

IWAO KOSAKA (1-1-1-1)

- T: Mr. Kosaka, how old are you?  
K: I'm 63 now.  
T: And you were born in Hawaii?  
K: Yea, in Honolulu. I'm a downtown boy. MaunaKea.  
T: Maunakea...Where were your parents from?  
K: They were issei.  
T: Where in Japan were they from?  
K: Japan? Oh, from Hiroshima.  
T: Both of them?  
K: Yes, my father is from Takewaraya and my mother is from Kaminaga which is a little further in from Takewaraya.  
T: How many brothers and sister were in your family?  
K: Mine? Here?  
T: Yes.  
K: An older brother and sister, a younger brother and sister. Four of them. And there was one who was born after we returned to Japan.  
T: You received your schooling in Japan?  
K: I graduated from middle school in Japan. I attended night class at a speciality school for two years.  
T: When did you return to Japan? You were born here...  
K: I was born here and returned to Japan during the first grade. After getting out of high school and went to school for a couple years after that and work a little while after that. I returned here when I was 23.  
T: You returned here when you was 23. What kind of work were you doing when you returned?  
K: When I came back, I went to Okumura Home. There, they told me to teach Japanese school. I taught at Kahumanu School for two years. The boarding was cheap, but so was the pay. Also during that time, I was going to Hawaiian Mission to learn English. After I paid my tuition, I didn't have anything left. So, I left there to go to a regular Japanese school. Kakaako Japanese School. There they gave me \$50 a month. With \$50, I could eat and do whatever. I was planning to go to the University over here, but I didn't have enough for my tuition. So, I went to business school.  
T: Which business school was that?  
K: Honolulu Business College.  
T: What were you doing when the war began?  
K: I was a school teacher, but I went to Japan in June. I returned in August and thought I was going to find another job. I asked them to let me quit teaching, but they told me that since they didn't have another teacher, they couldn't let me quit. The principal told me why don't I continue teaching while working someplace else. I thought if I went back to Japan, I could send my resignation from there. Where I was in the process of sending out my resignation, the boats stopped coming. That was August of 1941. So I got stranded over there. Finally in October, I was able to return to Hawaii. So, I came back on the last boat. I thought since I had sent out my resignation, I had quit. But the principal said no. He had not received anything of the sort. So he told me to return. So, I had plans to return to school in January. So, I had a continuous position at the school. During that time, the war broke out.  
T: When the war broke out, how did you feel?

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K: In the beginning, I thought it was very strange. I wasn't thinking of the legal ramifications. As a result I wasn't thinking too much about the war. I even thought that it was strange that I could come back. And when the war started I thought "I can't go back to Japan for quite a while." When the other Japanese in Hawaii began questioning what was going to happen, I had an uneasy feeling. At that time, the treatment of the Japanese in Hawaii wasn't really that bad. There were blackouts, items were rationed, we had to register, but those were things that were happening to everyone. So I didn't particularly have any ill feelings.

T: Where did your loyalties lie at that time?

K: At that time I realized that I can't go back to Japan. I had previously been called in for a military induction physical. My eyesight was so bad that I failed to pass my draft physical. I was classified as permanent 4-F. Not just 4-F but permanent 4-F. So, I felt that there was something that I could do for America. So if there was something I could do, I would do it. After all, I am a citizen. Later on the FBI came to question me. When they questioned if I could shoot my parents, which was unthinkable to me, I just wasn't raised to even think about killing my parents, I told them that I couldn't do it. They told me I was wrong. There was a Japanese FBI agent that said I was wrong. They asked me if I could kill my parents; I couldn't. But I could do many other things. When I came back to Hawaii I went to the Hawaii Mission Schools. They were Seventh Day Adventists, Christians, who were against war. I questioned their philosophy on war. They told me that you don't have to participate in war by carrying weapons and fighting. We could support the war effort with activities behind the lines. That was the kind of philosophy the I had.

T: How were you arrested? Was it the FBI?

K: Yes, it was the FBI. The Japanese school year begins in January so during the break between December and January I went to work as a carpenter through the urgings of a friend. I didn't know anything about carpentry but it was better than doing nothing. So I was working at the USFO. The FBI came to get me there. The next day I was at the Dillingham Building.

