

SHIZUKO AKAMINE AND THE SO-SHIN KAI: PERPETUATING AN OKINAWAN  
MUSIC TRADITION IN A MULTI-ETHNIC COMMUNITY

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the evolution of one of the oldest and longest running koto organizations in Hawai‘i based in the small town of Hilo on the island of Hawai‘i. Originally established in 1957 as an affinity group among the Okinawan diasporic community to accompany fellow Okinawan music and dance groups, the So-shin Kai evolved into an independent, multi-ethnic group performing iconic songs representing the various ethnicities that form the local community. The leader who implemented those changes, Shizuko Akamine, faced criticism and doubt. However, with innovative teaching methods she was able to successfully maintain student interest in the koto, and with a diverse repertory she was able to entertain as well as educate the greater community. While her methods may have been a concern among those hoping to preserve “tradition,” the So-shin Kai's evolution under Shizuko Akamine’s leadership ensured continuity of this koto group within the changing community of Hilo.

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

What are the challenges facing traditional ethnic music instructors in diasporic communities where the present social and cultural environment differs greatly from the historical past, and what are the reasons for, and consequences of, altering conventional teaching methods and repertory?

This case study discusses Okinawan cultural transmission in the Hawai‘i-based diaspora. The So-shin Kai was established in 1957 as an organization to practice and perform *Ryūkyū sōkyoku* (classical Okinawan koto music) among the *issei* (first-generation immigrants) of the Okinawan community in the town of Hilo on Hawai‘i Island. It provided much needed accompaniment for the popular *uta-sanshin* tradition (the dominant Okinawan music tradition of singing and playing a three-stringed lute) practiced and preserved by the Okinawan diasporic community there. Occasionally the So-shin Kai would perform as an independent entity, providing Okinawan as well as Japanese koto music. However, the majority of performances were as accompanists in the numerous community events and private celebrations featuring traditional Okinawan music and dance. This continued for decades while participation and membership gradually declined as subsequent generations, with little or no personal connection to the Okinawan homeland, lost interest in traditional Okinawan performing arts.

By the time foundress and original leader, *issei* Midori Matayoshi (1902 – 1996), passed away there was no designated leadership and the group was in limbo. After a few years of inactivity following her passing, *nisei* (second-generation immigrant) Shizuko Akamine (1922 – 2014), a community leader and So-shin Kai member, accepted the role of president and resurrected the So-shin Kai. However, as the new leader, her unique vision and approach to

teaching and performance programming differed significantly from her predecessor and this eventually led some within the Okinawan community to question her dedication to Okinawan music and culture. Focusing on teaching children, some as young as five years old, she began using non-Okinawan songs for lessons and gradually included them in the group's performances as she developed a repertory of what she termed "multi-ethnic" music to represent the variety of cultures in Hilo and on Hawai'i Island.

To address concerns from those within the Okinawan community that Akamine's "multi-ethnic" approach was doing a disservice to the Okinawan koto tradition and culture, this study will show that her actions, whether conscious or not, actually demonstrated well-espoused Okinawan values and traits, such as *champururu* (mixing/blending), *yuimaaru* (cooperation/mutual support), and *ichariba choodee* (connectivity/inclusivity), that allowed her to devise and carry through her own "invented tradition" to ensure continuity of the very tradition and culture that some felt was being ignored.

By examining Shizuko Akamine's philosophy and approach to teaching and performing we should be able to understand this one individual's ability and efforts, despite a lack of formal music training, to help perpetuate a centuries-old music tradition brought over from thousands of miles away across the Pacific Ocean, and her determination to share a part of Okinawan culture with the multi-ethnic community of Hilo while maintaining one of the oldest and longest running koto organizations in the state of Hawai'i.

Despite questions regarding the authenticity of her teaching and her musical selections as leader of the So-shin Kai, Shizuko Akamine's idiosyncratic approach and her innovative pedagogy and reconfiguring of performance repertory allowed for continuity of the group, and

thus, continuity of the Okinawan koto tradition, in the relatively small, isolated, and diverse community of Hilo, Hawai‘i.

## Background

In this section, historical background in relation to mainland Japan and the koto will be briefly explained.

The Okinawan people and culture have historically been marginalized by the mainland Japanese (Kerr 2000, 117) and discrimination continued even in the diasporic communities established around the world, including Hawai‘i (Kimura 1988, 85). Though discrimination is not the focus of this study, it is relevant as it continues today to affect what Okinawans themselves identify with as “genuine” or “authentic” Okinawan traditions. These are often the people who are most resistant to any non-Okinawan (especially Japanese) influence on Okinawan culture and art, including music.

As much as the Okinawan people respect Japanese high culture, and many strive to achieve the same levels of “sophistication,” there is often an underlying resentment due to less-than-equal treatment by the Japanese people and government throughout history. The fact that Okinawa had a long history of commercial and cultural connections with China also caused friction with Japan. (Matsumoto 1982, 129)

The 13-string koto is primarily associated with Japanese music and culture, particularly the aristocracy. Having arrived in mainland Japan as early as the 8<sup>th</sup> century CE the 13-string koto did not arrive in Okinawa until the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Thompson, Grove Music Online). By that time the Japanese koto tradition had already evolved from court styles and the more popular solo tradition had been established. It is thought that a small part of this solo

tradition was studied and brought back to Okinawa and subsequently perpetuated as part of the Okinawan/Ryūkyū koto tradition for over three centuries. (Thompson, Grove Music Online)

In chapter 2, the older Japanese koto tradition will be examined to provide context for the relatively younger Okinawan koto/Ryūkyū *sōkyoku* tradition, and the Okinawan koto repertoire itself will be examined to distinguish the original solo koto repertoire from the accompaniment material. Although there are over one-hundred works for koto in the Okinawan classical music canon, only ten of these are considered the original koto works brought over from mainland Japan. From this impoverished tradition, seven are purely instrumental works with the remaining three requiring singing. This explains the need for uta-sanshin performers to effectively perform all other classic works and shows how limited the original Okinawan koto tradition is. Within this marginalized culture and its classical/court music tradition, the koto itself is further marginalized as a “secondary” instrument (Higa 1976, 37). The fact that the instrument and its original canon are imports from mainland Japan also contribute to its subordinate status within the classic court ensemble and Okinawan music in general.

## Literature Review

Literature dealing with immigration, diaspora, community, identity, diversity, and appropriation are relevant to Akamine-sensei’s case.

Published material on immigration from Japan, particularly Okinawa, to the United States, particularly Hawai‘i, calls attention to the cultural differences between the Okinawans and mainland Japanese and how the Okinawans dealt with discrimination by their compatriots. The discrimination issue is addressed in order to explain the inclination of Okinawans to assert their own unique identity. Y. Scott Matsumoto provides concise general information on

Okinawan migration to Hawai'i. Yukiko Kimura looks at the issei from Okinawa and their efforts to establish themselves in Hawai'i and to distinguish themselves from other ethnic groups, especially from the Japanese (Kimura 1988, 83). Eileen Tamura focuses on the nisei and their efforts to assimilate into their homeland, often at the expense of familiarity and understanding of their parent's culture and their own ethnic identity.

Works written in the English language with specific regard to Okinawan music are limited, but a few studies provide valuable information. Jan La Rue's articles in the late 1940's and early 1950's are the earliest documents and give a general survey of Okinawan music as practiced by natives/residents at that time. His observations describe Okinawan koto practices (La Rue 1946, 161) which can be contrasted with Japanese koto practices, primarily in the tuning, but also in a vibrato technique non-existent in Japanese koto performance (further explained in chapter 2). Robin Thompson (2012) provides the most recent information on the Okinawan koto tradition and verifies the extremely limited repertory that exists.

Articles by Dale Olsen (1980, 1982) and R. Anderson Sutton (1983) focus on Okinawan music transmission and perpetuation in the diaspora (South America and Hawai'i respectively). Both refer primarily to first-generation immigrants following conventional repertoire and teaching methods in order to transmit the music tradition as they had learned it themselves back in its native land. However, the evolving cultural environment overseas provides challenges for subsequent generations to maintain interest in traditional music originating thousands of miles (and years) away and instructors of the art form must also adapt and evolve according to the diasporic community's changing needs and uses for the music. Wesley Ueunten's master's thesis (1989) confirms the importance of formal training for instructors of traditional music groups in the Okinawan community in Hawai'i and provides valuable insight as a "local" voice

from within that community. More recent studies by graduate students Christopher Vancil (1997) and Lynette Teruya (2014) examine the issues, faced by their own instructors Harry Seisho Nakasone and Katsumi Shinsato respectively, of teaching students with little or no familiarity with Okinawan nor Japanese culture and how their methods needed to be altered. Although these writings focus primarily on the *sanshin* tradition, the teaching methods themselves can be applied to other traditional instruments, such as the koto, and can be compared to teaching methods in the diaspora as observed firsthand in Hawai‘i.

The largest number of immigrants from Okinawa traveled across the Pacific Ocean and settled in the Hawaiian Islands and South America creating thriving diasporic communities there. Within these communities, social groups formed to practice music and dance, and they regularly performed for the community at events and gatherings big and small. Mark Slobin (1993) refers to these as “affinity groups” and distinguishes them from professional groups hired to entertain. Kay Kaufman Shelemay proposes a different model further categorizing these groups as being formed by descent, dissent, or affinity. (Shelemay 2011, 367) Both models can be applied to the So-shin Kai example as examined in chapter 3.

Although Akamine-sensei never taught koto at an academic institution, issues raised by Ted Solís regarding ethnic ensemble teaching at colleges and universities are pertinent to her situation. He considers the “foremost dilemma” faced by these ensemble instructors as how to properly represent those cultures while acknowledging and dealing with “cultural distance” and facing the challenges of “intercultural and intergenerational transmission,” (Solís 2004, 3) Akamine-sensei had to respond to this by being pedagogically creative, as will be discussed in chapter 5. Ricardo Trimillos also provides valuable insight as an academic ensemble instructor, having taught ensembles on the US mainland as well as in Hawai‘i, including koto. His views

on multiculturalism and performance programming are directly relevant to Akamine-sensei's situation and emphasize the need to consider multiple factors affecting traditional teaching methods and repertory selections in non-native environments.

Cultural appropriation is a problematic issue particularly in regards to music from minority ethnic groups. In the small community of Hilo, Akamine-sensei consciously developed and implemented her inclusive, multi-ethnic approach by using the Okinawan koto tradition as a foundation and by branching out to include music of ethnic groups that represented her years growing up in an even smaller plantation community. Issues of entitlement and appropriation, as described by Strang and Busse, could have arisen regarding intellectual property, however, as discussed in chapter 6, she consciously sought to use these songs as a form of cultural expression honoring the non-Okinawan ethnic groups while remaining loyal to her ethnic heritage as well as the roots of the So-shin Kai. (Strang and Busse 2011, 12)

## Methodology

The information presented and analyzed in this study comes primarily from face-to-face interviews with Shizuko Akamine conducted in Hilo, Hawai'i, over a period of one year and nine months from January 4, 2013, until the final interview on September 28, 2014. All interviews were done in English which was the native language for both author and subject. The trips to Hilo coincided with her Sunday afternoon teaching schedule set to accommodate her young students' extra-curricular activities. Her Sunday afternoon lessons were observed, and interviews were conducted on Monday mornings. Some lessons and most interviews were video recorded. Audio only interviews were done in cases where video recording was not possible or appropriate. Relevant information in the interviews was transcribed and cited in this thesis.

Additional information was obtained from interviews with her youngest student and his father to gain perspective on Akamine-sensei and her teaching from an alternate viewpoint. Members of the Matayoshi family were also contacted to verify data and information collected regarding Matayoshi-sensei.

Music transcriptions of two related songs in the group repertory, one traditional and one from the multi-ethnic repertory, are analyzed. “Old MacDonald Had a Farm,” as transcribed by Akamine-sensei, is re-transcribed into western music notation and compared to a western music notation transcription of “Tachiutushi Shigagachi,” the first formal piece studied in the Okinawan koto tradition. A brief analysis shows similarities that justify Akamine’s choice of “Old MacDonald” as an introductory piece prior to studying “Tachiutushi.” After the music examples have been discussed, the reasons behind these teaching/program choices, methods of presentation, and presence of changes are explained as much as possible with information provided by Shizuko Akamine herself through the interviews.

As a certified koto instructor in the Japanese tradition the author currently resides in Honolulu, but was raised in Hilo and has family ties with the Okinawan community there. Having been formally trained in the Japanese koto tradition at an established school in Tōkyō, the author has been teaching koto at the university level as well as in the general community of Honolulu. With musical proficiency as a primary goal, the author’s teaching methods generally follow what is practiced in Japan, whereas Akamine-sensei’s teaching methods were based on her own experiences as a student of koto as well as a student in grade school with her primary teaching goal being perpetuation through young students. In spite of major differences in training and musical objectives Akamine-sensei’s success with her innovative methods and her long and extensive involvement as a community leader warranted the author’s full attention and

respect. The State Foundation Apprenticeship grant formally designated Akamine-sensei as the master and the author as the apprentice, and fieldwork interviews were conducted from the author's position as a much younger and less experienced participant/observer in teaching koto. However, Akamine-sensei's admiration for the author's own achievements as a koto instructor allowed for a comfortable and friendly relationship based on mutual respect, and valuable information was openly shared and documented.

### Significance

This individual case study of the late Shizuko Akamine provides a specific example for Mark Slobin and Kay Kaufman Shelemay's concepts of affinity groups in diasporic communities. It could also complement the studies by Dale A. Olsen on the importance of music to the Okinawans in the South American diaspora, and R. Anderson Sutton's work on Okinawan music in the Hawai'i diaspora, specifically in Honolulu. Their conclusions show similarities in group rivalry and the developing of strong "cultural links" to Okinawa, whereas the Hilo situation is not as conducive to this, as will be examined in chapter 4. The challenges in this study, of teaching traditional music from a foreign culture in a geographically distant location, are closely related to issues examined by Ted Solís and Ricardo Trimillos, and the findings here add another perspective. Closer to "home," this study of Shizuko Akamine can augment similar studies by University of Hawai'i at Mānoa graduate students Lynette Teruya and Christopher Vancil of their own Okinawan music instructors' efforts to perpetuate Okinawan music traditions in Hawai'i.

This study begins with a description of the koto and its music in chapter 2, followed by background information on the key figures, Matayoshi-sensei and Akamine-sensei, and the So-

shin Kai in chapter 3. Chapter 4 discusses how Okinawan music thrived in the diaspora and the formation of affinity groups in these various geographic locations allowed for competition among performers. Issues regarding teaching and succession are looked at as well as how those issues affected Akamie-sensei's insecurity and influenced her leadership decisions. Chapter 5 describes Akamine-sensei's innovative and idiosyncratic approach to teaching and performing, particularly with her youngest students, and chapter 6 discusses the reasons for these changes and the development of her multi-ethnic repertory.

## CHAPTER 2. MUSIC

Central to this study, the koto will be discussed in this chapter to provide historical perspective and to explain the cultural significance of this instrument and its music. A general description of the instrument and how it is played is followed by an overview of the various styles that developed around the koto and their differences, particularly as practiced in Okinawa.

As the sanshin was introduced from Ryūkyū to mainland Japan, the koto was later introduced from mainland Japan to Ryūkyū. Unlike the modification and transformation of the *shamisen*, though, the Ryūkyū koto as an instrument remained structurally unchanged from that of the Japanese koto. Musically, however, they differ quite significantly as will be explained below. The status of the koto within Japanese music and within Okinawan music also differ, with the Okinawan koto being relegated to a subordinate position to the dominant sanshin. Because of this relationship the uta-sanshin tradition will also be briefly examined. More significant is the difference in repertory. While solo and ensemble works for koto continue to be composed in the Japanese tradition, in Okinawa only the core canon of ten works are available exclusively for the koto.

### Koto

The koto is a member of the family of musical instruments classified as “long zithers with movable bridges.” Its relatives in East Asia include the Chinese *zheng*, the Korean *kayagŭm*, and the Vietnamese *đàn tranh*. (Adriaansz, Grove Music Online) The koto entered Japan as one of the instruments of the *gagaku* (court music) ensemble from the Asian continent. Most likely originating in China, along with almost all Japanese instruments, it was modified

over time to suit the needs and preferences of the Japanese people. (Hughes, Grove Music Online) It is not known exactly when the koto was introduced to Japan, but it is generally accepted that it was sometime during the Nara period (710 – 794 CE), if not earlier. (Adriaansz and Johnson, Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments)

Koto was a generic term used in the Nara and Heian (794 – 1185) periods for a variety of stringed instruments (such as the *sō-no-koto*, *kin-no-koto*, *biwa-no-koto*, etc.). Eventually the suffix was dropped for most instruments and the term koto became associated primarily with the *sō* (non-native pronunciation of the Chinese character for koto). (Adriaansz, Grove Music Online)

The same character can be read as koto in the Japanese language, and both readings, koto and sō, are still used today, e.g. *koto-ji* (koto bridge), *sōkyoku* (koto music), etc.

For classification purposes, the various types of koto fall into four categories (Adriaansz and Johnson, Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments):

1. *gakusō* – used in the gagaku ensemble.
2. *tsukushisō/chikusō* – used in the *tsukushi-goto*<sup>1</sup> tradition, but basically the same instrument as the *gakusō*.
3. *zokusō* – used in the popular tradition developed after *tsukushi-goto*. Includes the *Ikuta-goto*, similar to the *gakusō* and *chikusō*, as well as the current standard *Yamada-goto*, which is slightly shorter, less decorated, with a rounded tail end.
4. *shinsō* – new types of koto such as the *jūshichigen* (17-string bass koto) and *tan-goto* (short koto).

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<sup>1</sup> koto is sometimes pronounced “goto” when part of a compound word.

The common, full-size koto is about 24 cm wide and approximately 180 cm (Yamada-type) to 190 cm (Ikuta-type) in length. (Adriaansz and Johnson, Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments) It is made of two long pieces of *kiri* (*Paulownia imperialis*) wood, slightly arched, and glued together forming a hollow resonating chamber. Thirteen strings (silk, nylon, or tetron) of equal gauge and length, and relatively equal tension, are stretched and secured over two fixed bridges set near each end (*ryūkaku* near the head, *unkaku* near the tail) of the koto and spanning all thirteen strings. A movable bridge is placed under each string and can be set according to traditional and standardized tunings, or to any number of specific pitches determined by the composer of the piece being played. The bridges can be made of wood, bone, ivory, or plastic (the latter most common today).

The koto player sits behind the instrument toward the right end either:

1. On the floor, cross-legged (*gagaku*)
2. On the floor with one knee raised (*tsukushi-goto*)
3. Kneeling (Ikuta, Yamada, Ryūkyū)

Nowadays it is common for players to sit on a chair with the koto raised on a stand.

