

JAPANESE CULTURAL CENTER OF HAWAII
VOICES OF LIVING HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Congresswoman Colleen Hanabusa (CH)

April 10, 2019

Interviewer: Melvin Inamasu (MI) and Jane Kurahara (JK)

Notes: Comments in brackets [] are by the transcriber. Inaudible words or sections are identified by ((?)) in the transcript. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability.

MI: Okay, today is April 10, 2019 and we're here again at the conference room of the Japanese Cultural Center to continue our interview with Congresswoman Colleen Hanabusa. Last time we learned a lot about her grandparents [and], great grandparents. Today we'll spend more time learning about her parents briefly and then about herself and eventually we'll get to her relationship, exposure with the Japanese Cultural Center and to the Honouliuli story and then maybe we'll talk about how all of these things have shaped her life and have her reflect upon how this has impacted her life. Okay, my name is Mel Inamasu. I am a volunteer at the Resource Center and helping me again with the interview today...

JK: Jane Kurahara, volunteer.

MI: Okay and we had you introduce yourself the last time so we're just going to go right in.

CH: Okay.

MI: Let's pick up with your parents. Tell us a little about your parents, and a little bit about, you know, what they did, and how they, and how they raised you and everything. Let's start out with your father. You already gave us his name.

CH: Right. My father was the oldest child of my grandparents, Minosuke and Chiyoko. And he was, I guess somewhat unusual in that, while maybe not at that generation. He got as far as the ninth grade but like all high school aged kids from Waianae, to go to high school back then you had to be in town. So you had to live with relatives or something. So, even for him, he got out of Central Intermediate ninth grade and he lived part of the time with my grandmother's youngest brother or something like that, so, because you couldn't commute from Waianae. You know, there were only trains and it wasn't enough to go through. So my father, at the end of ninth grade, went back to Waianae and worked. So he worked at what was called Gaspro then. Gaspro was run by an old kamaaina [long-time resident of Hawaii] family called the Rentons. So where you see...

MI: How do you spell that?

CH: R-E-N-T-O-N. So where you see the name, it's like in Ewa, for example, there is a Renton Camp, the old plantation camp. That's the family. And my father became very

good friends with Mrs. Renton's son from a prior marriage. It's really, if you're interested in all the old gossip in the old days, you know, I found out because I'm a graduate of St. Andrews Priory. So it's tied to that because Mrs. Renton's first husband was the son of the Bishop of the Episcopal Church back then. So it was really an interesting, the story about how ... but he was somebody who used to come to Waianae and hang out with my dad. Because you can imagine they were still almost teenagers back then but my dad worked with his stepdad at Gaspro. So at Gaspro, my dad started off like as a mechanic and then after that he was a mechanic/truck driver and in the ... he elevated himself to, for lack of a better description, he began to run the plant. So Waianae's plant was to create lime [calcium hydroxide] and they would mine limestone. And my father was the one who would take basically took care of that. Lime was essential for the plantations because it's a chemistry issue of the alkaline so the pH factor of the water, for example, to grow the cane and so forth, you needed the pH not to be too acidic.

MI: So he was like a chemist?

CH: No he wasn't, he just used to make the lime. So what happened with the lime is that the lime would reduce the acidity, to neutralize it and that was production of lime. So he did that and eventually he used to go, they sent him to all the, like Pioneer Mill, all these different plantations throughout the state and he would sell the lime. The lime was the best neutralizer for that. But during the war...

MI: How did he create or purify, isolate the lime? Was there like a somewhere did they mine it somewhere?

CH: It was in Waianae. If you know anything about Waianae and you look at the back of where they have this thing called the Waianae Mall now, they used to call that "limespur". L-i-m-e-s-p-u-r, for some reason. And it meant that they were, would literally mill the mountain. And then they would manufacture, technically, lime. So I remember, as a little kid, he got an award. My father got an award because he watched, I guess there was a lot water they used to use so they had a settling pond. This was pre-EPA. And what he did was he figured out that there was a lot of lime still in the water. So he created something like a big, kinda like a mixing, rotating kind of mixer that he would use on the sludge and then he would get more lime. So he got written up in some magazine for that.