T: Was that in January?

K: No, it was either June or July of '42.

T: So from January to June or July ...

K: I was a carpenter's helper.

T: And you were taken to the Dillingham Building?

K: And was investigated there. That same day I went to the immigration station. That's where I was locked up. The following day the FBI came for me again. I was already locked up then and the FBI came to get me again, so my roommate was really worried for me. He was wondering if I had escaped. He tried to call here and there to locate me. But I was already in custody and wherever he called, they didn't know my whereabouts. My roommate thought since the FBI had come to get me, the FBI wouldn't have had me in custody. He was wondering where was I hiding. I was there in my work clothes. I didn't have any change of clothes. I didn't have any underwear or much money so they allowed me to write a note. When my friend received the note, he was relieved. So I think the FBI at that time wasn't very well organized. I was already under custody and they still came looking for me.

T: Did the FBI give you any reason?

K: Nothing specific. One of my acquaintances, I don't know if I should disclose his name, was working as a maid and cook for Lewis and Cooke. A close friend.

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That person's son was a captain at the immigration office. They were saying that once you entered there that was it. You better forget about it. There'll be no way you will be released. I didn't know about that. I only found out when I was at Sand Island. I was playing handball when the ball broke my glasses. I can't do anything without my glasses, so I went to see the commander and he had someone come to the camp (to fix the glasses). It was then I found out there's no hope for you if they bring you here.

T: So there was no specific reason given?

K: Not particularly. Just that I received my education in Japan. But I didn't have a choice in receiving my education in Japan. My parents returned to Japan and took me with them. I told them that but they said didn't you receive military training while attending school there? That military training was compulsory; the only way you could get out of it was if you didn't have any hands and legs. So there wasn't anything wrong with it. Wasn't that the same as taking ROTC here? Was that a required course here?

T: When I went to high school two years of it was required.

K: My military training was to that extent. It was compulsory. Yet they said I received military indoctrination. And that I was teaching at Japanese school. At Japanese school I was teaching for the sake of America. I didn't teach them to go and die for the Emperor of Japan. They were bowing to the American flag.

T: But what did you personally think was the reason for your arrest?

K: When I was investigated by the FBI, I think it was a German who was doing the interrogation. I'm not sure but he was a foreigner. He asked me if my parents were attacking, would I shoot them. I told him I couldn't do it. Sitting at the next desk over was a Japanese FBI agent. I think he's still around. He told me that it was because of people like me that the rest of the Japanese in Hawaii would suffer. I asked him "Are you Japanese?" It was enough that they asked me if I would shoot my parents, but to tell me that I was wrong in saying that I would not, was too much. I don't think that shooting my parents was the correct answer. Deep down inside I couldn't do it. If I said that I would shoot my parents you would know that it a lie. I think they used that kind of questioning as a trick to send us to Sand Island. So I told them I couldn't shoot my parents. But if it were my brothers or sisters that came as the enemy, I would. But under normal circumstances if it were my parents I could not. That's when the Japanese FBI agent said that it's because of people like me .... and left the room. A little while later there was a phone call and there were no further investigations on me.

T: Were there other people arrested with you?

K: When I went in, there were no other people. The following day there was a Mr. Sekiya from Wahiawa. He's dead now, Sekiya Yoshio. There were other people that came in as I was leaving. There were other people there but they were in different rooms. I couldn't even talk to them.

T: Was your family in Japan at that time?

K: Yes, they all were. I was by myself; there was no one here. Perhaps they were thinking that since I came by myself, I was up to something bad. But when I left my home in Japan, my older brother was there and so was my younger brother. Since I was the second son (with no family responsibilities) I decided to return to my birthplace. I had heard that Hawaii was a good place from the others. So, I came back. I had no other intentions. There was no one here.

T: Were you able to bring anything with you to the camps?

K: Do you mean to Sand Island?

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T: No...the mainland. You said that your friend was able to...

K: Yes, clothes. I was able to write to a friend saying that I was going to the mainland. He thought since I was going to the mainland, I would need an overcoat. So he went to Musashiya and brought me a coat. So when I went to Topaz (Utah) I was the only person with a civilian overcoat. The others were issued an Army overcoat. Since I had a coat, they would not issue me an overcoat.