The formal kneeling position (*seiza*) is still used when appropriate (performance of a classic work), or necessary (performing on traditional *tatami* mats). The player sits at a right angle to the koto, except for the Ikuta tradition where the player sits at an angle facing slightly to the left.

The strings are plucked with three plectra (*tsume*) worn on the right-hand thumb, index, and middle finger. Today the *tsume* are usually made of bone, ivory, or plastic (bamboo is still used for the *gakusō*). The size and shape of the *tsume* vary in different styles of koto. The *gakusō tsume* have slim bamboo stubs with rounded tips protruding slightly from bands that cover most of the fingertip. The *tsukushi-goto* and Yatsunashi school *tsume* were also slim with

rounded tips, but extended longer from the finger bands and were made of bone or ivory. The Ikuta school tsume were about as wide as the fingers and square/rectangular shaped. The Yamada school tsume were just as wide, but round and forming a somewhat sharp point at the tip. Both Ikuta and Yamada tsume are made of bone, ivory, or more recently plastic.

The left hand is primarily used to raise pitches, usually no higher than a major second, by pressing down on the string at a point just a few inches to the left of the bridge. It can also lower pitches slightly by pulling on the string to the right, loosening the tension down to a minor second at most. This classic technique has been modified by contemporary players to create a mild vibrato effect. Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the left hand has also been used to pluck the strings to the right side of the movable bridges creating a pizzicato sound. The majority of works created since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century feature frequent use of this left-hand pizzicato effect for single note runs, chords, and arpeggios.

Traditional tunings are based on pentatonic scales (five pitches per octave) representing the five primary notes of the mode which are repeated in different registers (e.g. low to high: D, G, A, Bb, **D, Eb, G, A, Bb**, D, Eb, G, A). In this fundamental tuning called *hira-jōshi* the second (Eb) and sixth (Bb) degrees are tuned slightly lower than tempered tuning: “The exact ‘lowness’ of these latter pitches is not standardized: the ‘minor 2nds’ in the tuning produced by the more traditional musician vary, averaging about 75 cents, whereas more modern musicians tend to equate this interval with the Western tempered semitone of 100 cents.” (Adriaansz, Grove Music Online) Traditional tunings that include minor 2nds are generally adjusted in this manner.

Today, diatonic tunings are used to accommodate western-influenced melodies (popular songs, etc.). However, the majority of koto music studied and performed still uses traditional or pentatonic tunings.

### Sōkyoku

Sōkyoku (literally “koto music”) has continued from the gagaku tradition since the Heian period. Chinese influences are highly probable, but difficult to verify. (Malm, Encyclopedia Britannica Online)

The instrument moved from the court to the mercantile class during the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and developed during the “national isolation” (*sakoku*) of the Edo period (1603-1868). Toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Westernization began to influence the tradition. Therefore, the zokusō (“popular” koto) tradition from the Edo period is considered to be, “one of the most specifically ‘Japanese.’” (Adriaansz, Grove Music Online)

### Tsukushi-goto

Tsukushi-goto, named after the Tsukushi region in north-western Kyūshū where it originated (Adriaansz, Grove Music Online), was the earliest solo koto tradition which emerged during the late 16<sup>th</sup> century and had developed from the “elegant” court music. It was restricted to males of the higher social classes, mainly aristocrats and exiles from the capital (Kyōto) who had gathered in the region to escape political insecurity. (Adriaansz, Grove Music Online)

Kenjun (?1534–?1623), a Buddhist priest at Zendō-ji temple in Kurume city, is credited with arranging existing koto music and composing new songs with koto accompaniment. These new *kumi-uta* (song cycles) were influenced by *imayō* (“contemporary songs”) which were

improvised and enjoyed by the nobility, and often based on the popular gagaku composition “Etenraku.” Ten kumi-uta by Kenjun make up the core of the tsukushi-goto canon. The song texts were taken from classic literary works and the poems of the individual songs were typically unrelated. The “aristocratic, ceremonial character” of tsukushi-goto was preserved by Buddhist priests and Confucian scholars throughout the Edo period, and blind men (professional musicians) and women were prohibited from learning this tradition, particularly after the second head of the school, Genjo, had passed in 1649. From the late 19<sup>th</sup> century a sharp decrease in practitioners began. (Adriaansz, Grove Music Online) Today there are no known practitioners of tsukushi-goto.

#### Yatsushashi

During the 17<sup>th</sup> century a tsukushi-goto musician named Hōsui settled in Edo and, against school policy, taught a blind shamisen virtuoso named Jōhide (1614-1685), who went on to become the “father of modern koto” Yatsushashi Kengyō<sup>2</sup>. Credited as the founder of the zokusō tradition, Yatsushashi based his kumi-uta and *danmono* (solo koto instrumental works consisting of *dan* (“sections”) of equal length) on tsukushi-goto works. Whether he actually composed the works he is often credited with (“Rokudan,” “Midare,” etc.) or not, what is acknowledged is his incorporation of the *in* scale for tuning the koto, most likely to be compatible with the shamisen music he was familiar with. In any case, this was a major shift away from the tuning and modes of previous traditions. With this change, sōkyoku moved into the realm of secular entertainment by professional musicians and the bourgeoisie. The Yatsushashi school prospered during the Edo

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<sup>2</sup> “The term *kengyō* had been one of the basic ranks of musicians under the guild system and so is frequently found in professional names” (Malm, Britannica Online)

period, then began to decline. The last recognized carrier of the Yatsunashi tradition was Sanada Shin (1883-1975). (Adriaansz, Grove Music Online)

### Ikuta-ryū

With the shamisen being a more popular instrument among the bourgeoisie, Ikuta Kengyō (1656-1715) founded a new koto school in 1695 in Kyōto. This new Ikuta-ryū tradition established the strong, and lasting, connection between the koto and the shamisen through the *jiuta* (regional song) repertoire. These songs were originally accompanied by shamisen only, but now the koto was added. The ensemble was still led by the shamisen player who usually sang. Musical interludes (*ai-no-te*) between songs became longer and more elaborate, and were called *tegoto*, eventually developing into the *tegoto-mono* form: *mae-uta* (‘fore-song’), *tegoto* (interlude), *ato-uta* (‘after-song’). This style was formalized in Ōsaka by the works of Minezaki Kōtō. As the koto gradually played a more independent role, the *kaete-shiki* form developed primarily in Kyōto and the pieces were referred to as *kyōmono*. The *kaete* is an ornamental part added to the *honte* (main part) and played by a separate instrument. This style was mastered by Yaezaki Kengyō (d 1848) who arranged *kaete* for existing works by other composers. A neo-classical movement emerged in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century in reaction to the shamisen-dominated music, and composers such as Mitsuzaki Kengyō (d 1853) and Yoshizawa Kengyō (d 1872) sought to revive “pure” *sōkyoku* based on the *kumi-uta* and *danmono* traditions.

### Yamada-ryū

While the Ikuta-ryū was thriving in the Kansai (Kyōto-Ōsaka) area, it did not become popular to the same extent in the Kantō (Edo/Tōkyō) area. Toward the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century a

new school of koto music emerged in the Edo region. Yamada Kengyō (1757-1817), also influenced by shamisen music, founded the Yamada-ryū. Narrative styles, *nō* theater, and biwa music also provided inspiration and the ensemble was led by the koto, as opposed to the shamisen. (Adriaansz, Grove Music Online)

The Ikuta-ryū and Yamada-ryū traditions both continue in present-day Japan transmitting their respective standard repertoire. However, the majority of koto players, as well as new compositions for koto, belong to the Ikuta schools.

### Ryūkyū Sōkyoku

The koto (*kutu* or *kutū* in Okinawan pronunciation) is said to have been brought back to Ryūkyū from Satsuma province (part of present-day Kagoshima prefecture in Kyūshū) in 1702 by Inamine Seijun where he studied Yatsunami-ryū koto music.<sup>3</sup> Along with the instrument, he brought back a small repertoire of seven instrumental pieces and three songs which together form the foundation of Okinawan koto music, formally referred to as Ryūkyū Sōkyoku. The instrumental repertoire consists of five short *sugagaki* pieces and two danmono works, “as performed in the Yatsunami school,” (Okinawan pronunciation in italics):

Danmono (or *dan-no-mono*):

瀧落菅攪 (Takiotoshi-sugagaki/*Tachiutushi-shigagachi*)

地菅攪 (Ji-sugagaki/*Ji-shigagachi*)

江戸菅攪 (Edo-sugagaki/*Edo-shigagachi*)

拍子菅攪 (Hyōshi-sugagaki/*Hyōshi-shigagachi*)

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<sup>3</sup> Malm believes there is no connection to the mainland Yatsunami school stating, “The title Yatsunami was adopted later by another apparently unrelated school to the far south in the Ryūkyū Islands.” (Malm, Britannica Online)

佐武也菅攪 (Sanya-sugagaki/Sanya-*shigagachi*)

六段菅攪 (Rokudan-sugagaki/Rokudan-*shigagachi*)

七段菅攪 (Shichidan-sugagaki/Shichidan-*shigagachi*)

The three songs, “of uncertain Japanese provenance,” are:

*kouta* (short song):

船頭節 (Sendō-bushi)

對馬節 (Tsushima-bushi)

源氏節 (Genji-bushi)

(Thompson, Grove Music Online) (Miyashiro 1988, 100)

Though no longer extant in mainland Japan, the titles of several of the danmono appeared in the 1699 koto primer *Ōnusa*. Rokudan and Shichidan are very similar to the Ikuta/Yamada versions, but use a different tuning. The mainland tradition uses a minor-sounding hemitonic pentatonic tuning (*hira-joshi*), whereas the Okinawan tradition uses a major-sounding anhemitonic pentatonic tuning (*hon-choshi*). This anhemitonic tuning is identical to the standard tuning for the tsukushi-goto tradition. However, since Inamine is said to have studied the Yatsunashi-ryū, it is believed that he studied an early stage of the danmono prior to the development of the hemitonic *hira-joshi* tuning.

## 平調子 (低)

双調

一 二 三 四 五 六 七 八 九 十 斗 為 巾

hira-joshi (low register tuning, “tonic” on G)

本調子 (C)

一 二 三 四 五 六 七 八 九 十 斗 為 巾

hon-choshi (“tonic” on C)

The three short *utamono* songs use texts that are variations of *ofunauta* (“boat songs”) from mainland Japanese anthologies. These songs were prayers for safety at sea and could possibly be the surviving remnants of the tradition dating back to the Heian period.

The earliest notation for the Okinawan koto tradition is contained in the *Koto kuroronshi*, a two-volume set compiled in 1895 by Tedokon Junkan. The ten fundamental works are included along with koto accompaniment arrangements for 42 songs from the *uta-sanshin* repertory. The current edition compiled in 1940 is in three-volumes containing additional koto accompaniment arrangements for a total of 193 works. (Thompson, Grove Music Online)

The koto used in Okinawan music is generally the longer type (Ikuta) which accommodates the much lower tuning/pitch range compared to the higher range used in mainland Japan.

The plectra are roughly the same size as the current Ikuta and Yamada tsume, but the tips are much more rounded and the player kneels square to the instrument.

The bottom two strings (*ichi* and *ni*) are employed only in solo danmono pieces. (Thompson, Grove Music Online)

The koto later was used as an accompaniment to sanshin music, both classical and folk, where it remains, to this day, as a subordinate ensemble instrument.

“The koto’s role as an accompaniment will depend upon the tuning, playing, and singing format of the sanshin musician.” (Miyashiro 1988, 100)

One commonly used technique that is not found in mainland Japan koto traditions is called *yōgen*, a type of vibrato in which the left-hand fingertips bounce (once, twice, or three times) on the string to give slight pitch variations. (Koizumi et al 1984, 199~200)

La Rue observed that the use of this vibrato-like embellishment, “is apparently a matter of individual taste, since different players use it in varying amounts, one applying it to all whole notes, another merely to half-notes, while still another will use it only on unaccented beats.”

He further notes that, “Unfortunately, the vibrato technique mentioned above causes the strings to whine in a manner highly unpleasant to Western ears...” (La Rue 1946, 161)

Performance of sanshin, as well as koto, was originally restricted to male members of the nobility, and the sanshin continues today as a primarily male dominated tradition (except in modern folk music). The koto on the other hand is currently performed in Okinawa, as well as in Hawai‘i, “almost entirely by women.” (Thompson, Grove Music Online) The standard ensemble

commonly used to accompany classical Okinawan dance consists of two or three sanshin, one koto, one bowed lute (*kūchō*), one transverse flute (*fue/fwansō*), and one pair of drums (*taiko/tēku*). Ensembles of various sizes are used in performance ranging from one sanshin and one koto, to any number of performers of each instrument. “The sanshin, however, is always the lead instrument, and the others are secondary.” (Kanesiro 2001, 792)

Therefore, the koto continues to this day in its role as an accompaniment for the uta-sanshin tradition (described below). It is occasionally played solo, or with koto-only ensembles, when repertoire from the ten original danmono and utamono are performed.

As in the uta-sanshin tradition, some koto masters arrange existing works from the standard repertory, but newly composed works are extremely rare and not widely practiced. (Thompson, Grove Music Online)

## Okinawan Music

The Battle of Okinawa, fought between Japan and the United States toward the end of World War II, devastated the civilian population and caused, “immeasurable cultural damage,” destroying invaluable property, historical documents, and many of the artists who had preserved performing arts traditions. (Kanesiro 2001, 790)

Left with limited documentation of the early history of the Ryūkyū archipelago in general, even less is known about the indigenous music that developed there.

Prior to the 1609 invasion by the Satsuma army from southern Kyūshū, the kingdom of Ryūkyū consisted of the island groups of Amami, Okinawa, Miyako, and Yaeyama.

In 1879, the islands were forcibly annexed by Japan to become Okinawa Prefecture. Under United States military occupation after World War II, Okinawa reverted back to Japan in 1972.

Presently the Okinawa, Miyako, and Yaeyama islands make up Okinawa Prefecture while the Amami islands are part of Kagoshima Prefecture. The natives of the Ryūkyū archipelago share similarities in language and culture that are distinct from that of mainland Japan. This includes the widespread use of the sanshin as the most common and important musical instrument in expressing their indigenous music. (Kanesiro 2001, 789) (Thompson 2008, 303)

However, until the introduction of the sanshin and other instruments, religious ceremonial singing appears to have been the primary musical activity. In 1462, two envoys from Ryūkyū sent to Korea were asked about music in their homeland and the reply was: “One performer claps his hands and sings, whereupon others join in... There is no instrumental court music.” In 1534, after musical instruments (“flutes and strings”) had been introduced into the court and Ryūkyūan art music developed, singing still appears to be predominant as Chinese investiture envoy Chen Kan noted: “The music employs singing accompanied by stringed instruments. The sound is very melancholy.” (Thompson, Grove Music Online)

Though singing was, and still is, central to Ryūkyūan art and folk music, the sanshin became so popular and widespread that it has become iconic of not only Okinawan music, but of Okinawa in general. The sanshin is based on the Chinese *sanxian*, a long-necked lute which was introduced after a Chinese community from Fujian province was established in the Kume-mura district of Naha sometime after 1392. The sanshin tradition became firmly established during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries and it was during this time that the sanshin was introduced to mainland

Japan and eventually became the shamisen. (Thompson, Grove Music Online) The present-day sanshin is smaller than the shamisen as well as the sanxian. About 75 – 80 cm in length, the lacquered fretless neck is made of ebony or red sandalwood. Python skin from Thailand or Vietnam is stretched over the mulberry or camphor wood sound box, and three silk or nylon fiber strings are raised by a small bamboo bridge (*uma*). A large talon-shaped plectrum (*chimi*) made from water buffalo horn fits over the player's right-hand index finger. (Kanesiro 2001, 792) Even with the popularity of the sanshin, the human voice was, and still is, the most important instrument in Okinawan music, hence the formal name of the sanshin tradition is uta-sanshin ('song-[plus]-sanshin'). (Hughes, Grove Music Online) Although a few classical tradition uta-sanshin masters today compose new pieces, the majority, "confine themselves to arrangements of conventional idioms rather than developing innovative new forms." (Kanesiro 2001, 796)

In Okinawa, the uta-sanshin and koto traditions have managed to continue practicing and performing with the established repertory and very little, if any, new compositions. In the diaspora, however, this creates a problem for those trying to perpetuate the tradition, especially in smaller communities where many who are drawn to the instrument have little or no connection to Okinawa or Okinawan music. With no new works materializing from the tradition itself, instructors are sometimes forced to create or come up with repertory outside of the tradition in an attempt to maintain student, and audience, interest. This was the case with Akamine-sensei in Hilo as will be discussed in chapters 5 and 6.

## CHAPTER 3. PEOPLE

This chapter will discuss the background of the So-shin Kai and its key figures, Midori Matayoshi and Shizuko Akamine. As an issei from mainland Japan and a nisei of Okinawan ancestry respectively, immigration from both areas will be explained to provide context. An overview of the So-shin Kai from formation will be provided and its role as an “affinity group” will be examined through categories proposed by Mark Slobin and Kay Kaufman Shelemay.

### Immigration

The first Okinawan immigrants, a group of 26 contract laborers, arrived in Hawai‘i in 1900. (Matsumoto 1982, 125) They were followed by a second labor group of 40 young farmers who arrived in 1903. Each year after that saw increasing numbers of immigrants from Okinawa until 1907 when the Gentleman’s Agreement between the United States and Japan limited passports to family members already residing in Hawai‘i and the United States. (Matsumoto 1982, 126) During this period immigrants from Okinawa were considered as Japanese in all official records. However, the Japanese community in Hawai‘i, “distinguished between the Okinawans and the *Naichi* (Mainland) Japanese from the four main islands of Japan proper.” Both identified themselves and the other as distinct ethnic groups. (Matsumoto 1982, 125)

The first labor immigrants who came from mainland Japan to Hawai‘i to work on sugar plantations were recruited during the final years of the Tokugawa period in the Tōkyō and Yokohama areas by Eugene Miller Van Reed, a businessman from San Francisco who became the first consul general of the Hawaiian Kingdom to Japan in 1865 (Kimura 1988, 3) (Van Sant 2000, 102) and was one of the few foreigners in Japan at that time who could communicate in

Japanese. (Van Sant 2000, 45) One-hundred forty-eight inexperienced non-farmers (including six females and two teenagers) arrived in Hawai‘i in 1868, the first year of the Meiji period (1868 – 1912). Due to hard labor and brutal treatment by the *luna* (plantation overseers) the immigrants voiced their grievances to the Japanese government and many returned home to Japan. When their three-year contract expired in 1871, ninety individuals remained and settled in Hawai‘i. The following seventeen years saw no organized immigration from Japan. During this period the Hawaiian government, including King Kalakaua, repeatedly requested and negotiated for further Japanese immigration to Hawai‘i. (Kimura 1988, 3)

Finally, negotiations succeeded in 1883 for immigration to resume. Individuals from the first group of immigrants were interviewed and voiced issues such as poor living conditions, lack of understanding by luna and employers, inadequate pay, and inferior ethnic status. The Japanese government, “made a special effort to recruit hardy farmers in the hardest-pressed, overpopulated rural areas of Hiroshima and Yamaguchi prefectures.” (Kimura 1988, 4) The 945 individuals, arriving as the first group of government-sponsored contract labor immigrants, were from the following prefectures:

Yamaguchi - 420; Hiroshima - 222; Kanagawa - 214; Okayama - 37; Wakayama - 22; Mie - 13; Shizuoka - 11; Shiga - 5; Miyagi - 1.