MI: That's right, for him.

CH: Yeah, so he...

MI: He figured it out.

CH: Yeah, so, he was always thinking of different things and how they would ...

MI: How much education did he get?

CH: Ninth grade. And then, so he went from mechanic to and he made ... I'm not sure if he went to school to be a mechanic but then he would repair the trucks and he would drive the trucks. And he became a favorite of the Renton family. So in the end...

MI: Because he could do all these things.

CH: He did. Mr. Renton just took a liking to him and the son of Mr. Renton and Mrs. Renton,

not the step-brother, was the one who actually ... and my dad, they sort of had this interesting bond. So much so that all of our weddings and all of our funerals, for as long as Mr. Renton was alive, he spoke. Whether we had him on the program or not, he spoke. But we always had him on the program. And my dad, in the end, and probably for someone back then it was a high honor especially for Mister, local people in an old kamaaina family; he became one of two who were non-family members on the Board of Gaspro. The other person was a Mister ... I think his name was Lawrence Chun. He is Michael Chun's father, Kamehameha School's Michael Chun. His father and my dad were the only two non-Renton family members who sat on the Board for that company. So he saw it all the way through. Since it was not only for him, it was just a place to work that gave him the opportunity. But it was also something that, you know, he took pride in what he did. And it was a big employer in the Waianae area. So for example, Mr. Yeichi Kobashigawa, who was a Medal of Honor recipient, used to work for my dad at Gaspro. So they knew each other very well from back then. So my father never went to war because of his role because Gaspro provided the military with all the natural gases.

MI: He was essential.

CH: It was essential. So every time he got called up, Mr. Renton would take his papers and get him reclassified because they needed him to do the gases and also to do the lime part. So that was what my dad did, all the way till they closed the lime plant. And when they closed the lime plant my dad would go to work in town at Gaspro. And Gaspro is still called Gaspro although it's owned by a bigger company now, Air Liquide.

MI: He literally started at the bottom and rose to the top.

CH: Oh, yeah. That was him.

MI: Amazing.

CH: So my mom went to Waipahu High School because she's about nine years younger than my father. My mom is one of five girls and she is actually the middle daughter. And when you look at all my aunts, the rest of them all look alike. My mom is the one that look different. So, when she was growing up, she was more the one who worked, physical labor. And she would do things like ... my great grandfather as I said earlier didn't get picked up during the war. He stayed with my grandmother, but he also had a piggery and he used to do catering and he used to run the *furo* [communal bath] for the plantation. And so my mom was the one who would go with him and apparently she said that when they were children, to keep extra money, they would go in the beginning and buy, pick up those yellow kiawe beans and then stock up...

MI: For ten cents a bag.

CH: For ten cents a bag. Ten cents a bag and that was how they kept at it. But she was the one who helped my great grandfather with the piggery and taking care of the pigs. She and my—she had one cousin, my grandfather had one brother and one son, and so, he and she, they were close in age and they would always be together and they would work on them. And so my uncle stayed with them until all the way to, I think, seventh grade where his father's friends came to Waianae and told my grandmother that hem he's much too smart a boy to let him go to waste so they all kind of chipped in and they sent him to Iolani [school]. So my uncle went to Iolani, graduated from Iolani, and came back. He

couldn't wait to get on the train every Friday and come back to Waianae and then go back and stay with both his father's friend and ...

MI: His name was what?

CH: His name was Carl Muroda.

MI: Carl Muroda.

CH: And he eventually went to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute of Technology in New York and after graduating from Iolani. And, he started his own ... so he was an architect by training but a civil engineer by license. So, he took the license and passed that, so he got his civil engineer license.

MI: Did he come back here to work?