T: When did you leave for camp?

K: It was March of 1943. It was cold then.

T: You were there until the end of the war?

K: Yeah, until April of 1946. They closed the camp at the end of March.

T: What were you doing in the camps?

K: (Laughs) All kinds of things. We all had to eat, so I helped the cooks by waking up early in the morning and help washing dishes and other things. One of the cooks taught me how to cut foods in preparation for meals and other chores. Also, I taught school at Tule Lake. They had a Japanese school there. I got tired of the squabbling at the school and decided to become one of the security guards instead. They had one security guard for each of the blocks (of barracks). I used to circle the block to make sure that nothing happened.

T: Those were WRA camps?

K: Yeah, those who had regular jobs were paid \$16 a month with a \$3.75 clothing allowance. If you were a security guard, you were paid \$21. (Laughs) That's the way it was...

They used to have roll call in the morning. After that was done, the rest of the day was free.

T: Was there any kind of seperation between the people from Hawaii and those from the mainland?

K: Ahh! The WRA itself feared those from Hawaii. They thought of us as willing to fight at the smallest incident. I think the nisei from Hawaii had previously raised some hell beforehand. As a result, as soon as they heard of people from Hawaii, they thought of us as being troublemakers. We were all single too. Most of them were younger than I was and they were single. They were dressed in Army overcoats and geta. The people were scared of us. In the beginning, they wouldn't even come close to us.

And when we went to Tule Lake, there was a killing.

T: Was that the mess hall incident?

K: No, I think it was the canteen. There was this guy named Shitomi that was killed. The Army was called in to clean-up. At that time, those from Hawaii were thrown into the stockade. Within the internment camp, they had built a stockade. They had put the Hawaii people in the stockade even though they did nothing. There were people from Hawaii who were involved in the ruckus. They identified those people, but threw all of the people from Hawaii in the stockade. We even had to participate in a hunger strike.

T: I heard of the hunger strike from Mr. Kimura. It was pretty long.

K: When I was in there, a number of my friends would sneak in things. They brought cigarettes. I think it was 50 cents a carton, or was it 75 cents? I had about ten cartons in my room. They were all stolen. Then they brought in pickled seaweed and plums. They took away those, too. That sparked off the hunger strike.

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T: So you went to Crystal City after that?

K: No. I went from Topaz to Tule Lake. I got out from Tule Lake. I was supposed to go to Crystal City, but my release came on the last day before going there. My baggage was already out, some of it went to Crystal City. I had retrieve two trunks, otherwise, I would have nothing to wear.

T: Were you still single at that time, Mr. Kosaka?

K: Yes, I was still single.

T: How were the camps organized? Were there leaders? Was there an organization that represented you?

K: Yes, we had. We had a barrack head that were called barrack managers. The announcements from the main office would go to these people. Regulation changes would go to them and they in turn, would notify everyone in their barracks. Each barrack had a manager, and our barrack had a guy from the mainland. We would play poker with him.

When we first got there, the guys from the mainland feared us from Hawaii. They would come close to us. But as they gradually talked to us, they finally realized that not all of us were that bad. We were all single. So, afterwards, the manager would frequently come visit me in my room.

T: Were there differences that needed to be settled between those from Hawaii and the mainland?

K: At some places, but that stemmed from the fear that they had of those from Hawaii. After a while, when they got to know us, they liked us better than some of the mainland boys. They said that we were more frank.

T: What did you do during your free time?

K: We did a lot of mah jongg. We also made a number of things. Then there were those who decided to return to Japan. They asked us to teach Japanese to their children. Instead of going to school, they came to my room for lessons.

T: Was it at camp that you learned to make those miniture umbrellas and origami handicrafts?

K: That wasn't at camp. At camp, we groundshells and things like that. It was also the place where I made an ink dish for my calligraphy. There was one group that gathered metal shaving and used the space heater as a furnace to make a Japanese sword. The Japanese are resourceful.

T: What about your religion...

K: At that time, I didn't have a religion. At my home, we would have prayer meetings every night. On Sundays, there were morning services. After that, they would have Japanese services. There was a guy who worried about me; he was a Christian. I even got baptized over there. Even though I went that far, I thought the only person that would look over me was myself. I felt that God had forsaken me. From that point on, I was a nonbeliever.