They sailed aboard the *City of Tokio* on January 20, 1885, from Yokohama and arrived in Honolulu on February 8. King Kalakaua himself welcomed them upon their arrival. (Kimura 1988, 5) Soon, however, strikes occurred over poor living and working conditions and poor treatment by the luna. (Kimura 1988, 6) Conditions changed little after the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893, and problems continued. (Kimura 1988, 7)

Although the majority of immigrants came to work in the sugar cane fields, non-labor immigrants (merchants, priests, ministers, physicians, newspaper correspondents, teachers, students) not under contract also came to Hawai‘i. (Kimura 1988, 11)

Due to centuries of feudalism the nation of Japan, though often referred to as a homogeneous society, is composed of people from various regions with differing dialects and customs. Immigrants to Hawai‘i from Japan represented these various regions and, although seen as simply “Japanese” by others, were often identified within the local Japanese community by their respective prefectures (*ken*). (Kimura 1988, 32) Therefore, Okinawans were, “sometimes thought of as a separate group,” and also, “sometimes included with the Japanese.” (Smith 1946, 53)

“Because of difficulty in communicating and the strangeness of each other’s customs, newly arrived prefectural groups met with open hostility from the old-timers of large prefectural groups.” (Kimura 1988, xiv) The two largest groups were from Hiroshima and Yamaguchi, and they spoke the dialect of the Chūgoku region (“Chūgoku-ben”) which became the prevailing Japanese dialect in Hawai‘i. (Kimura 1988, 22) Immigrants from Fukushima arrived much later in July 1898 and did not speak Chūgoku-ben (Kimura 1988, 23), so they were ridiculed for their way of speaking (Tōhoku dialect) (Kimura 1988, 27) (“Zuuzuu-ben”) (Kimura 1988, 30) and many suffered from an “inferiority complex.” (Kimura 1988, 35) “The Fukushiman immigrants overcame the handicap of being late arrivals and the problems posed for them by their dialect and established themselves in various fields in the Japanese community of Hawai‘i. The Issei Fukushimans did not expect their Hawaii-born children to be their successors as Fukushimans, but as members of the larger community.”

Immigrants from Okinawa, arriving even later in January 1900 (Kimura 1988, 23), also did not speak Chūgoku-ben. It may have seemed impossible to be treated as the Caucasians, who were socially, economically, and politically dominant, but there was a level of respect and desire to be at least “equal” in status as the Japanese, and the Okinawans as well as the Fukushimaans were aware of their position in society and, “measured their success in terms of how close they were to the other Kenjins as well as to the Caucasians.” (Kimura 1988, 24)

### Midori (Shiraishi) Matayoshi

Midori Matayoshi was the daughter of a Christian missionary sent from Japan. In 1909 Rev. Kirinshi Shiraishi (1875 – 1971), a native of Ehime prefecture, came to Hawai‘i for missionary work on Kaua‘i, Hawai‘i Island, and Maui. An ordained Christian minister who graduated from Doshisha Theological School (presently known as Doshisha University, School of Theology, Kyōto), Rev. Shiraishi, unaccompanied by his wife and their children, who were still attending school in Ehime prefecture, became resident minister at Wailuku Christian Church in 1918. (Nakano 1996, 74)

Midori Shiraishi was born on March 9, 1902 in Nagahama, Ehime prefecture, Shikoku Island, Japan as second of the three daughters among the eight children of Rev. Kirinshi and Ikuyo Shiraishi. Midori graduated from Wilhelmina Girls’ School (presently known as Ōsaka Jogakuin) in 1920 and temporarily taught at Nagahama Elementary School before being summoned, around age twenty, to Maui to live with and do chores (cooking, cleaning) for her father. In June 1922, Rev. Shiraishi resigned from Wailuku Christian Church to return to Japan. Midori was reluctant to leave Hawai‘i and, at her father’s request, Rev. Shigefusa and Sue Kanda allowed her to stay at their Kanda Home boarding school for Japanese girls. In exchange for

boarding fees Midori was asked to teach students at the home (more than sixty), which she was comfortable with due to her teaching experience in Nagahama. In 1921 Midori began studying English through daily one-hour lessons from Miss Edith Parson, Bible study and western etiquette teacher at Kanda Home, originally from Boston.

In September 1922, a young doctor from Japan named Zenko Matayoshi began practicing medicine in Lahaina, Maui. Born in Miri-mura, Okinawa, in 1892, he graduated from Kumamoto Medical School in 1915 and worked at hospitals in Okinawa and in Tōkyō. He immigrated to Hawai‘i in September 1918 arriving aboard the S.S. *Korea-Marū*. (Nakano 1996,78) He soon left to study English at the University of Michigan, returning to Hawai‘i in 1922. (Pulea 2014, 3) After passing the Hawai‘i Territorial Medical Board exam, Dr. Matayoshi went to Lahaina. His medical practice became quite busy caring for the many Japanese and Filipino patients who were laborers at the Lahaina Sugar Plantation. Because many of the patients were indigent, Dr. Matayoshi often provided medical care to them free of charge.

Dr. Matayoshi became good friends with Rev. Shigefusa and Rev. Isaki at the Lahaina Japanese Christian Church, and both advised Dr. Matayoshi to marry in Hawai‘i if his wish was to continue practicing medicine there. Rev. Shigefusa and Sue thought that Midori, with her intelligence and beauty, would make an ideal wife for Dr. Matayoshi. According to Jiro Nakano’s book they, “invited Dr. Matayoshi to the Kanda Home to introduce Midori to him. It was love at first sight and soon they became engaged.” (Nakano 1996, 79) However, according to daughter-in-law Lilian Matayoshi, Midori shared with her that she and Dr. Matayoshi were “set up” in a “look/see arrangement.” While Midori played the organ at Wailuku Christian Church, Dr. Matayoshi, after a long, tiring drive from Lahaina, looked at her from the back of the church and thought she “passed the test.” Midori “sheepishly glanced up” and thought, “he

seemed short, but was very handsome, so she gave her consent to marry.” (Lilian Matayoshi email to author, 3/31/17)

In March 1923 their wedding ceremony took place at the Lahaina Japanese Christian Church and was conducted by Rev. Isaki. After living and teaching at the Kanda Home for about six-months, Midori finally moved to Lahaina and became a full-time wife of the “busiest doctor on Maui.” (Nakano 1996, 79)

In October 1924, about a year after Midori gave birth to their first child, daughter Tayeko, in Lahaina, the Matayoshis moved to Hilo to take over Dr. Chirin Uezu’s practice on Hoku Street. Dr. Uezu, who fell gravely ill, had one of the largest medical practices in Hilo in a large, modern hospital in the middle of town, so Dr. Matayoshi purchased the hospital and residence from Mrs. Uezu which eventually became known as Matayoshi Hospital. Dr. Matayoshi and Midori had four children: daughter Edith Tayeko, daughter Alice Miyoko, son James Keiichi, and son Herbert Tatsuo. Son James followed in his father’s footsteps and became a physician, while son Herbert served as Mayor of Hawai‘i County from 1974 to 1984. (<http://hawaiicountymayor.com/history/>) Dr. Matayoshi died of a massive heart attack on December 10, 1970 at the age of 78. (Lilian Matayoshi email to author, 3/31/17)

Eventually becoming the, “only koto instructor on the Island of Hawai‘i for several decades,” Midori began learning Ikuta-style koto when she was an elementary school student in Ehime prefecture. Her neighbor was a koto instructor and she studied with her for a few years until she moved to Ōsaka for high school. She did not play the koto again until around forty years later when she heard the koto being played at Okinawan community gatherings in Hilo. Taking up the instrument once again, she initially studied Ikuta-style koto from Mrs. Suetomi of Hilo. Midori became familiar with Okinawan customs through her husband and, “began a

serious study of Okinawan culture,” which led her to learning Okinawan music for the first time. (M. Hughes 1983, 32)

In 1953 she began studying Ryūkyū sōkyoku under instructor Shizuko Kiyabu of Honolulu who traveled to Hilo about twice a year to teach for about one week to one month during each visit. Midori herself also traveled to Honolulu for lessons with Kiyabu-sensei. (M. Hughes 1983, 32) She admitted, “it was not too hard for me to learn the Okinawan koto because I already had a foundation on the Japanese koto,” and that, “tuning is the hardest part. You have to tune the instrument by yourself. If you can tune it, then you can read the notes and play.” She also admitted that, for her, “the Okinawan language is very hard. Even now, I have a hard time. The meaning of the language is more difficult than Japanese.” (M. Hughes 1983, 32) When Dr. Matayoshi returned to Okinawa for further medical training Midori followed him there, and while he was at school she took the streetcar to study Ryūkyū sōkyoku from Yuki Owan, “the number one sensei in Okinawa.” (Akamine 2013)

In 1957, Midori established the So-shin Kai (箏眞會 : 箏 = *sō*= koto, 眞=*shin*= truth, 會=*kai*=association) with help and encouragement from family friend Mr. Kashin Isa, whose wife, Kanako, was the first president. In 1958, on the recommendation of Kiyabu-sensei, Midori received her Junior Teaching Certificate (Kyōshi Menkyojō) from Okinawa after having mastered, “a set of 50 classical Okinawan compositions,” which qualified her to give Ryūkyū koto lessons. Midori could now be addressed as “Matayoshi-sensei.” In 1964, after completing “100 musical pieces” and receiving recommendation from her instructor (M. Hughes 1983, 32), she received her Senior Instructor’s Certificate (Shihan Menkyojō) from the Nomura Ryu Sōkyoku Kōyō Kai (Nomura School Ryūkyū Koto Music Society) of Okinawa.

In 1959 she was elected as the second president of the So-shin Kai and served for nineteen years. She stepped down in 1978, but continued to serve as instructor and advisor. By the time of the So-shin Kai's "Silver Jubilee" concert on October 29, 1983, Matayoshi-sensei was still teaching two-hour sessions twice a week at her, "large, airy music studio with tatami covered floor," which was one of the four buildings that made up Matayoshi Hospital. (M. Hughes 1983, 32) It had been renovated for her to use as her teaching space, and members of the local Okinawan music and dance groups would gather there regularly. A group known as the Mokuyō-kai ("Thursday Group") met Thursday evenings at the "Matayoshi Hall" for weekly Okinawan music and dance practice. (Akamine 2013) While leading the So-shin Kai and teaching koto in the community, Matayoshi-sensei was also a koto instructor at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo music department.

In addition to koto, Matayoshi-sensei also studied sanshin from Masei Shimabukuro, commuting twice a week to Mountain View, "never missing a lesson." She also played the organ on Sundays for the Holy Cross Congregational Church (presently known as the Church of the Holy Cross).

Matayoshi-sensei truly loved the koto and it was part of her daily life: "When it is sad time, I play and it comforts me. When I am happy, it encourages me. It's for everyday living." (M. Hughes 1983, 33) On March 12, 1996, Matayoshi-sensei passed away in Hilo at the age of 94 leaving behind a legacy of over 40 years of teaching koto.

Shizuko (Higa) Akamine

Shōsei Higa, father of Shizuko Akamine, immigrated from Okinawa to Hawai'i in 1905. He lived with a childless couple and learned to speak standard Japanese from them. A rare skill

among Okinawan immigrants, Shōsei would later use his Japanese language ability not only for his business, but to also help fellow Okinawans acquire the language skill themselves. (Akamine 2012, 257). Kamato Higa (unrelated) was a “picture bride”<sup>4</sup> who arrived from Okinawa and married Shōsei Higa in 1915.

Shizuko Higa was born on February 12, 1922, in Oloo (present day Keaau), a sugar plantation camp in the Puna District of Hawai‘i Island (commonly referred to as the Big Island) (Hawai‘i Sugar Planters' Association). She was one of 10 siblings born and raised by Shōsei and Kamato. Shōsei initially worked in the cane fields, but health issues prevented him from continuing, so he apprenticed under a shoemaker from China and eventually ran a shoe-making and repair business in Keaau to support his wife and growing family. Around 1925, after being forced to vacate the shop when the lease expired, Shōsei went into debt to finance renovating an old building to hold three shops. Being an enterprising man, he rented one shop to a Chinese vegetable vendor and the other shop to a Filipino ring maker. As fellow immigrants from various countries they helped each other out and became very close, even sharing food during the holidays. Sometime in the 1930’s, Shōsei started a dry-cleaning and laundry business and was able to run it with the help of his many daughters, including Shizuko. Business was good as there were many Filipino bachelors who enjoyed dressing-up on their days off in the popular zoot suits, sharkskin suits, and linen suits. While still in the fifth-grade in elementary school Shizuko assisted her older sister by making the rounds picking up and delivering laundry at the various plantation camps in Puna. In her ninth-grade year, she got her own delivery route, but when her father was not around to drive the van, she drove it herself (without a license and well

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<sup>4</sup> “picture bride” – immigrant wives who, “exchanged photographs with their potential husbands,” and were, “legally married before leaving Okinawa by registering the marriage with the village office. Most picture brides met their husbands for the first time after their arrival in Hawaii.” (Matsumoto, 126)

below driving age) by remembering what she observed her father had done. Occasionally she would forget to release the parking brake and the workers would see her and yell, “*Ading* (little sister), *hemo* the brake!” (Akamine 2012, 255) This short phrase, which she remembers fondly, is a good example of the cultural mixing already happening throughout plantation life at that time (*ading* [younger sibling]- Ilokano/*hemo* [take off]- Hawaiian/brake – English). School lunches being unaffordable for the Higa family, Kamato made for her children *musubi* (rice balls) with *ume* (pickled plum) wrapped in *nori* (dried seaweed) with *edamame* (soybeans) on the side, all packed in a two-piece bamboo basket. (Akamine 2012, 256) Shizuko remembers her classmates also bringing home lunch and how enjoyable it was to share food from the various ethnic groups with each other.

Shizuko attended Olaa School from kindergarten through eighth-grade, then attended Hilo Intermediate School for ninth-grade. An accomplished student, she was only required to attend three courses during her senior year at Hilo High School so she could leave early each day to help with the family business. She graduated in 1940. (Fukumoto, Terao: 2012)

Being well-educated, Shōsei was also an ordained minister and eventually became a church and community leader. During World War II he was asked to officiate at funerals and memorial services while the resident minister of Puna District was interned (one of the few ethnic Japanese in Hawai‘i to be so treated). Her father tried to help empower fellow Okinawan immigrants by holding weekly gatherings where each person had to give a speech or sing in “proper” Japanese language. This served the purpose of building self-confidence through public speaking while raising their status within the Japanese community by improving their Japanese language skills. It was at these gatherings where Akamine-sensei learned the Japanese language

and also heard and fell in love with Japanese songs, especially “Kōjō no Tsuki” (Moon Over the Deserted Castle).

Though aware of their Okinawan ethnicity the Higa children were not allowed to speak the Okinawan language at home. Their father was very strict and only allowed “proper” Japanese to be spoken, especially at the dinner table when they all had to eat together. Uncomfortable, the Higa children would often try to quickly finish their dinner and leave. She later realized this was her father’s way of checking their proper use of the Japanese language on one hand, while being able to know what his children were talking about (instead of trying to decipher any slang they picked up from school) on the other. She did remember hearing some Okinawan language spoken at home when fellow Okinawans would visit her parents. The only other time she would hear the Okinawan language at home was when her parents would have confidential conversations that weren’t meant for the children to hear. Unfortunately, because of their unfamiliarity with the Okinawan language, she and her siblings felt uncomfortable and “left out,” ironically, at Okinawan community gatherings. Though there were times she regretted being deprived of opportunities to learn and use the Okinawan language as a child, she realized her father’s wisdom in training the Higa children to use standard Japanese. As she became more involved with Okinawan community activities, she was singled out to help interpret when Okinawan filmmakers arrived in Hilo for a documentary on Okinawans living abroad. Feeling she was unqualified, she declined, but was reassured her language skills were more than adequate and was asked where she learned to speak so fluently. Of course, she credited her father. Later in her life, on a trip to the 2011 Worldwide Uchinaanchu Taikai with her grandson, she was again asked to be interviewed in Okinawa. Again, asked where she learned to speak Japanese, she credited her father.

She grew up in the multi-ethnic camp with majority Filipino immigrants whom she interacted with through the family's laundry business and learned a few Filipino words and phrases. Not experiencing harsh discrimination directly Akamine-sensei was still well aware of it as her siblings and fellow classmates of Okinawan ancestry experienced it first-hand, primarily from the mainland Japanese. As a leader in school she was able to avoid this. Because of her parents' insistence on proper education she was always at the top of her class and often chosen as class president which somehow gave her immunity from the teasing and bullying suffered by others. Sadly, she observed that all ethnic groups discriminated against others to some extent (Tamura 1994, 192) and came to the conclusion early on that discrimination is, unfortunately, a part of life. She also found out that becoming educated was one way to gain the respect of others, and by speaking properly and communicating effectively one could lead and help others. During her fourth-grade year, she and her neighbor, Yoshinobu, were selected to take the entrance exam for Hilo Standard School, a prestigious school for students with above-average ability to speak and write in standard English. They both passed "with flying colors," but were unable to attend due to the expensive bus fare from Olaa to Hilo which their parents couldn't afford. (Akamine 2012, 257)

She first heard and fell in love with the sound of the koto while in elementary school. The Ōto sisters, financially well-off classmates of hers, traveled to Hilo regularly for Japanese koto lessons at Hōganji Temple (Hilo Hooganji Mission). Busy helping with the family business and unable to afford lessons, she vowed to someday learn to play the koto.

