 1/2 to 8/29 stayed in Hilo.

1. The Japanese American Elderly who helped this study by telling stories.
   1-1. Women: residents of Puna and Hilo, including members of Puna Hongwanji Fujinkai and the Kea‘au Senior Citizen Club.
   40 individuals
   1-2. Men: residents of Puna and Hilo, including customers at local restaurants and Puna Hongwanji Centennial Project Construction Team.
   40 individuals

2. Other informants.
   Japanese American elderly from Nā‘ālehe, Pāhala, Honolulu, Maui
   Residents of Hawaiian Paradise Park
   A son of former worker of W. H. Shipman, Ltd.
   Sons and daughters of Japanese American elderly
   Personnel of ILWU Local 142 Hilo
   Informants’ husbands and wives who were born outside Hawai‘i
   Ministers their spouses at Buddhist and Christian churches
   Puna Hongwanji members who are from the U.S. continent.
   Hilo Times former president
   Local restaurant owners

3. Interview: Tape Recorded
   3-1. The Japanese American elderly
   07/14/99
   07/16/99
   07/22/99
   07/27/99
   08/14/99
   08/08/99
   08/13/99
   06/01/00
   06/02/00
   06/06/00
   06/19/00
   06/21/00
3-2. Others

09/16/98  Japanese American elderly from Honolulu
10/11/98  Japanese American elderly from Honolulu
10/19/98  Japanese American elderly from Honolulu
06/18/00  an owner of local food restaurant Kau Kau Corner
06/28/00  a wife of informant
08/01/00  a Buddhist minister
08/13/00  an owner of local restaurant
06/02/01  a Buddhist minister
06/08/01  a wife of Buddhist minister
07/04/01  Puna Hongwanji members from California
09/23/01  Puna Hongwanji member from California
08/09/01  a husband of informant
4. Institutions that I visited.

4-1. Churches

Aiea Hongwanji Mission
99-186 Puakala Aiea, HI 96701

Church of the Holy Cross
440 W. Lanikaula Hilo, HI 96720

Kurtistown Jōdo Mission
Iwasaki Camp Road P.O. Box 6003 Kea’au HI 96749

Higashi Hongwanji Mission
216 Mohouli Hilo, HI 96720

Hilo Daigōnō
10 Anela Hilo HI 96720

Hilo Meishōn
97 Olonā Hilo, HI 96720

Honoka’a Hongwanji Mission
45-5016 Plumeria, Honoka’a, HI 96727

Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin
398 Kilauea Avenue Hilo, HI 96720

Homonu Hongwanji Mission
Honomu
Honpa Hongwanji Mission Hawaii State Headquarters
1727 Pali Highway, Honolulu, HI 96813

Kapa’a Hongwanji Mission
1170 Kuhio Hwy Kapa’a 96746

Lahanina Hongwanji Mission
551 Wainee Lahaina 96761

Makawao Hongwanji Mission
1074 Makawao

Nā‘ālehu Hongwanji Mission

Mo‘ili‘ili
902 University Avenue, Honolulu, HI 96848

Pāhala Hongwanji Mission

Puna Congregational Church
16-647 Old Volcano Road Kea’au HI 96749

4-2. Kea‘au Community Center

Kea‘au Senior Citizen Club
16-186 Pili Mua Kea‘au HI 96749
4-3. Nursing Homes
   Life Care Center of Hilo
      944 W Kawaiulani Hilo, HI 96720
   Hale Anuenue Restorative Care Center
      1333 Waianuenue Avenue, Hilo HI 96720
   Hilo Medical Center
      1190 Waianuenue Avenue Hilo, HI 96720

4-4. Museums
   Alexander & Baldwin Sugar Museum
      3957 Hansen Road Pu'unene, HI 96784
   Bishop Museum
      1525 Bernice Street Honolulu, HI 96817
   Gay & Robinson Sugar Plantation Visitor Center
      2 Kaumakani Avenue Kaumakani, HI 96747
   Hawai'i Shima Japanese Immigrant Museum (closed)
      777 Kilauea Avenue Hilo HI 96720
   Hawai'i's Plantation Village at Waipahu Cultural Garden Park
      94-695 Waipahu Street HI
   Lyman House Memorial Museum
      276 Haili Street Hilo HI 96720
   Pacific Tsunami Museum
      130 Kamehameha Avenue Hilo HI 96720