T: Were you religious before that?

K: Well from the time that I was at Okumura Home and Hawaii Mission. But the family is basically Buddhist. I was the sole Christian in the family. I was a devout Christian. (Laughs) But from that point, the internment, things changed drastically.

T: Do you still believe in God?

K: Well, at this point in time, I believe a in God. It's stronger than it was in camp. I guess that I've aged. I believe in the existence of a God. Since I had cold feet, I find it difficult to return to church. (Laughs)

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T: Were you able to write to your family while in the camps?  
 K: I tried writing two or three times and forwarded them through the International Red Cross. None of the letters got there. There was a woman who went back to Japan the same time I did. She was working at the Red Cross in Hiroshima. I wrote to her a number of times, but she never got any of my letters. She also wrote a number of letters to me, but I never received anything. So when you entered there (the camps) communications were futile. I suppose if one had connections, something could have been worked out.

T: If you reflect on the camp experience, what do you feel about it?  
 K: If it was now, I think I would have enjoyed the camp experience more. At that time, it felt like something was being pressed to my head. I really didn't enjoy it. I played a lot, but I don't think that I enjoyed the camp life. Especially since there was noplaceto go. If you walked a little, there was the barbed wire. Since we couldn't go out, there was nothing to enjoy. We could read books, but they were recent books. They were books that people brought to the camps, and they were quite old. They collected the books and made a library, but that was all the reading material. So while I was in there, I studied the Bible for a while.

T: Were there things in the camps that were needed but not available?

R: Food was not a problem. I was single. I cooked for myself and went to school. A lot of times, it was just a matter of opening cans, but there was no shortage. The one thing that didn't agree with me was mutton. Whenever that would come in, it would be in steady for two weeks. That meat really stinks. When we got heart, that was all that would come in. The same with liver--all we would see is just liver for a span of time. Whenever it was watermelon season, we would get these huge watermelons. Everyone would get half of those. The system was mixed up. There was no balance. The guys who had to cook had problems. Today we have...today we have...today we have...it would be the same thing. Then everyone would complain.

T: Did you have doctors?

K: Yes, we did. Dr. Miyamoto was there. My roommate got an appendicitis there. We called an ambulance for him. But he was afraid to go by himself and asked me to go with him. I went with him to the hospital.

T: The hospital was in the camp?

R: Yeah, but the camp was here and the hospital was outside of the camp. It was there where they had the administration office and other things. Outside of that was something else. The hospital was in something that could be considered the middle camp. But in order to get there, we had to go through a gate guarded by a MP who checked us.

T: I know that you were confined within the camp, but were you free to go anywhere within the camp?

K: We were free to go anywhere within the camp. It was only during the hunger strike when they had a blackout and curfew. Aside from that there were no restrictions. We had international security guards patrolling the inside of the camps. So when you were out late, they stopped you for questionning.

T: International security guards?

K: They were gaijin. We were just ordinary security, but they were called the international security guards. They were haoles that rode around in jeeps. We would rotate assignments for accompanying them on night patrols. That was about once every two months. With over 10,000 people there, you had some bad people there too. There