In 1945 Shizuko met Seitoku Akamine, a wounded veteran of the highly decorated 100<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team. Wounded in Italy and permanently disabled, he had returned to Hilo after a year of recovery. He had been assigned to the US Army's

message center in Hilo when he met Shizuko. They were introduced by Seitoku's best friend who lived across from the Higa laundry business. A year later, they married in Olaa (now Keaau) and had another reception at Seitoku's family's home in Honokaa in the northern part of the Big Island (at that time a bumpy, winding four-hour ride away). Seitoku began working for Hawai'i Transportation and Transport and they purchased a home in Hilo raising three children (daughter Martha, son Kurt, and daughter Alison) there. While raising the children she worked as a bank bookkeeper and retired in 1980 as assistant manager of the Hilo branch of Finance Factors. After retirement, she enrolled at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo under the GI Bill as a spouse. While studying at UH Hilo, former customers and friends urged her to get into the insurance business, so she obtained her insurance agent license and was highly successful, receiving numerous awards until her second "retirement" in 1996 at age 74. Although she had been busy working, when she felt the children were old enough she decided it was finally time to start learning koto and in 1974 (Akamine 2013) she began taking lessons with Matayoshi-sensei and joined the So-shin Kai. All throughout her life in Hilo she was heavily involved with the Okinawan community and became the first female president of Hui Okinawa, the Okinawan community organization of Hilo, in 1977. She was appointed as a commissioner for the 80<sup>th</sup> Okinawan Immigration Celebration and represented the Big Island on the Hawai'i Okinawa Center's board.

#### So-shin Kai

According to the So-shin Kai's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary (1983) program notes, Kiyoko Jitchaku Chinen (KOHO Honolulu radio announcer, mother of late local entertainer Teddy Tanaka) was the first Okinawan koto instructor in Hilo. Kana Isa was one of her students who later worked

with Matayoshi-sensei to form a koto group. In 1957, “a group of Hilo area koto enthusiasts join together and establish a club ‘to study, master, and promote koto music.’ The name chosen for the club is Soshin Kai, which is derived by combining the Sino-Japanese pronunciation of the character for koto, ‘Sō’, with the second syllable in the first name of Kashin Isa, a locally renowned shamisen artist and husband of long-time Hilo kotoist, Kana Isa. Mrs. Isa is named first president of the Soshin Kai, whose initial membership of 28 is comprised of 11 regular members, 14 supporting members, and three advisors.” (“Silver Jubilee” 1983)

In 1958, after Matayoshi-sensei received her Junior Instructor Certificate from the Kōyō-kai headquarters in Okinawa, an inaugural recital was held in Hilo at the Yamato Theater on Mamo Street, and in 1959, Matayoshi-sensei was elected second president of the So-shin Kai succeeding Mrs. Isa. (“Silver Jubilee” 1983) In 1964, Matayoshi-sensei received her Senior Instructor Certificate, and in 1969 her students Makato Nagamine, Teruko Sagawa, Masako Uehara, and Mitsuko Oshiro, received their Junior Instructor Certificates. These certificates were presented at the So-shin Kai 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary concert held at the Hilo High School auditorium by Yuki Owan, koto master and president of the Kōyō-kai, who came from Okinawa along with over fifty supporting performers from Oahu and Maui.

In 1978, Sue Ann Takata was elected third president of the So-shin Kai. In 1981 the Hilo branch of the Nomura School Kōyō-kai (parent organization of the “Nomura School Ryūkyūan Koto Society” based in Okinawa) was officially established and many of the So-shin Kai members joined. The Kōyō-kai headquarters presented Takata her Junior Instructor Certificate in 1982, and a commemorative concert for the So-shin Kai’s 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary was held in October of 1983. Under the leadership of Matayoshi-sensei at the time of its founding, as well as

25 years later, the group, primarily issei or nisei of Okinawan ancestry, was very active performing and accompanying the various sanshin and dance groups in Hilo.

In 2007, under the leadership of Shizuko Akamine-sensei, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary concert program stated, more specifically, that, “In 1957 a group of 28 issei and nisei koto enthusiasts organized a club committed to study, master, promote, and perpetuate koto music *of the Ryūkyū Islands.*” (emphasis added) Though still focusing on Ryūkyū/Okinawan, koto music, the membership had changed from its peak of 42 members, to 21 members of 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> generation Okinawan/Japanese descent by the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary when the program stated, “the club has few members, but has expanded its membership to include those of non-Okinawan and Japanese descent.” (“Soshin Kai 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert,” 2007) Of the eight members performing in the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary concert, half of them were adults of Okinawan ancestry. The other half were children of mixed ancestry, including Filipino, Japanese, Puerto Rican, Hawaiian, Chinese, German, and French. The performance repertory had changed as well, presenting songs from ethnic groups other than Okinawan.

Although significant events, such as the anniversary concerts, featured Okinawan classical and folk numbers, the group’s repertory for smaller community performances became more “multi-ethnic” under Akamine-sensei’s leadership. The first-year anniversary concert program in 1958 was purely Okinawan classic and folk music. At the 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary concert in 1969 one Japanese koto piece (“Hiyaku” – performed by the Sorin Kai) appeared in the program. By 2010, along with her multi-ethnic group of youngsters, Akamine-sensei’s “multi-ethnic” program (described in chapter 6) was being performed featuring well-known songs from Okinawa, Japan, Korea, China, the Philippines, and the U.S.

Although the So-shin Kai was established primarily to study, practice, and perform Okinawan (Ryūkyū) koto music, Matayoshi sensei was originally a student of Japanese Ikuta-style koto and taught a few beginner level pieces to the So-shin Kai and occasionally performed them when they appeared as an independent group at Japanese-themed events. This set a precedent for non-Okinawan music to be included in the group's repertory. As a student and participant, Akamine-sensei was aware of this intercultural mixing of Okinawan and Japanese music and saw its purpose in serving a specific event and particular segment of the community.

Following Matayoshi-sensei's example of bringing Kiyabu-sensei from Oahu to Hilo to teach, Akamine-sensei asked a student of Kiyabu-sensei, Bonnie Miyashiro (Ryūkyū sōkyoku master, director and instructor for Miyashiro Soho Kai based in Waipahu, Oahu), to fly to Hilo about once a month to hold workshops and teach members of the So-shin Kai. These workshops began around 1999, but after Bonnie-sensei's schedule wouldn't allow her to travel to Hilo regularly she suggested Jane Kaneshiro (student of Otoyo Izumigawa-sensei, Ryūkyū sōkyoku master, director and instructor for Jane Kaneshiro Sozan Kai) to continue the monthly lessons. Akamine-sensei had considered flying herself to Oahu for lessons, but she felt it would benefit the Hilo students considerably by having them learn directly from these respected Oahu instructors. However, airfare was being covered by the So-shin Kai and eventually became too costly, so lessons taught by outer-island instructors ended after a couple of years.

By the time the So-shin Kai was established in 1957 the Okinawans were already well integrated as part of the greater Hilo community, and the members and their supporters had gathered simply to participate in musical activities they commonly enjoyed as they did so in their homeland (or ancestral homeland, in the case of the nisei). According to Mark Slobin, ensembles such as the So-shin Kai fall under either of two categories: 1) bands – “performing

units of professional or semi-professional musicians that play for the pleasure of paying customers,” or 2) affinity groups - “charmed circles of like-minded music-makers drawn magnetically to a certain genre that creates strong expressive bonding.” He further explains that bands are “flexible” and, “might perform for several audiences (e.g. various generations) at a single event... making sure to please them all.” whereas affinity groups, “serve as nuclei for the free-floating units of our social atmosphere, points of orientation for weary travelers looking for a cultural home.” (Slobin 1993, 98) The So-shin Kai was not a professional performing ensemble playing for paying audiences (such as Hawaiian music groups or “dance” bands hired for parties), but merely an affinity group of koto enthusiasts who met regularly and performed with and for members of the local Okinawan community.

In Hilo, there was not enough demand to support “professional” or “semi-professional” Okinawan music and dance groups, but there were enough residents of Okinawan ancestry to form various affinity groups to enjoy the performing arts as practiced in Okinawa, which allowed the nisei to also participate and learn the songs and dances that their parents and fellow issei had enjoyed in their homeland. These included an Okinawan dance group, a folk music (minyō) group, and a group (Hilo Okinawan Culture Club) combining both arts as well as other cultural aspects such as Okinawan cuisine. The So-shin Kai initially included members of both generations, as well as those of mainland Japanese ancestry. As they actively participated in public performances throughout the community over the decades, the group attracted members and supporters beyond those of Okinawan or Japanese ancestry. As Slobin notes, “Musics seem to call out to audiences across nation-state lines even when they are not part of heritage,” and, “contemporary global culture allows anyone anywhere to be attracted to a music of choice, many of which can now be heard close to home.” (Slobin 1993, 68)

While Slobin offers two categories, Kay Kaufman Shelemay describes three categories she has observed among musical communities: descent, dissent, and affinity.

1. Descent communities – united through shared identities, these collectives are generated by, “shared ethnicity or aspects of kinship,” among other possible factors. In these collectives, “music moves beyond a role as symbol literally to perform the identity in question and serves early on in the process of community formation to establish, maintain, and reinforce that collective identity.”

(Shelemay 2011, 367, 368)

2. Dissent communities - often generated by minority or subaltern groups, these collectives, “generally emerge through acts of resistance against an existing collectivity,” and are usually based in opposition to a dominant majority.

(Shelemay 2011, 370)

3. Affinity communities – as described above by Slobin, these collectives emerge, “first and foremost from individual preferences, quickly followed by a desire for social proximity or association with others equally enamored.” (Shelemay 2011, 373)

The So-shin Kai would fit the category of “descent” as it was created from within the local Okinawan community with the original “regular” members being all females of Okinawan or Japanese ancestry, some with direct family ties (mother/daughter), and was clearly established as a koto group by and for the Okinawan community. Throughout its history, the So-shin Kai may have had a member or two with negative feelings toward the mainland Japanese due to past discrimination, but resistance was never the intent of the group and dissent appears irrelevant in this case. By the time Akamine-sensei had taken over the So-shin Kai and welcomed her

youngest students, however, the group began to fit the “affinity” category. With only one girl of half-Okinawan ancestry who could claim “descent,” playing the koto was simply an activity to be enjoyed among this group of multi-ethnic friends.

Instead of treating them as three fixed categories, Shelemay suggests considering descent/dissent/affinity communities as, “existing along a continuum that can move in different directions or become part of a multidimensional framework.” (Shelemay 2011, 376) The continuum model could be used to illustrate changes that happened over time for the So-shin Kai, such as the increase/decrease in membership and evolution in demographic diversity. These changes will be discussed in chapter 4.

## CHAPTER 4. ISOLATION

This chapter describes the importance of music to the Okinawan people, even in (especially in) the diaspora, and how affinity groups were able to form and even prosper to the point of competing against each other. Instructors and leaders had great responsibility to uphold traditional teaching methods and standards of performance as recognized back in the homeland. Through fieldwork conversations with Akamine-sensei themes of identity, integration, and succession arose as some of the main issues she dealt with that eventually led to her reluctant acceptance as leader of the So-shin Kai and influenced her decisions affecting the group's future direction. She agreed to this leadership position, which would have normally fallen to a designated officer or member qualified/certified to teach koto, due to strong community persuasion. Akamine-sensei's insecurity was understandable and she greatly appreciated the mutual support of fellow affinity groups in sanshin and Okinawan dance. Isolation followed the loss of these groups and their support (along with support from the Okinawan community), but as an independent group Akamine-sensei was now free to reconfigure the role of the So-shin Kai as far as what it provided and what it represented to the greater community, both to the Okinawans and to the general populace, while embracing diversity through music.

### Expression

Music has always been an integral part of daily life in Okinawa. Throughout history foreign scholars observed many Okinawans carrying their instruments around with them, even to work, and Dutch scholar Englebert Kaempfer, "noted a universal love of music.", among the

Okinawan people. (Kerr 2000, 224) They delighted in the numerous annual festival celebrations and, “No occasion for singing and dancing together was neglected.” (Kerr 2000, 217)

Even as far as Peru and Brazil, music was, “greatly adhered to and nourished” by the Okinawan community there. Dale Olsen notes that, “From the time of the very first shiplod of Japanese immigrants to reach Brazilian soil, Okinawan *minyō* (folksong) has been an important expression of the Okinawan people.” and, “More important than *minyō* as a group expression is the Okinawan semi-classical musical genre known as *koten*.” (Olsen 1982, 111) He also noted that for traditional dances, many mainland Japanese performed with pre-recorded music, whereas the Okinawan dancers, “were almost always accompanied by live musical performances...” (Olsen 1980, 43)

Though many Okinawan immigrants simply enjoyed performing or listening to familiar songs from the homeland, it is possible that others could have used their native music as a way to openly express their ethnic identity and cultural pride, particularly toward the Japanese majority. As Timothy Rice explains, “When a social group cannot be heard, for example when it is suppressed by a more powerful group, music often provides members of that group with a noisy, heartfelt way to communicate their feelings, beliefs, and their very existence to another group.” (Rice 2014, 48) Dissent groups, as described in chapter 2, among the Okinawan music community in Hilo did not appear to exist, at least not openly. The affinity groups were supportive of each other enough that feelings of mutual enjoyment neutralized feelings of resistance or opposition toward any other ethnic group or majority. As far as the local Japanese community, there were practically no traditional performing arts affinity groups to compete with.

In addition to the organized associations for Okinawan *minyō* and Okinawan *koten* music that participate in annual concerts and competitions, many mainland Japanese associations were

also established in Brazil post-World War II. The Nippon Minyō Kyōkai, an association of Japanese folksong enthusiasts, was large (hundreds of members) with numerous sub-groups. Some of these sub-groups included other Japanese instruments such as shamisen and shakuhachi, while other groups later formed specializing in taiko drumming and even *rōkyoku*, a, “light classical Naichi-Japanese theater.” (Olsen 1982, 113, 114, 116, 117) Community support in Sao Paulo seemed strong enough to even have a “professional” koto group. (Olsen 1982,124) Both the Okinawan community as well as the mainland Japanese community in Brazil were large enough to support their respective affinity groups who proudly perform/display their unique culture and arts, but not necessarily to oppose any social injustice by a dominant ethnic group or majority.

In Hilo, the much smaller population was not conducive to forming as large, numerous, or varied affinity groups as in Brazil, but the Okinawan community was no less enthusiastic about singing and dancing as their ancestors in Okinawa, or their fellow immigrants across the Pacific Ocean in South America. Hawai‘i also has its share of Okinawan minyō and koten groups, and the same observation can be made in Hawai‘i regarding Japanese dance performances using pre-recorded music and Okinawan dance performances accompanied by live music. This fact is important in showing the mutual support between Okinawan music and dance that allows and encourages dance, sanshin, and koto groups to practice and perform together. These opportunities allowed groups like the So-shin Kai to exist and prosper within the Okinawan community.

## Diversity

Hawai‘i, located in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, is often noted for its ethnic diversity. Recent census data shows that Asian, Caucasian, Latino, Pacific Islanders, African American, Native American, and other groups, including many of mixed ethnicity, comprise the current population.<sup>5</sup> As the 50<sup>th</sup> state in the union, everyday life is conducted under the social and political system of the United States of America, however many residents enjoy and perform music and dance representative of the homelands of various ethnic groups. Many of these art forms have continued since the plantation era when they were brought to Hawai‘i by first-generation immigrants. Festivals celebrating these various ethnic groups and cultures are regularly held in large public venues/spaces and are well attended by the general public. Individuals and groups providing entertainment do so with pride and often hope to attract future students or supporters, especially for the “traditional” arts. This creates an equally diverse soundscape in Hawai‘i as, “... every culture has a music to present and to share. No one is without music.” and “ ... In artistic exchange all parties are equal. Each brings something to the table; and in Hawai‘i the table is rich indeed.” (Trimillos 1997, 4)

Even during the early plantation days when immigrant laborers were usually living in camps with their fellow countrymen and women, Akamine-sensei fondly recalled examples of “cultural exchange” while growing up on the plantation where the children would sometimes bring food to school and share it with their classmates. This allowed them to enjoy and appreciate edibles from the various ethnic groups. To her, music, just like food, is something to

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<sup>5</sup> from the 1960’s to the 1980’s the island of Oahu had approximately 80% of the state’s population, compared to approximately 10% for the entire island of Hawai‘i.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171) Summary File (February 2011) calculations by the Hawai‘i State Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism, Hawai‘i State Data Center.

be shared with all; a way to celebrate cultural diversity by enjoying what each ethnic group could “bring to the table.”

## Integration

In Hawai‘i during the plantation era many Okinawans experienced discrimination. Not only were they foreigners in a US territory, but they were also a minority-within-a-minority and looked down upon by their fellow immigrants from mainland Japan, some of who, “likened the Okinawans to a different race.” (Ueunten 1989, 1,2) In order to avoid less-than-equal treatment as much as possible, many Okinawans tried to assimilate into the culture of the Japanese community in Hawai‘i, while others, “due to their own in-group feelings and prejudices against the Japanese, drew closer to each other, creating additional barriers between themselves and the Japanese from the mainland.” (Ueunten 1989, 2)

However, after World War II and the social changes that followed, the negative attitudes of the mainland Japanese and Okinawans toward each other had diminished enough to the point where, “intermarriage between Okinawans and mainland Japanese, as well as between Okinawans and other ethnic groups, have greatly caused the blurring of social barriers that had previously isolated the Okinawans.” (Ueunten 1989, 3) Still, there were enough people in Hilo of Okinawan ancestry to naturally form affinity groups for pure enjoyment centered around music and dance from Okinawa.

Similar affinity groups that formed thousands of miles away in Brazil developed to the point where, as Dale Olsen observed, “an important event for the koten clubs... is the annual competition” where, “individuals, ranked in three levels, compete against their peers.” (Olsen 1982, 113) In Hawai‘i, on the island of Oahu where the larger population sustains multiple

Okinawan performing arts groups for various dance styles, music styles (koten, minyō) and instruments (sanshin, koto), their rivalries show that, “Competition is clearly a part of Okinawan musical life in Hawai‘i and does contribute toward the vitality of the tradition...” (Sutton 1983, 63) Although there are no official competitions as in Okinawa or Brazil, this rivalry between the groups motivates the instructors and students to improve musically and artistically. In the small town of Hilo, however, the situation was quite different for the So-shin Kai, which was described by the foundress’ grand-daughter as being, “like a social club which meets once a week to play together. There is not that fierce competition for perfection, because there is no pressure from other groups to perform on the best level. They meet not to practice rigorously for a performance, although they do perform at various events, but to enjoy the company and the music of their ancestors.” (Matayoshi 1982, 11)

The population in Hilo was not large enough to support rivalrous koto groups. Even if another small “group” had existed they would have been included in performances (see Sorin Kai in chapter 3) and community gatherings, since mutual support and cooperation tends to negate rivalry in small communities.