CH: Yes. So he had his own company here. He's gone now. He's gone but, you know, that was ... So my father, from there, started a gas station. And that's the Hanabusa Gas Station. This was before my time. But the reason he did that was because he wanted to see his younger sister and his younger brother go to a university. So to make that extra money, he did the gas station. And then, of course, he knew how to be a mechanic. My uncle who, he was the MIS uncle, he also worked in the service station so the three boys technically started the service station. And then they ran that and the other two started to the university. So, my uncle who graduated, he moved to Palo Alto with his wife and children and he worked for the city of San Francisco. I believe he was a civil engineer with them.

MI: So, last time, you told us, [following] December 7...

CH: Yeah.

MI: The following months, both grandfathers were picked up, placed in internment camps. How did this impact the family that remained, the family and then your parents?

CH: You know, that's the thing, because they were at varying ages so my father was the one who was already working at Gaspro. So he continued. So he was able to provide for his family. My grandmother, the Muroda side, they had only girls and then my uncle, he was also too young and he was going to Iolani at that time. So with her, but she also had the great grandparents with her. So they helped, you know, by having the piggery, picking up kiawe beans and doing whatever they needed to do. But she survived with laundry, doing military laundry. I think my Hanabusa grandmother may have done some but they say my Muroda grandmother did the bulk of military laundry. She did a lot of military laundry. So that's one thing. So all the girls, she had all these girls, so they were very helpful in terms of doing the laundry. And she did that and then that's how they survived. So I think at varying times during the internment, the military or whomever came to see them and asked them if they want to go because they would go as a family ...

MI: Join the father?

CH: Right. And they all said "No." They wouldn't go. So and my grandfather said, he felt that they, the family should stay intact because it wasn't necessary. I always thought that was unusual that my great-grandparents didn't have to go. But my grandfathers ... yeah, just the two grandfathers. So then my father had the service station and after that he started

various businesses related to the automotive industry. So he had parts stores and things like that. And, he invested in real estate and so forth. My father passed away just about eleven years ago, I think.

MI: Did they ever reflect on that period about what was done to the family? Did the family lose say, assets, property, from, you know, [the internment]?

CH: The only thing that I know they lost was my grandfather's fishing boat, for sure. And on my Muroda side, I'm not sure if he lost, he may have lost time because when he came back, he had to basically start up [again]. So he basically became like a contractor in Waianae, and built homes because of the fact that he was the plantation carpenter. My Hanabusa grandfather, unfortunately, could never go back to fishing. So as a result, I don't know whether that was because to my father [and family] it was so negative, that the fishing was what probably took him away, that they never invested in a boat until later on. And my grandfather was a lot older then but everyone would tell me, that did fishing professionally in the Waianae area, you know, that they would love to have my grandfather go and teach them where all the fishing holes were. But he never did. But, yeah, so I think for my grandfather, that was probably the worst part, my Hanabusa grandfather. It was the loss of the profession, the loss of, I think, a sense that he was ...

MI: He never recovered.

CH: I don't think he recovered. And then, of course, you know, you add to that the loss of the son. The one in Hiroshima.

MI: Yes.

CH: So, you add to all of that. And the sense of the, you know, almost the inequities in terms of the two countries and how they treated ...

MI: He never talked too much about that?

CH: No, he never talked too much about it, you know. The only thing I remember was he was really moved when they, as a family, he took all my uncles and their wives and my aunt and they went to Hiroshima and they brought back part of the family [urn], you know they have a big family grave and from what I understand, I remember this from my father, he said, it's like a huge urn within the grave. And then so, you don't know who's who ...

MI: They're all mingled.

CH: They're all mingled, right. So they took parts of it [ashes] and they brought it back. But I think, in the family grave now, there is a reference to the brother that died and they also have a reference to all the Hanabusa families because they brought back part of the ashes. But, it's still in Hiroshima, too, the family grave. So there, I think that if anybody...