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- K: (cont.) were those who stole things in that group.
- T: Were the international security guards military?
- K: No, they weren't military.
- T: Civilians?
- K: Civilians, but more like policemen for only the camp area.
- T: How were you released from the camp?
- K: Me? I was supposed to go to Crystal City with the rest of the people. The bags were out. My friends came over to help eat what I had stored and were having a farewell get together. They had liquor on sale in the camps, and they were making their own liquor too. They brought some of that and came over. Towards the end, there was no locally produced drinks, so we drank whiskey that was brought in from the outside. It was then when the international security came. My room was 1404 C, but they called someone else's name. I told them that there was no one here by that name. They left right after that. In another couple of hours, they came back. I was wondering what they were up to. They asked if a Kosaka from Honolulu was there. I told them that was me. They told me that I was released. I was dumbfounded. My baggage was out. They told me that my luggage was at the mess hall. I was told to pick up by suitcases from there the first thing tomorrow morning. After that I was to report to the administration office to receive my release papers. I thought that was strange since the rest of them were being sent to Crystal City. I went to pick up my baggage first since that was to be sent to Crystal City. Then I went to the administration building. They gave me a ticket to San Francisco and per diem of \$2-\$3. I was instructed to go to the WRA office when I got to San Francisco. I was supposed to pick up my boat ticket to Hawaii there. By the time I got back to the barracks everyone was gone. They had been sent to Crystal City. I was the only person left in that large camp. There was no one there; even the dogs were gone. I had to bring my two suitcases to the gate, but the suitcases were really heavy. So I decided to cross the fire break to where the international security guards were. They gave me a lift to the gate. At the gate I met seven or eight others who were released the night before. We got on the bus and went to the train station and went to Stockton. I had just missed the bunch that was going to Crystal City. When I got to San Francisco I couldn't get on the boat right away. I was stuck in San Francisco for about ten days. So I thought I had two weeks to play with in San Francisco. But I ran out of money. A Mrs. Brown from Tule Lake was at the San Francisco WRA office. I told her that until I reached Hawaii the WRA was still responsible for me. I told her to do something for me because I didn't have any money. There were seven or eight of us from Hawaii who were in the same situation. The day before we left for Hawaii we each got \$73.
- T: How did you feel when others were released before you?
- K: The people who left earlier had family here in Hawaii. They must have had something to do here. I didn't have anything. The only thing that I thought was "Is that so?" They were saying that they were closing Tule Lake and sending the people to Crystal City but eventually they were going to close that vamp. So whether it be earlier or later, everyone was going to be released. But the war was over and I thought the sooner they released me the better.



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- T: So there were no ill feelings when you were released?
- K: No, I wasn't the only one. There were other people who were in the same situation. Especially those from Hawaii weren't released early. The issei were a different story. They were kept till the very end.
- T: So when you came back, since you had no relatives, there was no one to greet you?
- K: No. My present wife, who I met when the war just began, she had written and told me that she wanted to get married, but I told her that I was planning to return to Japan...I came back on April 16 but by April 29, we got married. We got married at her house.
- T: When you came back, did you feel that your values had changed? Did you feel that you were a different person than the one who went to the camp?
- K: I think that the camp experience was good. It was from the camps that I learned to distinguish the person who makes big talk from the honestly kind person and the guys with guts. In that kind of situation, you find that the true self comes out in that kind of life style. I realized that there are people that I could relate to from their essence. You could compare the camp experience to veterans of a war, its a situation in which you reveal the true self. The reasons why they can come back and be lifetime friends is because they were stripped down into a situation in which there is nothing but the self. From there they existed.
- T: When you returned, how were you received by the Japanese society?
- K: I just turned thirty. The ones who went to the camps were the issei big shots. They were the big shots in the Japanese community. People like me were insignificant. We did not receive any special attention upon our return. We organized an internees' club. They had gatherings at Kanraku and Matsunoya teahouses. They issei treated us like children. Since they treated the nisei like children, we drifted apart from the issei. We have our own club, and we call it the Topaz Club, but it's not only for the people who went to Topaz. It's just that the Topaz people were central in organizing the club. We have others who went to other camps in our club.
- T: So there was a definate seperation between the issei and nisei.
- K: At parties, the issei would say "Hey, there no sake...Go get some!" What is that...
- T: How did the local people treat you?
- K: The local people expressed their sympathy for our experience. They realized that although we were sent sent there, we were sent back. If we did something wrong, we wouldn't have come back. They understood that we were innocent and placed into that difficult situation. They all felt sorry for us.
- T: When you came back, your old job wasn't waiting for you, was it?
- K: When we came back, there were no Japanese schools. What did I do? I was a carpenter for a while. I was doing a little carpentry when the war started, and I was still young. Everything went slack just before the start of the Korean War. I was the first to be laid-off. I thought to myself, if I was a contractor with hired people, the first people that I would lay-off would be someone like me who had started carpentry at a late age. I thought of it as a matter of fact since I did not really know the people. I just thought that I had made a mistake by taking the carpentry path. That's how I got into radio.