### Succession

These affinity groups, whether competitive or not, needed qualified leadership in order to function and grow while serving the community. Wesley Ueunten explains, “A samisen instructor under Nomura-ryu must receive the proper accreditation before he can officially teach. Membership in either of the two branches of Nomura-ryu requires that the koten samisen musicians in Hawaii conform to the standardized system of those two branches. Therefore, the koten samisen schools in Hawaii maintain strong cultural links to Okinawa which serve to

enhance their position in Hawaii as bearers of ‘genuine Okinawan culture.’” (Ueunten 1989, 59).

Though referring to the sanshin (often called shamisen or *samisen* by Hawai‘i residents<sup>6</sup>) this requirement for certification applies to koto as well. Teaching a traditional art form in the diaspora can be particularly challenging due to geographic distance from the main source. In addition to proper certification, regular and ongoing contact between instructors/performers in Hawai‘i and in Okinawa has always been important to show commitment and is essential for validation since studying in Okinawa is, “comparable to study and recognition in Europe for the aspiring American concert musician.” (Sutton 1983, 65) It is through these certified instructors in Hawai‘i who maintain contact with their teachers and schools in Okinawa where, “the students join part of a direct line back to the great masters in Okinawa.” (Sutton 1983, 66) Even *minyō*, although an informal style from the common people, became standardized as groups formed and, “affiliated themselves with the *minyō* organizational network in Okinawa which required that instructors be properly accredited before they could teach.” (Ueunten 1989, 59) Because the affinity groups in Hilo did not have professional ambitions, nor any competitive spirit, proper accreditation, while often desired and highly regarded elsewhere, did not seem to be a requirement. Adequate knowledge and the ability and willingness to teach or lead was sufficient.

Though certification may not have mattered much to members of the Okinawan community in Hilo, Matayoshi-sensei set the bar high as she had all the credentials expected of instructors of traditional arts, along with additional skills and training that enhanced her credibility as a koto instructor. Although she wasn’t ethnically Okinawan, or even from

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<sup>6</sup> “The sanshin is more commonly known in Hawaii as *samisen*, (after the *shamisen*, the Japanese three-stringed plucked lute). However, the two instruments differ in size and in the way they are played.” (Ueunten, thesis, 58)

Okinawa, she had studied Japanese koto in her native country of Japan, the original source for Okinawan koto. Also trained on piano, she had an understanding of western music and could read western music notation as well as standard koto notation (both Japanese and Okinawan). When she eventually resumed her koto studies in Hilo and began learning Okinawan music, she had the financial means to fly in a certified Okinawan koto master from Honolulu (Shizuko Kiyabu) and eventually got to spend time in Okinawa studying under Kiyabu-sensei's instructor, Yuki Owan, while there. After becoming a certified Okinawan koto instructor herself and returning to Hilo, she also took on the responsibility to travel regularly to Mountain View to study the uta-sanshin tradition with Masei Shimabukuro in order to sing and lead her students during lessons and practice sessions. As the wife of a successful doctor, she could also afford the leisure time needed to devote to music. However, she was still very hard working and proactive and sought out proper training from qualified masters in order to be a well-rounded and capable koto instructor.

After Matayoshi-sensei stepped down as president, Sue Ann Takata was elected and served through the 25th anniversary celebration, but eventually stepped down and moved back home to Kaua'i after her husband passed away. With no successor designated, the So-shin Kai was in limbo and became inactive for a few years. Strongly encouraged by others, especially by the sanshin and Okinawan dance groups, because of her leadership skills shown in the community, Akamine-sensei hesitantly accepted the position as 4th president of the So-shin Kai in 1986.

As a dedicated member of the So-shin Kai who was already well-known and respected within the Okinawan community, it seemed natural to have her take charge of the group. Being of full/pure/100% *uchinaanchu* (native Okinawan) ancestry, she would seem even more entitled

to the leadership position than Matayoshi-sensei, who happened to be of naichi ancestry. However, Akamine-sensei remained hesitant and self-conscious. Her reluctance was due to a number of factors, primarily music-related. Although succession was not based upon race or rank, but upon willingness to cultivate the art form, Akamine-sensei still felt unworthy of filling Matayoshi-sensei's shoes as a koto sensei.

### Insecurity

“In a formalized transmission system such as that of Okinawan music, the ability to gain full legitimacy as a musician in Hawaii bodes well for the continued vitality of the tradition there.” (Sutton 1983, 70)

In Hilo there was no question that Matayoshi-sensei was a “fully legitimate musician” recognized by the Okinawan community in Hawai‘i as well as the koto association in Okinawa. Akamine-sensei, on the other hand, felt unqualified to lead due to her lack of formal music training and especially her lack of any certification to teach koto. Previous presidents (Matayoshi-sensei, Sue Ann Takata) had at least a Junior Teaching Certificate to verify that they had achieved a certain level of competence with the instrument and its repertoire. Despite her decades of koto study as a dedicated So-shin Kai member, Akamine-sensei always envied Matayoshi-sensei and others who had opportunities to study in Okinawa, or even on Oahu, and who were able to earn their certification. Because she herself never had these opportunities or any type of certification, she felt quite insecure. Regardless, her willingness to help and her sense of responsibility prompted her to take charge and resume the group's practices and performances. Although initially working with remaining members who were former students of Matayoshi-sensei, she did not feel comfortable “teaching” them since she herself was not

certified. In addition to that, many of the remaining members were older than her and had been studying koto much longer. She felt awkward being addressed as “sensei” and referred to uncertified successors like herself as “student teachers” who fell into the instructor position after their own instructor had stepped down or passed away. (Akamine 2013) As the group president and leader she became the “face” of the So-shin Kai, but when it came to the music she felt she was more of a “practice leader” rather than an instructor for the group.

Eventually, the “Tri Club” was formed along with the Shinsei Kai, a sanshin group led by Reynold Miyashiro, and the Kin Ryosho Dance Academy led by Rev. Earl Ikeda. There was a period of time when all three groups gathered and performed together regularly, even following the *hiki-zome* (first playing of music for the New Year) tradition at the beginning of each year. However, this ended after Reynold Miyashiro passed away in 2009 and Rev. Ikeda was assigned to a Honolulu temple and left Hilo in 2011. Other prominent sanshin and dance instructors unexpectedly passed away and their remaining members became inactive. Merrill Kanna, who taught dance and uta-sanshin as Hilo Okinawan Culture Club leader, passed away in 2012. Shoko Nagamine, another important uta-sanshin instructor, also passed away in 2012. Rev. Ikeda was proactive and trained at least one Hilo student for certification, however the uta-sanshin instructors did not designate any successors and no one among their students or descendants stepped up to maintain the group, nor the music. (Akamine 2014)

With the loss of these cultural leaders around the same time period, a large void had formed in the Okinawan performing arts community in Hilo. The So-shin Kai clearly felt the sudden loss of mutual support that those senseis and groups had provided.

Akamine-sensei had none of the credentials, or opportunities, that Matayoshi-sensei had. Being born and raised in Hawai‘i, she could not speak Japanese as fluently as Matayoshi-sensei,

a native speaker, and therefore couldn't communicate as well with koto masters from Okinawa or Japan. She rarely had the opportunity to even meet any masters unless they visited Hilo, so a "strong cultural link" (Ueunten 1989, 59) could not be established or maintained. Although Akamine-sensei heard and wanted to learn koto from a very young age, she never had the opportunity to actually begin formally studying it until she was closer to retirement age. Needless to say, her progress as an older adult was slower than younger students, or students who had any training in music, but she was still very much content as one of the regular members who could play along with the group's standard songs and other pieces they studied.

Though she had the opportunity to meet some of the koto instructors and masters from Oahu and even from Okinawa when they visited Hilo for the special anniversary performances, she never considered studying from anyone other than Matayoshi-sensei and wouldn't have had the means to travel to study anyway. She definitely did not have the financial means to fly anyone in to take lessons from them. Only when she became the leader of the So-shin Kai did she take responsibility to fly herself out to study, or preferably, to fly in a certified instructor to teach the whole group. Though she did get to travel to Okinawa, it was for brief trips and not long enough to take any formal koto lessons.

"There is reason to believe that in most societies the casual performer receives relatively little training of a direct nature and instead learns almost entirely from imitation, while the future specialist must almost always undergo some sort of instruction, for special skill requires special training." (Merriam 2006, 150) This observation by Alan Merriam applies to Okinawan music study, even in the diaspora. Group learning, mostly by imitation, among fellow "casual performers" is the norm for these affinity groups. However, special training for future leaders or instructors seemed to be of little importance to the Hilo groups.

Matayoshi-sensei's lessons with the So-shin Kai were always by group, as is common practice in Okinawa as well as in Hawai'i<sup>7</sup>. Akamine-sensei recalls individual lessons with Matayoshi-sensei only at the very beginning, and once she caught up after about one month or so, she then joined the group. Because she and all the other members were "casual performers" they would simply play along/imitate, as a group, whatever song or piece Matayoshi-sensei was leading. No individual appeared to be a "future specialist" and singled out for "special training." The need to designate a successor did not seem to be a necessity. Though imitation allowed the students to follow along and be able to play the music, their singing skills were never consciously developed (because of its role as an accompanying instrument, singing is generally not specifically taught when studying Okinawan koto). Although encouraged to sing, it was not a requirement as long as Matayoshi-sensei or a sanshin player could sing and lead the group, therefore many students would just mouth the words silently and some wouldn't even make any effort. During practice, "Matayoshi-sensei would sing, but she never forced us to sing. That's why whenever we went onstage to play, nobody in the koto group sang." Even Matayoshi-sensei wouldn't sing whenever they performed with sanshin, as all koto players understood their role as "accompanists." (Akamine 2014) This was unfortunate since the students never got to develop the ability to sing while playing. Only Matayoshi-sensei was able to do this since she took the initiative to study and practice uta-sanshin. This not only made her familiar with the songs/repertoire she and the So-shin Kai would need to know to accompany the uta-sanshin and dancers, but it helped her apply the skill of singing-while-playing to the koto as well. (Akamine 2013)

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<sup>7</sup> "Teaching for both music and dance is primarily in groups – from as few as three to as many as twenty-five. This method of transmission enables a large number of students to work with a single teacher." (Sutton, 1983, 60)

Though singing by the sanshin player(s) only is standard in formal settings, during less-formal performances, especially in the diaspora, singing is done by whomever is capable as Olsen observed at a festival in Peru of a full ensemble (sanshin, koto, fue, taiko): “all but the fue and taiko players also sang while playing.” (Olsen 1980, 43) In Hilo, unfortunately, this wasn’t the case and, as per tradition in Okinawa, only the sanshin players sang in public performances. Akamine-sensei would have loved to develop the skill to sing while playing koto, but simply went along with the other students and just followed Matayoshi-sensei. Having started koto late in life and having no background in music, Akamine-sensei did not expect to be specially trained and the thought never occurred to her that she herself might someday be teaching koto. She was always just grateful for the opportunity to participate and enjoy playing koto as part of the So-shin Kai.

Being isolated geographically and not having the means to begin training as an instructor, her sense of insecurity was understandable. Despite this, she agreed to lead the So-shin Kai as president, but did not want to be called sensei considering the “big shoes” she needed to fill, and her own lack of qualifications.

### Independence

Akamine-sensei further isolated the So-shin Kai from Okinawa and, to a certain extent, even Oahu by allowing the So-shin Kai membership with the Ryūkyū Sōkyoku Kōyō Kai umbrella organization to expire. As with the sanshin players, the koto players in Hawai‘i have been affiliated with the main organizational network in Okinawa (formal name: Nomura-ryu Soukyoku Koyo Kai) since 1976. (Ueunten 1989, 60) She did not feel comfortable having to conform to a system thousands of miles away where she had no familiar personal contacts and

was also unconfident of her Japanese language skills in case the need to communicate with the main branch instructors or administration ever arose. This inadvertently deprived the So-shin Kai of opportunities to join even the Kōyō Kai members of Hawai‘i to participate in events such as the annual Okinawan Festival in Honolulu, in anniversary concerts, or in any performances with members visiting from Okinawa.

However, a positive outcome of this expired membership was that it allowed the So-shin Kai to become relatively independent as a koto group since there was no obligation to pay annual membership dues or to help fund events or projects initiated by the Kōyō Kai in Okinawa or Hawai‘i. The So-shin Kai was also no longer limited to repertoire approved by the Kōyō Kai.

### Representation

Finding herself in the position as the leader of the only koto group in Hilo (or the Big Island, for that matter), Akamine-sensei had to figure out a way to represent both Okinawan culture, as perpetuated by the So-shin Kai, and Japanese culture, as perpetuated by Matayoshi-sensei, and do her part to “share” the instrument and its music with the community. First, she had to deal with her role as instructor and how she could grow, or at the very least maintain, the student base of the So-shin Kai.

The most active Japanese koto teacher on Oahu, Kazue (Kay) Mikami, taught numerous students during the ‘60’s, ‘70’s, and early ‘80’s before retiring. One of her students, Barbara B. Smith (Professor Emeritus of Music and foundress of the ethnomusicology program at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa) noted that Mikami-sensei, “taught some girls (most of whom studied koto to please their grandparents) and some adult women (who studied it as a cultural hobby). All were of Japanese ancestry.” (Smith 1987, 210)

Over in Hilo, the So-shin Kai was also made up of adult women amateurs. However, they were of Okinawan and/or Japanese ancestry, and there were few, if any, school-age girls. The young ones who did practice regularly were often related to an older member, or participated, as Smith mentioned, to please their grandparents. Akamine-sensei finally had the opportunity to teach younger school-age students when her niece and a few friends began studying koto together as middle-school and high school students. By age difference alone, there was already an inherent level of respect for Akamine-sensei that allowed her to introduce the koto to them without any insecurities on her part. They obediently followed what Akamine-sensei taught and prepared accordingly for performances. She even made special kimono-like outfits for them to wear and sometimes had them perform separately from the adult members. At the invitation of Jane Kaneshiro-sensei, these young girls were invited to perform on Oahu with her Sozan Kai students, and a highlight for them was joining the Sozan Kai for a goodwill tour of Okinawa and Japan where they had the opportunity to interact and perform with fellow koto players from Okinawa. In preparation for this tour Jane-sensei asked the So-shin Kai to study and *memorize* the set of five classic songs known as “Gozen-fū” (御前風, “Gujin-fū” in the Okinawan dialect). These are considered standard repertory for the uta-sanshin koten tradition and koto accompaniment was arranged for each of these songs. No small feat, and challenging even for sanshin players, the girls worked hard under Akamine-sensei’s guidance and were ready to perform this set of classics with their Okinawan counterparts. Ironically, when they arrived in Okinawa and finally got together to perform, they were surprised to see the Okinawan koto students using the scores. A great achievement for those youngsters and for the So-shin Kai they represented, Akamine-sensei had hopes for them as the next generation of “cultural carriers.”

Eventually, though, they graduated from high school and left Hawai'i for college to pursue their own goals, which, unfortunately, did not include the koto.

In regards to “ethnic” music ensembles and their “formidable diversity of cultural relationships” (director to members, members to each other, members and group to cultural tradition being represented) Ted Solís asks: “...how do we represent the rich cultures we revere while we acknowledge and deal with the cultural distance between us and our students, and between both of us and these cultures?” (Solís 2004, 1, 2) Faced with the same dilemma, although complicated by the position of the koto in both Japanese as well as Okinawan music, Akamine-sensei chose not to emphasize one culture over the other. Fortunately for her, the students were too young to be concerned with issues such as identity, representation, and authenticity. They simply enjoyed playing the instrument.

The koto itself can represent both cultures. However, the generation gap between her and her youngest students (at least two, and eventually three generations apart) made it difficult to find existing koto music (Okinawan or Japanese) that might keep their interest. Moreover, most of her students were of mixed ethnicity and may not even be interested in Okinawan or Japanese culture, much less traditional music. Among her last group of students, who also happened to be the youngest (one was five years old) and all around the same age, only about half of those students were of Japanese ancestry and only one was of (half) Okinawan heritage. Sutton pointed out that, “In Hawaii one’s self image is very much dependent on one’s ethnic identity.” He also pointed out that, “Gaining recognition from the larger Hawaiian community is valued by performers of all ethnic groups in Hawaii. It is especially valued by less visible minorities such as the Okinawans.” (Sutton 1983, 62) For Akamine-sensei in Hilo, it was not about ethnic identity and gaining recognition as an Okinawan group, but more about sharing the koto, the

music that came with it to Hawai‘i, and the music that it is capable of providing the community. Her group of young students of mixed ethnicity were the perfect vehicle to communicate that concept.

## Optimism

In reference to, “acculturation progressing with each succeeding generation,” Tamura points out Marcus Lee Hansen’s theory of, “the almost universal phenomenon that what the son wishes to forget the grandson wishes to remember.” and notes that while the first-generation, “remained attached to the old country and its traditions,” the second-generation, “-in the push to acculturate – rejected the ways of their immigrant parents.” leaving the third-generation, “secure in their identity as acculturated Americans, to revive interest in their ethnic heritage.” (Tamura 1994, 50) In Hawai‘i, however, Tamura observed that, “While the Nisei acculturated into American middle-class society, they also retained aspects of their Japanese cultural heritage.” (Tamura 1994, 52) Over in the South America, Olsen observed that *sansei* (third-generation) musicians, “include very little of their Japanese heritage in their musical activities.” and states, “the Hansen effect does not seem to be prevalent and the South American *sansei* are not concerned about reclaiming their ethnic heritage, although they may have some curiosity about it.” (Olsen 2004, 15)

Though there may be concern that the younger generations of Okinawan descendants anywhere show little or no interest in learning the koto or traditional instruments (Olsen observed that in Peru, “although there is much interest among the youth, they seem to have little time to practice.” Okinawan music) (Olsen 1980, 46), Akamine-sensei observed in Hilo that interest in Okinawan cultural arts was less common among nisei, almost non-existent among

sensei, and seemed to have skipped a generation over to the *yonsei* (fourth-generation), such as her own grandchildren, who had somehow become attracted to and fascinated by their ancestral heritage. Akamine-sensei actually delighted in the fact that her youngest students represented many different ethnicities, and she considered it an advantage since her goal was to show that the koto was not restricted to those of Japanese or Okinawan ancestry, and the music could be enjoyed by all. Furthermore, she could use the koto to represent and honor the various ethnicities and cultures that she grew up with and that made up the community of Hilo.