MI: If you were to describe your parents after the war, were they bitter or did they just move on with their lives and...?

CH: I think they just moved on. And the reason that I say that is because they never talked about it. You know, like so many, we didn't even know. You know...

MI: Did they ever talk about it at some point, like when your grandfather's stories started to become public?

CH: That was when I was telling you, when they were about eighty-something years old.

MI: Yeah. Did that also get your parents talking or they never did?

CH: You know, they really didn't say much about it, you know, about what it was like. My mother probably more than anyone else used to engage my grandfathers and have them talk about it. But, other than that, even for my mom, the war time, you know, they were still relatively young. So, I don't think the experience except that... and I think they didn't know what was different. In other words, they grew up working. Like with her, she helped with the piggeries and things like that. On the Muroda side and then the other aunts did the ironing. So, every once in a while, my aunts would talk about the starch and, how you had to boil it in those days to make the starch and the clothes, but other than that...

MI: The internment stories kinda, I guess they came back [publicly] in intervals. The 1980s era was a time when Gale Honda and [Mike Gordon, Hank Sato] ... they started interviewing and I think [Robert] Muroda was interviewed.

CH: Yes, Muroda was interviewed. And then...

MI: Did that change him or the family?

CH: No. I didn't even know.

MI: The he just told his story and went on with his life?

CH: Yeah. I don't remember very much of a conversation after that. I didn't know because...

MI: Where were you in 1980?

CH: Oh, I was already living more in town, I think. So I wasn't home. We would go home for, like Sunday dinners but even then, it took till they were in their eighties.

MI: That didn't change the family in any way?

CH: No, no. Well, not with us. I don't know if it changed with them but I doubt it. They just, it would be something, a conversation that would continue but I don't think it did. I think so many people just wiped that part out of their mind.

MI: Okay, let's start with you now. So you were born in, what year was it?

CH: 1951.

MI: '51. So I think as I recall you were at some point, you started going to the Priory. At this point it was convenient to go back into, commute every day?

CH: No, it wasn't.

MI: You talked about your father having to move to town?

CH: No, yeah, no. Most of the people that I knew lived in town.

MI: I see. You mentioned yourself that having to...

CH: We commuted because my father did....

MI: So you did commute every day?

CH: The H-1 was being built so it wasn't completed then. So it was being built. I still

remember commuting when they still burned [sugar] cane. And then it made an impact on whether or not you could stop the traffic and so forth. And I still remember getting on and off the freeway. So I tell people that my younger brother went to Epiphany [School] in Kaimuki. So I kinda say we kinda saw the freeway being built. So we know all these odd on ramps and off ramps because that's where you would be routed off or on the freeway. No, but my father did not believe that we should live in town. So we commuted every day.

MI: But in a sense, that deprived you of some of the childhood...

CH: Right.

MI: School social activities.

CH: Right. So you don't really belong to one place or another, you know. Because, you're not a townie and Waianae is just so far away. So by the time you do the commute, it's a long time. I remember one of the biggest disputes was whether we would eat before we come home and my grandmother would be very upset because she would cook and we would have eaten something, like a hamburger or something and, you know, she spent all that time cooking. So I remember those kinds of disputes with us commuting. But commuting was the only way that we could both go to town.

MI: So you graduated from the Priory...

CH: Right.

MI: What year?

CH: '69.

MI: Then what happened to you?

CH: Then I went to a school in California called the University of the Pacific, because they had this interesting experimental school.

MI: Stockton.

CH: Stockton. So I went there for a year. Then I eventually graduated from the University of Hawaii and...

MI: How long did you go to Pacific?

CH: One year.

MI: One year and then you graduate from University of Hawaii.

CH: Right.

MI: Studied what?

CH: Economics and sociology, double major, from the University of Hawaii. Then I took a year and I got my Masters in sociology. And then I went to law school.

MI: Okay, having studied sociology at the University of Hawaii, did you start learning about the internment story?