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- T: Which radio station was that?
- K: KULA. Later on I was at, what was that Kuraishi started in Kaneohe, and there's the Christian radio station on Waiialae KNDI? I forgot all that. It was after that they were discussing the restarting of Japanese schools. I also sold insurance. (Laughs)
- T: When did you return to the Japanese language schools?
- K: Japanese schools, what year was that now?
- T: You were saying after the Korean War...
- K: I was selling insurance in 1952. It was okay during the months that I sold well, but it was rough when I couldn't. So, I started teaching during lunch time. It was after that when I got into the Hochi. Originally, I thought about selling insurance while at the Hochi. I guess that I must be lazy; I'm still stuck here.
- T: When did you start at the Hawaii Hochi?
- K: Just looking back at it, 28 years.
- T: Have you seen changes in society since you came back from the camps?
- K: Not immediately after coming back. It hadn't changed to much then. I don't think, even for the guys coming back with the 100th and 442, saw too much change when they came back. The drastic change came with statehood. Until then, I was living in Kalihi, I had no reason to lock the door when I left the house. I don't know if that's because Japanese were living in the surrounding houses. I was living by the Libby cannery. You know where Pay 'N Save is. It used to be a Japanese district over there. My neighbors would say, "I'm going to a show, so could you please look out for m place." And they wouldn't lock the door. They would just leave like that. And no one would enter and nothing would happen.
- T: Now, it's come to the point of dead bolts.
- K: Even then, it's no good sometimes. I think the change occurred after statehood. I share those images of pre-war Hawaii with the students at the Japanese school. Even if we had keys...even if someone did come to steal something...there weren't that many bad people among the Japanese.
- T: That's changed quite a bit now.
- K: Yeah, it sure has. The change is worldwide. Even if you go to Japan, you see the young sitting in trains while the elderly struggle standing. It doesn't seem to bother the young. I ride the buses every now and then, but I never thought about sitting unless the bus was really unfilled. I used to stand in the front to to figure where I was.
- T: If there happened to be another war with Japan, do you think something like internment would happen again?
- K: Well, I think the big companies would be affected. Some of the large firms are affiliated with the government. But in terms of private individuals, I don't think something like that would happen again.
- T: How would the Japanese communities react to something like that?
- K: Presently, I don't think the people in the Japanese community identify themselves as being Japanese. The sansei and fonsei do not particularly think of themselves being Japanese. I think that's where the Japanese society and the American have blended. They skin color maybe yellow but they are 100 percent Americans.
- T: Would they react if the Japanese who were working for these large firms were arrested?
- K: I don't think that they would feel anything. It's expected that these people, and those working for the consulate would be detained. Aside from that, I don't think that they would take away private individuals. I don't think that they would have to go that far.

IWAO KOSAKA (10-10-10-10)

- T: I think there are a number of people who went through the internment camp experience, but are hesitant to talk about it. Why is that?
- K: Why?...Some people take the internment camp experience as being a shame. But I think it's essential for them to explain to their children that they didn't do anything wrong, especially for the children's future sake. You were interned...Why were you interned... You didn't do anything and were interned? I don't think it's wise to stay that silent about the experience.
- T: Before the war, you were teaching at the Japanese language schools. What were you teaching besides the language itself?
- K: Japanese is...even the Bible says...words become the soul. By learning the language, you learn of the heart of that country...the feelings of the Japanese. That's one of the reasons why they had shushin education. That's why the students had a deep respect for the teacher. And the teaching, in living up to the respect, had to do everything to retain it. The FBI may say things to the contrary, but we were focussing that respect to this country. That why the students have a deep respect for the American flag. This was a long time ago. That is what we were teaching. Just because we were teaching Japanese language school does not mean that we were pro-Japan. I think it was because of this training in Japanese school that enabled the 100th and the 442nd to accomplish the feats that they did. They learned how to honor and respect the country through those instructions.
- T: And you were teaching Japanese in the camps...
- K: In the camps, people gathered from all parts of the country. Some of them didn't have the opportunity to learn the language. Some of them were considering returning to Japan and they needed to teach their children even the least amount of Japanese. They themselves didn't know the principles of the language. So at camp, it was the teaching of characters and conversation for survival purposes.
- T: Have you heard from any of them who returned to Japan?
- K: No, not since they left. When the war ended and we were leaving the camps, we scattered everywhere. I don't know what happened to those people.
- T: Do you feel that the internment camp experience overall was good for Japanese society, or was it bad?
- K: I think that depends on the direction that you want to bring the internment camp experience. For instance, there are those who went into camps and benefited from it. There are those who went into the camps and were negatively affected for life. So there is no one answer to that question. There are those who went to camp and remained in the U.S. to become financially wealthy. Those people, if not interned, could have remained here as a laborer. Then there are those who had their future's path become impassable because of the camp experience. So, I can't generalize and say if it was good or bad. I think it depends on how that individual see the camp experience, and how it affected his lifestyle. I think everyone at the camps learned who to accept the experience of life. They had to do what had to be done, tried what needed to be tried...
- T: Mr. Kosaka, you were teaching Japanese before and after the war. Do you see any difference in terms of the difficulties faced by students?
- K: There was over a 10-year blank in terms of Japanese education. I think the effects of the 10-year blank is tremendous. If you compare the pre-war student, the worst of the lot, to the post-war prize student, the pre-war student was much better in his Japanese language ability. The students who did well here could transfer to a regular