4-5. Libraries
   Buddhist Study Center Honolulu
      1436 University Avenue Honolulu, HI 96848
   Edwin Mo'okini Library at University of Hawai'i at Hilo
      Hawaiian Collection
      200 W. Kawili Hilo, HI 96720
   Hamilton Library at University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
      Hawaiian Collection
      2550 McCarthy Mall Honolulu HI 96822
   Hilo Public Library
      300 Wainuenue Hilo, HI 96720
   Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai'i
      2454 Beretania Honolulu, HI 96826
   Kea'au Public and School Library
      16-571 Kea'au-Pāhoa Road 96778
   Mountain View Public and School Library
      P.O.Box 380 Mountain View 96711
   Pāhoa Public and School Library
      15-3070 Pāhoa-Kalapana Road HI 96778
   Sinclair Library at University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
      Wong Audiovisual Center
4-6. Other

Alae cemetery in Hilo
Borthwick Group (mortuary)
570 Kino'ole Hilo HI 96720
Dodo Mortuary
199 Wainaku Hilo HI 96720
Hawaii County Hall
Homelani cemetery in Hilo
ILWU Local 142 Hilo
100 W. Lanikāula Hilo HI 96720
Okinawan Festival at Kapiolani Park in Honolulu (2001)
Pāhoa YBA Hall
Pāhala cemetery
Pāhoa cemetery

5. Participation

5-1. Periodical participation

  Sunday Service: from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m.
  Centennial Project: Saturday From 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. (4/7/01-8/17/02)
  Monthly Broad Meeting: Third Wednesday night at 7 p.m.
  Monthly Fujinkai Meeting: First Sunday after the service
  Weekly Cleaning-up: Monday 7 a.m. to 9 a.m.
Keaʻau Senior Citizen Club (2000, 2001)
  Wednesday 8 a.m. to noon

5-2. Funeral of Japanese American elderly: to listen to eulogy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Deceased</th>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
<th>Birthplace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/26/01</td>
<td>Puna</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>3/14/17</td>
<td>Pāhoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/23/01</td>
<td>Puna</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>12/3/12</td>
<td>Mountain View</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/14/01</td>
<td>Puna</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>7/21/01</td>
<td>Keaʻau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/8/01</td>
<td>Puna</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>5/23/26</td>
<td>Pāhoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/8/01</td>
<td>Dodo</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>11/11/50</td>
<td>Keaʻau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/4/00</td>
<td>Dodo</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>8/28/07</td>
<td>Pāhoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/30/00</td>
<td>Dodo</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>2/17/18</td>
<td>Mountain View</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/6/00</td>
<td>Puna</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>12/19/37</td>
<td>Pāhoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/12/99</td>
<td>Puna</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>2/10/20</td>
<td>Keaʻau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/23/99</td>
<td>Puna</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>8/21/18</td>
<td>Keaʻau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/10/99</td>
<td>Dodo</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>12/15/1895</td>
<td>Volcano</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5-3. Bon Dance (Originally brought from Japan by immigrants as a Buddhist ritual to celebrate and honor the spirits of the departed ancestors)
   1999: Hilo Hongwanji, Higashi Hongwanji, Honoka'a Hongwanji, Honomu Hongwanji, Nāʻālehu Hongwanji, Pāhala Hongwanji (the last Bon dance in Pāhala), Pāhoa YBA, Puna Hongwanji
   2000: Hilo Hongwanji, Higashi Hongwanji, Honomu Hongwanji, Nāʻālehu Hongwanji, Pāhoa YBA, Puna Hongwanji
   2001: Hilo Hongwanji, Pāhoa YBA, Puna Hongwanji
   2002: Hilo Hongwanji, Puna Hongwanji

5-4. Volunteering
   Bazaar: 2001/11 Puna Hongwanji
   Fundraising: 2000/12 Keaʻau Senior Citizen Club (Back to school fundraising for needy children)
   Life Care Center Visitation: 2000/8, 2001/7, 8 Puna Hongwanji Fujinkai projects.

5-5. Lunch time session for chitchatting
   Kau Kau Corner: Keaʻau Shopping Center in Keaʻau
   Hiro’s Place: Pūainako Shopping Center in Hilo

5-6. Party
   New Year’s Party
   Puna Hongwanji 2001, 2002
   Japanese American Association 2002, 1/21 at Hilo Hongwanji Sangha Hall
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Duus, Masayo Umezawa

Edwards, Derek

Embree, John
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Garro, Linda C.

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