Akamine-sensei chose to focus on teaching the children as a group of friends enjoying an extra-curricular activity. “Informal music learning among children in the absence of conscious efforts at instruction is probably the most common mode of music learning around the world. It occurs where music is an important aspect of children’s socializing and also where children are encouraged to attend and participate in adult social gatherings.” (Rice 2003, 74) Though two-generations younger than most of the older members, she considered these children part of the So-shin Kai and had them perform along with the adults as often as possible, usually during Okinawan community events. This got them accustomed to being around fellow musicians and performers of all ages. (J. Scofield 2014)

Fortunate to have the opportunity to teach this group of very young, innocent, unbiased children, Akamine-sensei was motivated to do whatever it took to make koto playing as enjoyable as possible for these “kids.” Examples of her own innovations are described in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER 5. INNOVATION

This chapter discusses Akamine-sensei's teaching methods and innovative ways of familiarizing her young students with koto notation and simplifying it, along with her method of tuning, to help them execute this music in performance. Although uncertified as a koto sensei, Akamine-sensei was familiar with koto learning and instruction due to her many years as a student and member of the So-shin Kai. Under Matayoshi-sensei she and the other members studied primarily Okinawan music through Okinawan-style teaching (as a group). However, when the opportunity arose to perform at Japanese or general community events, they also had the opportunity to study Japanese Ikuta-style koto music which Matayoshi-sensei had also been trained in. With her familiarity of both Okinawan as well as Japanese koto music, group learning experience, Japanese language background (thanks to her father) and, most important, a willingness to teach anyone, not just those of Okinawan or Japanese ancestry, interested in koto, she was more than qualified to teach beginners, especially a group of children. How she would teach them became a welcome and enjoyable challenge for her.

### Pedagogy

With this new group of very young children Akamine-sensei had to quickly re-think her teaching methods. Challenges in teaching Okinawan or Japanese music to those unfamiliar with the language and culture is not unique to Akamine-sensei or to Hilo. Lynette Teruya explains that on Oahu her uta-sanshin sensei Katsumi Shinsato's teaching methods require him to, "reconceptualize presentations of lessons to make them relevant to the students," and it,

“involves so many more steps than if he were teaching someone who already understood Japanese/Okinawan and have the same cultural understanding.” (Teruya 2014, 54)

Since the Japanese style of koto (Ikuta-ryū, Yamada-ryū) is more commonly practiced internationally Akamine-sensei consciously chose to use the standard Japanese terminology, instead of Okinawan, in regard to the koto and its music. Though the majority of terms are similar with slight differences in pronunciation (plectra = *tsume* in Japanese, *chimi* in Okinawan) some are quite different. For example, the Japanese term for koto bridge is *ji*, whereas in Okinawa, and among practitioners in the Okinawan diaspora, it is often referred to as *uma*. Although the So-shin Kai was founded as an Okinawan koto group, Akamine-sensei did not focus exclusively on Ryūkyū sōkyoku and her primary reason for using standard Japanese terms was that if the students ever happened to study koto in any part of the world there is a much higher probability that the instructor would be trained in the Japanese style. Therefore, familiarity with standard koto terminology would be much more useful for the students if they were to continue their koto studies elsewhere. Akamine-sensei was quite strict when it came to using proper terminology: “I make sure when I teach this they have to tell me in Japanese ‘*ichi, ni, san, shi.*’ I don’t accept ‘one, two, three.’... I say from the beginning you gotta know the right words for the koto because this is an instrument from Asia, so this is what you do.”

(Akamine 2013)

Though her career was related to financial business, Akamine-sensei had wanted to be an elementary school teacher. Being educated in Hawai‘i as a US territory, she was familiar with educational tools used for memorization. To help the young students learn the Japanese terminology, she would start with using “flip cards” (flash cards) which had the numbers from one to ten written in romaji (*ichi, ni, san, etc.*) with the same word written in the back along with

the translation (“ichi – one”) to help the parents who weren’t familiar with the Japanese language. These flash cards were given to the parents to help the students learn at home. Some were fast learners and she was surprised that one 5-year-old learned it in one week. Once they knew the names of each number up to ten, she would then use flash cards with the kanji characters, including the additional three strings (*to*, *i*, *kin*). She would use familiar words and concepts such as “king” for *kin*, explaining that the king is “number one” (meaning the “top” string closest to the player, not the string designated as *ichi*). To practice recognizing the *kanji* (Chinese characters used in the written Japanese language) she would have the parents show the kanji to the child and have the child write the character reading (“ichi,” “ni,” “san,” etc.) on a separate piece of paper. (Akamine 2013) Eventually the students would be able to recognize all 13 kanji for the strings which would allow them to read and follow any koto piece or exercise.

## Notation

Akamine-sensei also compiled a list of symbols used for various techniques in Okinawan koto notation and had to point out the differences between Okinawan and Japanese names for some of the techniques. For example, the *warizume* (pronounced *waijiimi* in Okinawan) technique of brushing adjacent strings with the index finger followed by the middle finger is printed as ワワ (read *wa wa* in standard Japanese) with the *wa* character representing the first syllable of the name of the technique. In Japanese koto notation, this same technique is printed with the specific string numbers to be played (五六、六七、 etc.). Colloquially read as “sha sha” in Japanese, Okinawan koto practitioners refer to it as “chin chin.” In addition to the technique being verbalized differently, the way of notating it is different as well, so Akamine-sensei would explain this to the students. (Akamine 2013)

Okinawan music notation can become quite complex, especially when vocal notation is adjacent to the sanshin or koto string notation. Chris Vancil notes in his thesis that the vocal line along with its many ornaments, “are fit into a relatively small space and are difficult to read,” adding that the late Harry Seisho Nakasone, a revered uta-sanshin master whom he studied under, “never uses notation in public performances, and only rarely uses a modified sanshin and text only notation in rehearsals.” (Vancil 1997, 63) As a master, Nakasone-sensei never used notation in performance since he memorized the songs, much of it in Okinawa, as part of an oral tradition. His modified notation would be for personal use, not for teaching his numerous students of all ages in the Honolulu area. In Hilo, Akamine-sensei, on the other hand, was not trained in the oral tradition and relied on the literate tradition for koto music. She did modify the traditional notation, but only for the purposes of teaching as discussed below. She tried to preserve the music as accurately as possible, but made changes primarily to the layout of the notation to make it easier to read, particularly for young children.

Modifying the official printed scores for uta-sanshin, especially the koten, may be unthinkable to some, but is not an uncommon practice. On Oahu, Katsumi Shinsato, “spends countless hours creating music sheets with romanized lyrics (Figure 2) so that the students can sing the songs.” (Teruya 2014, 49) In his case, Shinsato-sensei didn’t necessarily change the score itself, but mainly translated the lyrics from the Japanese characters to Romanized syllables for his English speaking/reading students.

As a responsible leader Akamine-sensei had to think of ways to keep the group active, without relying on sanshin and dance groups to invite them as accompanists, for the sake of both the students as well as for the community. After learning the first five dan-no-mono instrumental pieces and the koto parts to accompany the uta-sanshin standards, most students are able to

perform these works as a group with a strong ensemble leader with singing ability, as Matayoshi-sensei was. However, with the sudden loss of prominent uta-sanshin leaders and the performance opportunities disappearing along with them, Akamine-sensei needed to find additional repertoire that students could learn; songs and pieces that didn't require vocal performance and would also keep the interest of young students. Recalling the occasional So-shin Kai performances with Matayoshi sensei at Japanese-themed events, and now with a group of young students willing to learn anything "new" or different, she taught them the few Japanese songs that she herself had learned, including "Sakura" and "Kōjō no Tsuki", that would be practical for them to know for future performances at such events. Having received basic, hand-written scores of these iconic songs from Matayoshi-sensei, she re-did the scores by replacing the hand-written characters with printed characters from the original scorebooks. These she would individually cut and paste the "old way." She would recycle extra or defective photocopies of koto scores by cutting out each kanji character with scissors. Keeping the cut-outs for each character in a plastic pill organizer, she would use tweezers and glue to place each character in the appropriate spot within a hand-drawn blank koto notation grid. The purpose of this was to create a score with uniformly printed characters that would be much easier for the children to recognize than hand-written characters and symbols. In addition, she also got "creative" and added small things such as an opening glissando to "Kōjō no Tsuki" to, "make it more dramatic, yeah, and the kids love it when I tell them, 'Okay, we go make a run, yeah, from kin down.'" (Akamine 2014)

Most Japanese koto beginner textbooks start with single note exercises, usually repeated, and played with the thumb only, soon followed by simple melodies such as "Kazoe-uta" and "Sakura." The Okinawan koto tradition has no textbook or simple melodies to teach beginners.

Some begin their Okinawan koto training with the koto accompaniment to “Kajadifuu,” an utasanshin composition that traditionally opens celebratory occasions and gatherings. This requires many of the standard koto techniques utilizing all three right-hand fingers as well as the left-hand to alter pitches, and familiarity with the song is crucial in being able to properly follow the sanshin. Others are immediately introduced to “Tachiutushi Shigagachi,” which could be described as an etude since it contains almost every technique used in Okinawan koto and happens to be the very first piece printed in the three-volume collection of koto works. “Tachiutushi” is much more complex than a simple melody such as “Sakura,” but beginning Okinawan koto students are generally expected to imitate the instructor and follow along as much as possible. Eventually they’ll associate the hand movements with the score symbols and be able to play through “Tachiutushi” and subsequent pieces.

### Transcription

The first song Akamine-sensei transcribed on her own, dated September 2004, was “Old MacDonald Had a Farm” which she titled simply as “Ole MacDonald’s Farm” (Transcription 1, p. 90). It is a well-known melody and song that she was confident most people who grew up in the United States, including Hawai‘i, would be familiar with regardless of age. The melody is also recognizable in many countries around the world and is known in Japan and Okinawa as “Yukai na Makiba” (“Happy Farm”).

A “catalogue song” characterized by “addition and listing,” Old MacDonald is basically, “a list of animals and human imitations of the noises they make.” (Gammon 2011, 50) With similar versions existing as far back as the early eighteenth century, it evolved over three-hundred years to become a modern “children’s favourite.” (Gammon 2011, 42) and, “one of the

most popular cultural artefacts by means of which adults interact and communicate with young children.” (Gammon 2011, 50) The song structure is in AABA form with each A section (p. 92, measures 1~4, 5~8, 13~16) consisting of five notes and the B section (p. 92, measures 9~12) consisting almost entirely of the tonic note. (Gammon 2011, 59) The repetitive pentatonic melody can be easily learned by children and easily played on the koto in one of its conventional major-pentatonic tunings.

Because the younger children literally could not reach across the koto to the lower-pitched strings Akamine-sensei chose to start the melody on the tenth string (十) and transcribed it accordingly. Transcribing the song an octave higher (starting on the tenth string 十 instead of the fifth string 五) made it much easier for the smaller children to reach since the upper strings are closer to the player. She used the same “*shichi-i sage*” (7, 12 lowered) tuning used for well-known traditional Okinawan folk songs such as “Aha-bushi” and “Asadoya Yunta” that the students would eventually learn. She also added a small touch, just a few notes in succession, of ornamentation between the melody (transcription 1, p. 90: end of first line from the right - 九、八、七 and end of fourth line from the right - 九、八、七、八) since it falls under the fingers easily when playing the koto, while also making it a bit more interesting for the children to play.

With “Old MacDonald” being such a familiar melody to her, she relied on her memory, not on a published score. Compared to a relatively recent (1990) score published in “The Fake Book of Everybody’s Favorite Songs” (p. 92), Akamine-sensei’s transcription and performance show differences in interpretation of the standard 16-bar melody. A video clip of a performance on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010 at the Pahala Hongwanji Mission includes a performance of “Ole MacDonald’s Farm” by the So-shin Kai (Akamine-sensei and her six young students) and a transcription of this particular performance is shown on page 91. Repeating three times total

presenting a dog (“bow wow”), cat (“meow meow”), and pig (“oink oink”) respectively, the melody itself deviates only briefly during the B section (measure 10 - beat 3, and measure 11 - beats 2 and 4, marked by ♭) by dropping down a perfect fifth instead of staying on the tonic. Akamine-sensei’s added ornamentation (measure 4 – beats 2 and 3, measure 16 – beats 3 to 5, measure 17 – beats 3 and 4 plus measure 18 – beat 1, marked by \*) fits in nicely, melodically and rhythmically, and can help keep the students in time as opposed to having them hold and count a dotted half-note as in the published score. The most noticeable difference, however, is on the first beat of measure 13, marked by ♭. Instead of immediately starting the final A section, Akamine-sensei added a quarter rest on the first beat. This rest is included in her koto notation transcription (transcription 1, end of third line from the right) and is also observed in the clip, leading one to conclude that is how it was regularly performed by the So-shin Kai. This rest causes the melody to shift one beat (quarter note) behind requiring the 16<sup>th</sup> and final measure before the repeat to be transcribed in a 5/4 time signature. Although the flow of the melody may not appear to be “correct” in Akamine-sensei’s transcription, this could possibly be how she learned it as a child given the long history of the song and prevalence of commercial recordings of similar versions in the 1920s. (Gammon 2011, 49) Regardless of how accurately she transcribed the melody, Akamine-sensei’s version was recognizable enough for the children to follow along as a group in practice and in performances.

Another deviation from convention done consciously to make things easier for the children was adjusting the koto notation layout. Standard koto notation is written and read the same way as traditional Japanese, in columns read from top to bottom and from right to left. For koto notation these columns usually have a set number of boxes and each successive column is the same length. The music notation is filled in to fit these boxes and columns, and the player

follows each box (usually representing a single beat) successively until the end of the song or piece. Akamine-sensei's transcriptions still followed the traditional writing order of top to bottom, right to left, but the column lengths were short and uneven. She explained, "at one time I made it all the way down to the bottom [of the page], but I found out if I do that the kids had a hard time to follow, so that's why I cut it short, line by line, according to the way the music goes." (Akamine 2014) Basically, she only notated one song phrase per column which allowed the children to follow the song according to each phrase, not by counting beats.

As expected, her young students were all familiar with "Old MacDonald Had a Farm," and they learned to play it on the koto rather quickly. As they enjoyed practicing it they became familiar with the string numbers and also finger and hand movements particular to koto playing. Akamine-sensei's transcription of "Old MacDonald" shows the same descending perfect fifth motif a total of six times in each verse. Although with an extra note (G-G-G-D) or just the perfect fifth interval (transcription 2, p. 91: measure 11) this was enough to give the children practice skipping strings to execute this similar pattern, described below, in their upcoming study of "Tachiutushi."

Generally the first piece learned in the Okinawan koto tradition is the classic instrumental "Tachiutushi", also called "ichidan" (first step) since it's listed as the first among the seven danmono works. Sometimes referred to as "go-go-san" (five-five-three) because of the opening three notes played on the fifth and third strings, Akamine-sensei found that this short motif was similar to the opening notes of "Old MacDonald." By having students play the familiar "Old MacDonald" first, they could get used to the beginning hand movements for "Tachiutushi." Written formally as 瀧落菅攪 and read as "Takiotoshi sugagaki" in standard Japanese, it is sometimes pronounced in the Okinawan dialect as "Tachiutushi shigagachi." The score

Akamine-sensei used has the *furigana* (Japanese syllables written/printed over or beside kanji characters to indicate pronunciation) reflecting the Okinawan pronunciation (タチウトウシスイガガチ), however, she typed the title on the score as “Tachiutushi suga gachi” since she was familiar with it being referred to that way. Regardless of accuracy in pronunciation, it was helpful for the students who couldn’t read Japanese. Most practitioners usually refer to this piece as “Tachiutushi” or, as mentioned earlier, simply as “go-go-san,” amongst themselves. The estimated performance time is printed below the title in kanji as, “approximately one-minute, fifty-nine seconds,” however Akamine-sensei has, “Time: 1:56” hand-written below that. She may have misread the kanji for 9 (九) as a 6 (六). In any case, the entire piece usually takes about two-minutes to perform.

As the very first piece listed in the three-volume compilation of Okinawan koto works (Ryūkyū Sōkyoku Kun-Kun-Shi), “Tachiutushi” covers two-and-a-half pages. Akamine-sensei photocopied, cut, and arranged it to fit entirely on two pages so that the students didn’t have to worry about turning pages and could focus on playing. Another thing she did to make it easier for the students was numbering every “box,” equal to one beat, from 1 to 180 (see “Tachiutushi” score, p. 93~94). This allowed her to start anywhere in the piece during practice by telling the students which number to start from, as opposed to instructing them to find a particular line and a particular “box” which could be confusing and time consuming for the children. She also translated the *ritardando* at the top of the final line from the kanji characters to “slow down” in English (see “Tachiutushi” score, p. 94).

“Tachiutushi” opens with two lightly “brushed” glissandos across the bottom four strings immediately followed by the “go-go-san” pattern (boxes 4,5,6). Transcribed with the pitch C as

“tonic” (transcription 3, p. 95) this descending perfect fifth motif (F-F-C) appears twelve times throughout the piece in four different positions:

1. Measures 2, 4, 16: F-F-C
2. Measures 8, 10, 15: C-C-G
3. Measures 21, 23, 28, 37, 43: F-F-C (octave higher)
4. Measure 32: C-C-G (octave higher)

“Old MacDonald” being a relatively easy song for her to transcribe, she still needed more repertoire to keep the young students interested and give them something to look forward to. Not having any formal music training and unable to read western staff notation, whenever she had the score for a song she wanted to transcribe she would ask her second daughter Alison, who studied piano as a child, to translate the notes for her into A, Bb, C, etc. Striving for accuracy, she understood printed music enough to know that some scores had elaborate arrangements, therefore she focused on the, “main line, main source, never mind the alto and the bass...” (Akamine 2014) Akamine-sensei would then have to figure out a tuning to accommodate the melody, then translate the melody into koto notation using her cut and paste method described above.

## Tuning

Akamine-sensei would eventually transcribe and introduce many more songs, both familiar and unfamiliar, to the students. However, not all could be played using a standard pentatonic koto tuning. For practices and performances, she tried to group the songs by similar tunings as much as possible to avoid having to re-tune for every song. Re-tuning the koto can be time consuming and, unless it involves only a couple of strings, is usually not desirable during a

performance. To allow the young students to re-tune by themselves she devised a colored-sticker system to mark tuning changes directly on the koto, so during a performance in between songs she can just call out a color to them. Using dot stickers of various colors such as red, blue, yellow, etc., she used tweezers to place the stickers where the bridge for that particular string would need to be moved in order to sound a specific pitch for a particular song. The use of stickers is not very accurate since the strings stretch requiring the bridge to be shifted slightly, and the stickers sometimes fall off the koto entirely. However, this was nevertheless a clever system that the young students could easily relate to, as opposed to calling out the names of traditional tunings, and especially for the diatonic tunings required to accommodate western and western-influenced melodies. This tuning system was put to good use as the repertory increased in number and variety.

Faced with the daunting task of teaching a group of young children not only how to play a foreign instrument from thousands of miles away, but to also familiarize them with the centuries-old notation system written using characters from a foreign language, Akamine-sensei put a lot of thought and effort into making her teaching methods “kid-friendly.” Using western pedagogical tools such as flash cards to get them to memorize the written characters first, she could then explain the unusual symbols, how they’re verbalized, and how they related to the playing techniques. Making sure the students could understand and follow these characters and symbols was important in familiarizing them with the literate tradition of standard koto notation, both Okinawan and Japanese. Her innovations and alterations were not done to replace the traditional notation, but simply to make it easier for the children to learn.