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K: (cont.) intermediate schools in Japan. In normal cases, they would be a year behind. So a student who was in the fifth grade here would be placed in the fourth grade when he went to Japan. It would not be possible today. That's why I think the pre-war children did a lot better than the post-war students.

I think the attitude toward the teacher has changed quite a bit from the pre-war days. In the pre-war days, the students had respect for their teachers. Today, it is not a student-teacher relationship, but more like a friend. I think the parents must bear some of the responsibility for this. It's becoming more evident that the people who gain the respect of other are the ones who are rich. "How much you going to earn?" That becomes the dividing line. Depending on how much a person earns determines the amount of respect given to that person.

T: So you feel that money has become the focal point?

K: Yeah! It wasn't like that before. The pay given to teachers was small, but the respect given to the teachers was great. Both parents and students thought that way, but it's not so today.

T: Do you think that was because of the war?

K: I think it's because of society. Society has changed it that way. Perhaps, the war changed the attitudes held by people. It's not only here; I think Japan is facing a similar situation.

T: After the war, there was opposition in some segments of the Japanese community in restarting the Japanese language schools. Why was that?

K: I think that resulted from some people thinking that they were interned because they were learning Japanese. You don't need to learn Japanese to exist in America, was the kind of attitude that they had. There was no longer the pressure that the children must learn English and Japanese.

T: In the case of the mainland, entire communities were placed into camps, while in Hawaii, only the leaders were interned. Do you think that there is a difference?

K: In my case, I was single. It's not I was married with a family and business. So, I didn't suffer. But the mainland families were all placed in the camps. They really suffered. There are case in Hawaii where the internment only meant the absence of the father for a period of time. There probably were cases when it affected their little children. But the mainland case is when the entire group went into the camps. I think they suffered emotionally as well as financially.

I think the current standing of the Japanese community is because of the feats performed by the 100th and the 442nd. They came back and finished their education using the GI Bill. With strength and courage that they would not be beaten by the American system, they built the community up. Sure the mainland people volunteered for the 100th and 442nd, but not to the extent of the Hawaii Japanese. They poured their support into the Democratic Party and (John) Burns and became an explosive force in Hawaii.

T: What was the rationale that finally culminated in the reopening of the Japanese language schools?

K: There were no specific reasons.

T: Did people feel that there was something missing from the community as a whole?

K: There were some urgings from the Japanese community. For the Japanese Americans, we needed Japanese language schools was the thoughts conveyed. Then there were the returning principals who found themselves jobless and with the want of returning to their old jobs. The Hochi forwarded the argument that whatever was taught to the children should be left up to the discretion of the parents.

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E: (cont.) It's a school. They don't teach the children bad things in a school. The kind of thought was crusaded.

If the 100th and the 442nd didn't perform as they did, I believe that Hawaii's Japanese community would still be suppressed. The freedom that we enjoy today is because of them, but it was the Japanese school training which enable them to perform the feats. The urgings to the deed for the sake of America, stems from the Japanese school. I don't think the English language schools could do something like that alone.