## CHAPTER 6. INCLUSIVITY

With her teaching methods, notation modification, and tuning system proving to be effective with the young students, Akamine-sensei could then focus on repertory. This chapter discusses how she became aware of the potential of transcribing and performing music outside of the koto traditions and how she would use this to entertain as well as educate audiences of varied backgrounds in Hilo.

Smaller communities tend to be vulnerable to alienation if one group appears dominant, at least in population, over another. In an effort to be inclusive and yet maintain continuity, Akamine-sensei appeared to deviate from “tradition” by inventing her own repertory of non-Okinawan koto music primarily to appease her young students. However, her goal was never to replace the core canon, and she made sure the students also practiced and understood the importance of the standard classic works.

### Possibilities

When the master koto instructors were flown in to teach (as described in chapter 2) Bonnie-sensei had based her workshops around classic Ryūkyū sōkyoku standards, whereas Jane-sensei included folk and popular Okinawan songs. Learning from both instructors allowed the students to become familiar with the various styles of Okinawan koto music. (Akamine 2014)

However, a breakthrough came for Akamine-sensei when Jane-sensei happened to bring “patriotic” songs, such as the “Star-Spangled Banner,” “America the Beautiful,” and “God Bless America,” arranged by one of Jane-sensei’s students who has a strong music background. Although these arrangements were only performed by Jane-sensei’s group during a brief period

after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Akamine-sensei found it fascinating that such seemingly incompatible music could be played on the koto. She also saw the potential in using those arrangements to honor servicemen such as her husband's fellow veterans. Not only was it something completely new for the students and the So-shin Kai repertory, but it showed Akamine-sensei that practically any melody can be transcribed for koto. This inspired her to seek out sheet music for diverse songs that she wanted to include in the repertory, particularly songs popular with, and representative of, the various ethnic groups in the community. She began thinking of ways to achieve this. However, as Trimillos points out, "The awareness of cultural pluralism and the hope for multiculturalism raise the difficult issues of entitlement and authenticity." (Trimillos 2004, 27)

#### Multi-ethnic repertory

Music is a form of expression. It can also be a form of intellectual property. As a "non-rivalrous resource," though, one's ownership or use does not prevent another's, therefore, "someone's performance or consumption of a piece of music does not stop someone else from performing or listening to it." However, non-rivalrous resources can become rivalrous, "when their exclusive use by a particular community is a key element in that people's identity or their ability to make a living. Performing a piece of music that is critical to a people's identity or their economic viability does not stop them from performing it, but it does mean that the music is no longer unique or exclusive to them." (Strang and Busse 2011, 12)

Naively unaware of these concepts, Akamine-sensei's intent for using songs from other ethnicities and cultures has always been to honor those people and their music, never to offend or insult, nor to profit from. She never consciously sought access to anything exclusive or sacred to

an ethnic group. She simply chose songs that she remembered as part of her everyday life, songs she heard, from record players, radio, and eventually television, that anyone could listen to and enjoy. Fortunately, she had never been accused of “cultural appropriation” for using songs that did not “belong” to her or her group. Regardless, she always tried to acquire these songs respectfully by approaching friends or acquaintances who were from that particular ethnicity and/or country where that song originated.

“Dahil Sa Iyo” (“Because of You”) is a classic film song from the Philippines. (Trimillos 2004, 51) Akamine-sensei asked one of her staff members, who was of Filipino ancestry and played the piano, for a copy of the score to transcribe. Growing up among the Filipino clients of her father’s business, she wanted to present a song that the local Filipinos would enjoy and “Dahil Sa Iyo” was well-known since it was performed often on local Filipino programs. According to her, the song was to the Filipinos, “...just like “Sakura Sakura” [was] for [the] Japanese...” (Akamine 2014) so she would program that whenever she noticed many of Filipinos in the audience. However, “Dahil Sa Iyo” was not her first choice for a Filipino song. Although very popular, as a “love song” Akamine-sensei felt it “doesn’t fit with the kids” due to the mature content of the lyrics. (Akamine 2014) She would have preferred to have transcribed a song she remembered singing as a little girl. Back then, the Filipino ring-maker near her father’s business would play that record over-and-over, and although she could still, at age 92, sing the first couple of lines, she could not recall the title of the song (“Sitsiritsit Alibangbang”) and therefore was never able to search, or even ask, for the music score.

She also looked into Chinese songs. The “Jasmine Song” (“Mo Li Hua”) is a popular folk song from China. Although knowing it as the “Narcissus Song” while growing up, Akamine-sensei was familiar with the melody, “...because we had a Chinese neighbor, I used to

know the song...” (Akamine 2014) She recalled her mother learning how to cook Chinese food from this neighbor, and she would hear the record being played. Being an acquaintance of Eugene Tao, a native of China who became editor of the Hawai‘i Tribune-Herald, she asked about the music and his wife, a school teacher, found the score for her. (Akamine 2014)

For Korea, Akamine-sensei added the very popular folk song “Arirang” by asking her neighbor David, a native of Korea, who found the score for her on the internet. He printed it out for her, she transcribed it, (cassette) taped it, and had him listen to it and check it. David is the brother-in-law of former Hawai‘i County Civil Defense Director and current Hawai‘i County Mayor Harry Kim. Akamine-sensei’s mother and Harry Kim’s mother were good friends, so they were all “Olaa people.” (Akamine 2014)

“Pua Carnation” and “Hilo March” were Hawaiian songs she learned in elementary school, and they were also familiar to the Hilo community. Scores were readily available, and she was able to easily obtain them by asking music experts such as the late Dr. George Durham, retired professor of music and former music chair at UH Hilo.

## Localization

Just as Old MacDonald was not chosen at random, Akamine-sensei also carefully chose the various multi-ethnic songs to introduce to her students, and eventually the audience. By localizing the group’s repertory she was able to reach out and entertain those beyond the Okinawan or Japanese community. Christmas carols were also transcribed and performed at care homes and events during the holidays. Taking her cue from Matayoshi-sensei, who would present Japanese songs such as “Sakura” and “Kōjō no Tsuki” when appropriate, and now armed with a variety of non-Okinawan or Japanese songs to choose from, she tried to program pieces to

fit the event and the audience: “I like to introduce the Hawaiian (songs) first ‘cause we live in Hawai‘i.” (Akamine 2013) She took great pride when someone complimented a performance by saying things such as, “Wow, I never would have thought I'd hear that song played on the koto!,” which validated her efforts and motivated her to continue. She also hoped that her young students might appreciate and enjoy these songs that she felt are timeless and important to the people of Hawai‘i. Akamine-sensei transcribed a wide variety of songs for the koto, even the Hilo High School alma mater: “You know, when we have our class reunion I take the koto and I play the koto for them.” (Akamine 2014)

## Sharing

Even without cultural pluralism/multiculturalism affecting traditional music presentations, issues of entitlement and authenticity can still arise among “purists.” Resistant to change, they refuse to accept that change is inevitable and they question the dedication of anyone, especially one in an instructor’s position, who studies, practices, and performs anything outside of the “traditional” repertory.

Changes to repertory, especially in diasporic settings, can and do happen. In Peru, Julio Isa learned sanshin from his father, an issei who “knew hundreds” of Okinawan folk songs. As a nisei, though, Julio only knows about five of those folk songs, but he also, “plays folksongs from Tokyo, Europe, and Peru.” (Olsen 1980, 45) Referring to non-Western music ensemble instructors in academic settings, Trimillos explains that, “Variables of demography, local soundscape, cultural perspective, and musical background determine how, and sometimes what, the teacher presents.” (Trimillos 2004, 33) This describes what influenced Akamine-sensei to

choose what she did for the So-shin Kai repertoire and her own methods for teaching these non-traditional songs.

As a nisei growing up and living in Hawai‘i, Akamine-sensei knew the standard Okinawan songs she was taught by Matayoshi-sensei. In addition, though, she was also acquainted with, and eventually transcribed, taught, and performed, all the songs she grew up hearing including American, Asian, Hawaiian, etc.: “...you see I’m mixed up, I’m about the multi-ethnic kind of style...” (Akamine 2013)

Not having grown up in Okinawa or Japan, nor being formally trained in Okinawan or Japanese koto music, she gravitated toward music she was familiar with, music that she grew up with, music that was part of her own life.

With a multi-ethnic group of young students, and now a multi-ethnic repertory, Akamine-sensei could continue performing at various community events with or without sanshin and dance groups, such as when the So-shin Kai was invited to share koto music at Pahala Hongwanji on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010. Along with her six young students, she was able to present the koto and her multi-ethnic program to a very small farming community of mixed ethnicities, most of whom had never seen or heard the instrument before. After briefly introducing the koto and its history, she explained that they had prepared a program representing, “kind of a plantation community where there were *all kinds* of people” and enthusiastically announced that the program would include, “Chinese songs, Korean songs, Japanese songs, Okinawan songs, Hawaiian songs, and American patriotic songs.” She then proceeded to explain each song and its significance before performing it along with her students for a receptive audience. Although primarily invited to entertain, Akamine-sensei embraced opportunities like that to present her

diverse program as, “not only aesthetic, but as cultural and educational.” (Trimillos 1995, 29) to the local audience of mixed ethnicities and mixed generations.

The last project she was planning to work on before “retiring” was to transcribe US military songs such as “Anchors Aweigh”, etc. Though they would be unfamiliar to the students, these songs were chosen to potentially perform at the Okutsu Home (Yukio Okutsu State Veterans Home) a veteran’s care home for those who had served their country, as her own husband did. Naturally she thought it would be nice to honor them with the already transcribed patriotic songs, songs related to their branch of service, as well as “golden oldies” (from the WWII era) she hoped they might recognize, and planned a program accordingly since, “It’s for *them* that we’re gonna be playing.” (Akamine 2013)

An old, tattered scorebook of those “golden oldies” she happened to find in a bookstore was a treasure chest of memories for Akamine-sensei. Randomly flipping through the book made her reminisce, taking her, “all the way back to the elementary school days...” (Akamine 2014) Finding songs that she particularly enjoyed, she would proceed to make a photocopy and follow through with her transcription method (keeping daughter Alison busy, of course). Even though she was aware that the young students, or even their parents, would have no familiarity with most of these songs, she still introduced them during lessons as not only potential program material, but also, “to show the kids what you can do with the koto, not only play Okinawan songs, you know, but you can play a variety of songs.” (Akamine 2014)

Fortunately, one “kid” (the youngest) did take notice. When asked to describe what style of music he plays on the koto, Carter Scofield answered, “Everything... anything you can play on it.” citing Akamine-sensei’s influence with her ever-expanding repertory. (C. Scofield 2015)

Always conscious of the type of event and the audience present, she explained that, for example, if asked by Hui Okinawa to perform for their annual New Year's party, "I play nothing but Okinawa songs." On the other hand, if asked by the local Hiroshima kenjin-kai (prefectural association), "then we play like 'Sakura' and 'Kōjō no Tsuki,' you know, for the Hiroshima gang. Because they would not appreciate Okinawan songs."

Humble, yet proud of her dedicated group of "kids," Akamine-sensei states, "We're very versatile. We can change to all kinds [of music] to *fit* the audience. And I think music should be like that, you know." (Akamine 2013)

Musical versatility, as far as performing diverse music programmed for different audiences, was definitely not the original intent for the So-shin Kai. At the time there was already an active Okinawan music and dance community within Hilo and the formation of a Ryūkyū sōkyoku group was a welcome (possibly overdue) addition to the affinity groups, particularly for the sanshin players who could now practice and perform with koto accompaniment. That generation enjoyed the koten and minyō they brought with them from Okinawa and the community provided many opportunities to perform them for fellow Okinawans at public gatherings.

For many nisei and most sansei, interest was naturally not as strong. Being born and raised in Hawai'i, most had no direct ties to Okinawa. They grew up in mixed ethnicity plantation communities that became even more mixed as social barriers gradually fell, especially after World War II. Statehood in 1959 brought an even stronger American cultural influence, and the ties to Okinawa and Okinawan culture began to wane.

Akamine-sensei lived through all of this, witnessed these changes over time, and experienced their effects on the Okinawan community in Hilo, particularly the performing arts

that she was involved with. As support from the Okinawan community itself also declined, with prominent cultural leaders leaving or passing away and lack of interest among the sansei, she had to think of a way to keep the So-shin Kai relevant to the community. Instead of trying to resist any “outside” influence and preserve “traditional” (however that may be defined) Okinawan koto music, she chose to embrace change and looked beyond the exclusive local Okinawan and Japanese communities to, hopefully, serve the entire community of Hilo, a community she grew up in that had treated her well.

She could think of no better way to present a multi-ethnic program to a multi-ethnic audience through a multi-ethnic group of young children.

#### Perpetuation

Ultimately, Akamine-sensei’s main concern was perpetuation. She invested a lot of thought and effort into making the koto tradition as accessible, understandable, and enjoyable for the youngest possible student, regardless ethnicity or walk of life. Her foresight allowed her to strive for continuity through the koto itself, which would convey not just pleasant sounds, but also the beauty of the culture(s) that it represents. By focusing on her youngest students, she hoped to somehow influence them enough to impart her love for the instrument and its music regardless of whether they were of Okinawan or Japanese ancestry. Unlike other instructors of traditional art forms who were certified as “masters” Akamine-sensei was very much self-aware of her shortcomings, yet remained dedicated: “In my case, I’m teaching, but I don’t have a degree [certification]. It’s just that I want to pass on the legacy to the kids.” (Akamine 2014)

At least one student, who began as a five-year-old and continued until graduating from high school, seems to have been affected. In his final paper submitted for his AP English Language and Composition class just prior to his graduation, Carter Scofield wrote:

“My koto teacher, Mrs. Akamine, started teaching when she was in her 80’s and continued to instruct me up until the age of 92. She was always committed to perpetuating such a unique aspect of culture that would have largely died out without her support. She loved the traditional koto music and wanted to spread her passion with the younger generation so this tradition would not disappear. Her dynamic energy and desire to share the beautiful sounds of the koto with others will always motivate me to positively impact those around me.”

Akamine-sensei was no longer around to read those words, but she would have been delighted to know that it came from what many would consider the most unlikely protégé: a freckle-faced boy of German/French descent born in Texas and arriving in Hilo via Virginia. He and his older sister took swimming lessons and happened to be invited by a fellow swimmer to also try koto lessons with Akamine-sensei. Others around the same age followed and thus began the transformation/evolution of the So-shin Kai. Throughout his childhood he continued with koto and also regularly attended Japanese language classes. He took a break during high school due to his soccer schedule, but returned to the koto prior to graduating and was able to perform once more with the So-shin Kai to honor Matayoshi-sensei as well as Akamine-sensei in a special concert held at the ‘Imiloa Astronomy Center on July 13, 2014.

On July 19, 2015, the So-shin Kai presented a tribute concert honoring the late Akamine-sensei and her legacy. Once again at the ‘Imiloa Astronomy Center in Hilo, the remaining members were accompanied by a few sanshin players, Kin Ryosho Jimpu Kai dancers, and others who had known and performed with Akamine-sensei, including Jane Kaneshiro-sensei

and her grandson who flew in from Honolulu to join and support the So-shin Kai. The program was not multi-ethnic, but it focused on Okinawan songs and did include the Japanese songs “Sakura” and Akamine-sensei’s beloved “Kōjō no Tsuki.” This was the last performance featuring the remaining “kids” she had nurtured. After performing those songs she had taught them as young elementary school students, they returned to their lives as recent high school graduates, and all but one soon moved away and moved on to their next phase in life.

## CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION

It is difficult to imagine how a music tradition with a repertory of only ten works is able to survive for over three centuries, yet the Okinawan koto/Ryūkyū sōkyoku tradition continues to this day in its homeland as well as in the diaspora. Originally imported to Okinawa after the Satsuma invasion (from the Satsuma region, no less) the koto was somehow integrated into the court ensemble among indigenous instruments and became the primary accompaniment to the uta-sanshin tradition. Whether due to a contentious political history with mainland Japan or not, its role remains as secondary. This position allows the koto to remain relevant as long as there is an active uta-sanshin tradition to accompany. Its role also does not necessitate the creation of new material exclusive to the koto as the much larger uta-sanshin repertory provides an ample supply of almost two-hundred works. On the rare occasion when the koto is featured in a performance, any of its ten original works seem to suffice. This continues as common practice in Okinawa as well as in the Okinawan diaspora where affinity groups for uta-sanshin, koto, and dance mutually support each other.

Affinity groups form and exist for varying reasons, and the original So-shin Kai fit Slobin's general description as a gathering of like-minded enthusiasts who enjoyed each others' company as much as they enjoyed playing koto (interestingly, by the time Akamine-sensei had implemented her multi-ethnic repertory, she appeared to be thinking more along the lines of his definition of a professional band as she was clearly proud of the group's ability to play for mixed audiences and their "versatility" in programming music to "fit" the particular audience and occasion). Shelemay's proposal of three types of musical communities illustrate more clearly the various incarnations of the So-shin Kai over time. Originally a "descent" group of adult female

members sharing the same or similar ethnic background (Okinawan/Japanese) and/or kinship, it was able to avoid being a “dissent” group, but eventually evolved into a true “affinity” group under Akamine-sensei with the young members, including males, reflecting the current multi-ethnic demographic of Hilo. Shelemay’s suggestion of these communities existing along a continuum can be useful in observing future changes in the makeup of the So-shin Kai membership.

This specific case study of an affinity group in the Hawai‘i diaspora is just one example of how changes to tradition can occur when a seemingly unqualified individual with minimal training is persuaded to lead a traditional music group that initially represented a particular segment of the community. As noted by Trimillos, in certain situations such as this, alterations/modifications to the tradition, as far as pedagogy, performance practice and repertory are concerned, may be necessary and one needs to consider demographics as well as the instructors’ position within that particular locale and community. With obligations as a “cultural carrier,” changes were made accordingly by Akamine-sensei while she faced considerable challenges as the So-shin Kai evolved along with the community it called home.

As Olsen and Sutton observed, with larger diasporic populations of Okinawan immigrants and descendants in regions such as Brazil, and even on Oahu, affinity groups were sustained by their respective communities, competing with each other and performing alongside mainland Japanese and other affinity groups at cultural festivals and events. The Okinawan diaspora in Hilo, however, was quite different primarily due to its much smaller population. The issei had the strongest ties to the homeland and many nisei were also enculturated as direct descendants despite being born and raised in Hawai‘i. Most sansei, however, grew up as Americans and had little time nor interest in cultural activities associated with their distant (in

time and space) ancestors. Renewed interest in their Okinawan heritage appeared among a few yonsei, but after social barriers between the Okinawans and other ethnicities, particularly the Japanese, were weakened the demographics had changed significantly and many Hilo residents were now of multiple ethnic backgrounds. Some of these children of mixed ancestry showed interest in the koto, and Akamine-sensei welcomed them without hesitation. Fortunate to have this varied group of young children, she was able to use her skills in Japanese language and her interest in elementary education to come up with her own appropriate and innovative teaching methods.

Despite being doubted for presenting multi-ethnic songs and not focusing on Okinawan music, few noticed that she familiarized the students with the Okinawan “standards” for koto, and what prompted the change toward new repertory was actually the change in support from the Okinawan community itself, beginning with the loss of leaders and disbanding of other affinity groups the So-shin Kai had relied on for practice and performance. Lack of interest among those of Okinawan descent also compelled Akamine-sensei to embrace the greater community by presenting multi-ethnic songs, hoping to please the audience and also give them a sense of what it was like during the plantation days. It was a nostalgic and enjoyable endeavor for her, and her young students seemed content, at the very least, to be learning any “new” songs.

Akamine-sensei’s wish for inclusivity may have led fellow Okinawans to feel she was not dedicated to her own heritage, however she embodied values that are considered characteristic of Okinawan people. Though she rarely referred to these concepts by name, she understood that her multi-ethnic program could be an example of what Okinawans refer to as *champururu*, roughly meaning to mix or combine things in a favorable way. Her emphasis on community/connectedness reflected the Okinawan concept of *yuimaaru* which is often used to

describe the ability to organize and work together. An Okinawan phrase, *ichariba choodee*, was also occasionally mentioned by Akamine-sensei. Roughly translated as “once we meet, we are family,” she felt this concept was similar to the Hawaiian “spirit of aloha” that she grew up with in Oloa. Without such core values she would not have been able to endear the So-shin Kai to the people of Hilo whose support the group would need in order to carry on the art of koto music and the Okinawan tradition along with it.

Many in the local Okinawan community, including the author, were concerned about the future of Okinawan koto and the So-shin Kai under the direction of Akamine-sensei. After interviewing her for the apprenticeship, however, the author fully understood the reasoning behind her decisions. Though it may have appeared that Akamine-sensei randomly selected songs to her liking and self-servingly had the young students of the So-shin Kai perform them, in reality there was much thought and effort behind her self-less undertaking. More important to her than musical artistry (a goal assumed by most, including the author) was perpetuation of the koto tradition. This needed to be achieved by modifying the material for easy comprehension by the younger generation, maintaining their interest with a steady flow of “new” music, and having them perform for the community to show, and reciprocally receive, appreciation and support. Prior to her passing Akamine-sensei requested the author to take over as instructor for the So-shin Kai. Although not certified in the Okinawan koto tradition, the author was reassured by Akamine-sensei that his training and teaching experience were more than adequate and that he was not expected to follow her teaching methods or repertory, allowing him the freedom to teach as he saw fit. Teaching challenges aside, the primary obstacle is the fact that the author does not reside in Hilo and will require costly airfare in order to commute.

The Okinawan diasporic community, in Hawai‘i and in other parts of the world, needs to be aware of the issues of authenticity dealt with by traditional performing arts practitioners and instructors, and must consider their own understanding, or lack thereof, of what is believed to be truly “Okinawan.” Though marginalized for her “non-traditional” methods of teaching and performance programming, the local Okinawan community and the community at large should recognize that Shizuko Akamine and her musical *champuru* provided a socially significant service by maintaining the So-shin Kai in order to continue providing koto music for the community as well as contributing to the unique soundscape of Hilo.

The koto, with its refined sound quality and the elegant imagery it can evoke, continues to attract followers in Okinawa and Japan as well as overseas. Since Akamine-sensei’s passing a few members of the Hilo community have shown interest in learning to play the koto. However, most are simply curious and seem hesitant to commit to long-term membership. In the meantime, the So-shin Kai continues beyond its 60th year as a handful of dedicated members do their best to represent the group by practicing and performing, or by assisting the performers logistically, at local events. Though members are aware of its roots as an Okinawan koto group, most of the public performance opportunities are non-Okinawan related which shifts the emphasis toward Japanese songs and melodies that the koto is more commonly associated with. The So-shin Kai continues to face the same dilemma that Akamine-sensei had: how to program a performance to “fit” the audience of community members whose support could potentially help sustain the So-shin Kai. Only by carefully presenting songs and music that attendees can appreciate, hopefully relate to, and ultimately enjoy, will the So-shin Kai be able to continue as a valuable member of the community of Hilo, Hawai‘i.

APPENDIX A: TRANSCRIPTIONS/SCORES

TRANSCRIPTION 1 - "Ole MacDonald's Farm"  
 arranged in koto notation by Shizuko Akamine

OLE MACDONALD'S FARM (Shichi/I sage)											
				十	OLD	八	WITH	八	AND	十	OLD
				十	MAC	八	A			十	Mac
				十	DON	十	BOW	十	ON	十	DON
				十	ALD	十	WOW	十	THIS	十	ALD
				九	HAD	十	HERE	十	FARM	九	HAD
				九	A	十	AND	十	HE	九	A
				八	FARM	十	BOW	九	HAD	八	FARM
				八		十	WOW	九	A	八	
				為	EE	八	THERE	八	DOG,	為	EE
				為	AY	八				為	AY
				斗	EE	十	HERE	為	EE	斗	EE
				斗	AY	十	BOW	為	AY	斗	AY
				十	OH	十	THERE	斗	EE	十	OH
				十		十	BOW	斗	AY	十	
				九		十	EVERY	十	OH	九	
				八		十	WHERE			八	
				七		十				七	
				八		十	BOW				
				十		十	WOW				
						○					

TRANSCRIPTION 2 – “Ole MacDonald’s Farm”  
 So-shin Kai performance at Pahala Hongwanji Mission, May 2nd, 2010  
 transcribed by Darin Miyashiro

"OLE MACDONALD'S FARM"  
 (Shichi/I sage)

♩ = 99

Old Mac Don ald had a farm ee ay ee ay oh and on this farm he had a dog

7

ee ay ee ay oh with a bow wow here and bow wow there here bow there bow

12

ev' rywhere a bow wow Old Mac Don ald had a farm ee ay ee ay oh

17

ay oh

## OLD MacDONALD HAD A FARM

Moderately

1. Old Mac - Don - ald Had A Farm E - I - E - I - O! And on this farm he had a duck,  
 2-10. (See additional lyrics)

E - I - E - I - O! With a quack - quack here, and a quack - quack there, Here a quack, there a quack,  
 Ev - 'ry where a quack, quack. Old Mac - Don - ald Had A Farm, E - I - E - I - O!

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### Additional Lyrics

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>2. Old MacDonald Had A Farm,<br/>         E - I - E - I - O!<br/>         And on this farm he had a chick,<br/>         E - I - E - I - O!<br/>         With a chick, chick here<br/>         And a chick, chick there,<br/>         Here a chick, there a chick,<br/>         Everywhere a chick, chick<br/>         Old MacDonald Had A Farm,<br/>         E - I - E - I - O!</p> | <p>3. Other verses:</p> <p>3. Cow — moo, moo<br/>         4. Dogs — bow, bow<br/>         5. Pigs — oink, oink<br/>         6. Rooster — cock-a-doodle, cock-a-doodle<br/>         7. Turkey — gobble, gobble<br/>         8. Cat — meow, meow<br/>         9. Horse — neigh, neigh<br/>         10. Donkey — hee-haw, hee-haw</p> |
|--|--|

Source: "The Fake Book of Everybody's Favorite Songs"  
 Publisher: Crescent Books, New York, 1990

“Tachiutushi Shigagachi” – koto score from Ryūkyū Sōkyoku Kōyō Kai Kun-Kun-Shi  
 (notes by Shizuko Akamine)

- 2 - - 1 -

ハ	五	○	ハ	ハ	五	△ 1 2 3 4	TACHIUTUSHI SUGA GACHI  籠 <small>ワチ</small> 落 <small>ウツシ</small> 管 <small>ネガ</small> 攪 <small>カチ</small>  凡 <small>ワ</small> 一分五十九秒
九	三	ハ	六	カ	三	○	
○	カ	ワ	カ	七	カ	△ 3 2 3 4	
△ 5 6 7	四	ワ	七	ハ	四	五	
十	ワ	九	ワ	ハ	ワ	五	
カ	ワ	ハ	ワ	ハ	ワ	三	
九	カ	七	ワ	カ	カ	カ	
十	六	ハ	ワ	六	六	四	
十	カ	ハ	九	ワ	カ	ワ	
ハ	七	六	ハ	ワ	七	ワ	
カ	○	七	ワ	ハ	○	五	
九	△ 12 11 10 9 8 7 6	五	ワ	ハ	△ 24 23 22 21 20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6	六	

TIME: 1.56

十	○	為	カ	巾	十	○	ワ
八	十	中十	為	カ	八	十	十
カ	ワ	十	ワ	為	カ	ワ	斗
九	為	八	巾	巾	九	為	十
十	斗	カ	○	巾	ワ	斗	十
八	十	九	九	斗	十	十	八
カ	ワ	ワ	仲	カ	カ	ワ	カ
七	為	十	仲	為	斗	為	九
○	斗	ワ	巾	ワ	カ	斗	ワ
六	十	ワ	巾	巾	為	十	十
○	九	カ	為	為	○	九	ワ
一	十	為	斗	斗	斗	十	為
五							
○							

TRANSCRIPTION 3 – “Tachiutushi Shigagachi”  
Transcription of koto score from Ryūkyū Sōkyoku Kōyō Kai Kun-Kun-Shi  
Transcription by Darin Miyashiro

"Tachiutushi Shigagachi"  
瀧落管攪

凡ソ一分五十九秒 ("approximately 1 minute 59 seconds")

Musical notation for measures 1-6. The score is in 4/4 time. The bass clef staff contains the primary melody, starting with a series of chords and moving to a descending line of notes. The treble clef staff is mostly empty, with a few notes appearing in the final measure.

Musical notation for measures 7-11. The bass clef staff continues the melodic line with some grace notes and rests. The treble clef staff remains mostly empty.

Musical notation for measures 12-17. The treble clef staff becomes more active, featuring a series of chords and eighth notes. The bass clef staff has rests in measures 12-14 and then resumes with a simple accompaniment.

Musical notation for measures 18-24. The treble clef staff continues with a melodic line of eighth notes. The bass clef staff provides a steady accompaniment with chords and eighth notes.

Musical notation for measures 25-30. The treble clef staff continues the melodic line, ending with a final chord. The bass clef staff continues its accompaniment.

31

36

42

此レヨリ漸次緩弾 ("gradually play slower from here")

## APPENDIX B:

### GLOSSARY

(All terms are Japanese unless otherwise noted)

- ading* – (Ilokano) younger sibling.  
*ai-no-te* – musical interlude between songs.  
*ato-uta* – “after-song” following instrumental interlude.  
*biwa-no-koto* – early name for the biwa, a fretted lute.  
*champururu* – (Okinawan) to mix or blend together; usually referring to a stir-fry dish of various ingredients.  
*chimi* – Okinawan pronunciation for plectrum/pick (*tsume*).  
*đàn tranh* – (Vietnamese) Vietnamese plucked zither.  
*danmono/dan-no-mono* - solo koto instrumental works consisting of sections of equal length.  
*edamame* – green soybeans, usually boiled.  
*fue/fwansō* – Okinawan transverse bamboo flute.  
*furigana* – Japanese syllables written above kanji for pronunciation.  
*gagaku* – imperial court music and dance.  
*gakusō* – early form of koto used in gagaku ensemble.  
*hemo* – (Hawaiian) to take off/remove.  
*hiki-zome* – traditional gathering for the first playing of music in the New Year.  
*hira-jōshi* – standard Japanese koto tuning; hemitonic pentatonic tuning with semitones.  
*hon-chōshi* – standard Okinawan koto tuning; anhemitonic pentatonic tuning without semitones.  
*honte* – main part.  
*ichariba choodee* – (Okinawan) expression roughly translated as, “once we meet, we are family.”  
*Ikuta-goto* – longer koto used in Ikuta tradition.  
*imayō* – “contemporary songs” with koto accompaniment enjoyed by nobility in 16<sup>th</sup>~17<sup>th</sup> century.  
*in* – minor pentatonic scale used in shamisen music; adopted to form the hira-jōshi tuning.  
*issei* – first-generation immigrants.  
*ji* – bridge, as in koto-ji (movable bridge for koto strings).  
*jiuta* – regional songs; originally accompanied by shamisen only.  
*jūshichi-gen* – 17-string bass koto invented by Michio Miyagi.  
*kaete* – ornamental accompaniment part.  
*kaete-shiki* – composition form utilizing kaete part added to honte part.  
*kai* – association, club.  
*kanji* – Chinese characters used in Japanese writing.  
*kayagūm* – (Korean) Korean plucked zither.  
*ken* – prefecture.  
*kin-no-koto* – early name for the kin, a plucked 7-string zither.  
*kiri* – Paulownia imperialis; wood that kotos are made from.  
*koten* – classics; classical repertory of Japanese and Okinawan music.  
*kouta* – short song; the three songs that are part of the original Ryūkyū koto tradition.  
*kūchō* – Okinawan 3~4 stringed bowed lute.  
*kumi-uta* – early song cycles with koto accompaniment.

*kutu/kutū* – Okinawan pronunciation of koto.  
*kyōmono* – kaete-shiki style music developed primarily in Kyōto.  
*luna* – (Hawaiian) foreman of a plantation.  
*mae-uta* – “fore-song” before instrumental interlude.  
*minyō* – folk music.  
*musubi* – rice ball.  
*naichi* – term used by Okinawans referring to mainland Japanese.  
*nisei* – second-generation; children of first-generation immigrants.  
*nō* – traditional theater art; masked drama with music and dance.  
*nori* – dried seaweed.  
*ofunauta* – “boat songs”; prayers for safety at sea, possibly dating back to Heian period.  
*ritardando* – (Italian) music term indicating deceleration of tempo.  
*rōkyoku* – theatrical recitation accompanied by shamisen.  
*ryūkaku* – fixed bridge on “head” end of koto.  
*Ryūkyū* – chain of islands between Kyūshū and Taiwan including the Okinawan islands; a term referring to the people/language/culture of the islands once under the Ryūkyū Kingdom.  
*Ryūkyū sōkyoku* – music for the koto as preserved and practiced in Okinawan koten tradition.  
*sakoku* – national isolation policy during Edo period.  
*sansei* – third-generation; children of nisei.  
*sanshin* – (Okinawan) popular Okinawan three-stringed lute-type instrument.  
*sanxian* – Chinese long-necked lute; precursor to the sanshin.  
*seiza* – formal kneeling position used when playing the koto on the floor.  
*sensei* – teacher; master.  
*shamisen/samisen* – Japanese three-stringed lute developed from the sanshin.  
*shichi-i sage* – Okinawan koto tuning; literally “7 and 12 lowered.”  
*shin* – “truth”; second kanji character in So-shin Kai name.  
*shinsō* – term used to categorize “new” types of koto.  
*sō-no-koto* – early name for the koto/sō.  
*sōkyoku* – music for the koto.  
*sugagaki* – stringed instrument music without voice.  
*taiko/tēku* – Okinawan drums, usually referring to the pair used in court ensemble.  
*tan-goto* – short koto.  
*tatami* – floor mats made of straw.  
*tegoto* – longer and more elaborate interludes between songs in tegoto-mono form.  
*tegoto-mono* – fore-song/interlude/after-song composition form developed in the Kansai region.  
*to, i, kin* – 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> strings of the koto.  
*Tsukushi-goto* – earliest koto tradition originating in the Tsukushi region of Kyūshū.  
*tsukushisō/chikusō* – koto used in tsukushi-goto tradition.  
*tsume* – plectrum/pick.  
*uchinaanchu* – (Okinawan) the Okinawan people.  
*uma* – small bamboo bridge used to support the sanshin strings.  
*ume* – pickled plum.  
*unkaku* – fixed bridge on “tail” end of koto.  
*uta-sanshin* – (Okinawan) dominant Okinawan music tradition of singing while playing the sanshin.  
*utamono* – songs such as the kouta repertory.

*waijūmi* – Okinawan pronunciation of *warizume*; similar technique played lighter in Okinawan tradition.

*warizume* – Japanese koto technique; striking two adjacent strings simultaneously.

*Yamada-goto* – shorter koto used in Yamada tradition.

*yōgen* – Okinawan koto technique; a type of vibrato in which the left-hand fingertips bounce once, twice, or three times.

*yonsei* – fourth-generation; children of *sansei*.

*yuimaaru* – (Okinawan) cooperation, mutual support.

*zheng/guzheng* – (Chinese) Chinese plucked zither; precursor of the koto.

*zokusō* – “vulgar” koto; term used to differentiate the common instrument from the *gakusō*.



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Office of Research Compliance  
Human Studies Program

February 18, 2014

TO: Darin Miyashiro  
Principal Investigator  
Music

FROM: Denise A. Lin-DeShetler, MPH, MA  
Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Denise A. Lin-DeShetler".

SUBJECT: CHS #21884- "The So-Shin Kai: Maintaining an Okinawan Koto Tradition in a Multi-Ethnic Community"

This letter is your record of the Human Studies Program approval of this study as exempt.

On Feb 18, 2014, the University of Hawai'i (UH) Human Studies Program approved this study as exempt from federal regulations pertaining to the protection of human research participants. The authority for the exemption applicable to your study is documented in the Code of Federal Regulations at 45CFR 46.101(b)(Exempt Category 2).

Exempt studies are subject to the ethical principles articulated in The Belmont Report, found at <http://www.hawaii.edu/irb/html/manual/appendices/A/belmont.html>.

Exempt studies do not require regular continuing review by the Human Studies Program. However, if you propose to modify your study, you must receive approval from the Human Studies Program prior to implementing any changes. You can submit your proposed changes via email at [uhirb@hawaii.edu](mailto:uhirb@hawaii.edu). (The subject line should read: Exempt Study Modification,) The Human Studies Program may review the exempt status at that time and request an application for approval as non-exempt research.

In order to protect the confidentiality of research participants, we encourage you to destroy private information which can be linked to the identities of individuals as soon as it is reasonable to do so. Signed consent forms, as applicable to your study, should be maintained for at least the duration of your project.

This approval does not expire. However, please notify the Human Studies Program when your study is complete. Upon notification, we will close our files pertaining to your study.

If you have any questions relating to the protection of human research participants, please contact the Human Studies Program at 956-5007 or [uhirb@hawaii.edu](mailto:uhirb@hawaii.edu). We wish you success in carrying out your research project.

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