CH: No. (Laughter)

MI: You didn't learn...?

CH: No, no, I didn't learn about it.

MI: When did you learn about it?

CH: I started to learn about it more, I guess I think that I remember reading about it because my emphasis was ... when I took my Masters, they emphasized what they called the sociology of law. I was always interested in how law impacts people. In other words, what laws do. I was at that time looking at Executive Order 9066, because I was trying to figure out how they could pass something like that.

MI: When were you exposed? Was it a class at the university?

CH: No, it wasn't a class. It was just because I was, stumbled across it and that's when I started to look at it because I don't even think at the university, back then, there was much of an emphasis even on...

MI: There was no law school at that time?

CH: Well, the law school, I'm in the second class of the law school. It was just starting.

MI: As an undergrad, there was no law school there.

CH: No. So it was, so it...

MI: How did you or why did you decide to go to law school?

CH: For some reason, I think, ever since I was in high school, I thought I would go to law school. And I think what influenced me was, they give you these tests when you're a senior ...

MI: Aptitude.

CH: And it also was, for something to tell you what you were inclined to do. So when my results came back, law was way on top. The next thing was a General, which was kinda weird.

MI: A what?

CH: A General. A military General.

MI: What was number one?

CH: Law. A lawyer.

MI: Oh, okay, it was number one.

CH: It was way on top. And the next thing it was quite a bit down. It was a General. Right below General was an architect. It was just weird. So my teachers would always look at it and go, "You know, this is really a weird ... this is the weirdest of all the results we've had."

MI: Were you active in high school?

CH: I was the student body president...

MI: Oh, you were, okay.

CH: When I graduated. I was student body president. And then of course, then I went to ...

MI: Even though you were commuting?

CH: Yeah, and I was the student body treasurer, the only junior at that time who was part of the student council. I was student body treasurer when I was a junior and then when I was a senior, I was student body president. Yeah, so, but, you're right. You have all this strange, you're... like you don't go to football games, like everybody else. But you just don't have the time. And on top of that, my grandfather used to take me in. As he said in one of his interviews, he used to take me [to] flower arrangements. So I learned flower arranging.

MI: He took you to?

CH: Japanese flower arranging. And after that, we'd go to samurai shows or something after that. So my Saturdays were taken up. Commuting from Waianae again. So there was only one day I didn't commute which was Sunday. (Laughter)

MI: So tell us a little about your law school education.

CH: So in law school...

MI: Was Dr. Eric Yamamoto there at the time?

CH: No. Eric was not a professor yet. I think Eric was going to law school, too, at the same time. He was on the mainland. So when I started law school in Hawaii I thought, was very interesting because it wasn't your traditional law school. So we actually had, in my class ... I used to call my class the reaction to the first class. The first class is who John Waihee [Governor of Hawaii] was a part of, Carol Fukunaga [State Legislator], a lot of Russell Blair, a lot of the politician types were in that first class. And the rumors were they were the ones who were part of the legislature and people made sure that they got into law school. My class was said to be a reaction to that kind. So we looked more like...

MI: So the first class, wasn't it older people?

CH: Some of them were older. Yeah, yeah.

MI: Your class were more [students] directly from the undergraduate [school]?

CH: Well actually, we were not directly from undergrad because I think statistically, our class had the highest advanced degrees coming in...

MI: Oh, really?

CH: Of the between the classes.

MI: So, there was still a backlog [of student seeking law school education]?

CH: Right. And then, our class had, they said, looked more like a mainland law school class because we had a large number of haole [Caucasian] students. And then we had an interesting number of women going through law school. But, yeah, we were deemed to be more of a conventional law school class because of the advanced degrees.

MI: Okay, what year is this, that you're going to law school?

CH: '70, my grandparents—'74, '74.

MI: This was before the [report of the] Commission on Wartime [Relocation] and Internment [of Civilians].

CH: Yeah. '74...

MI: Were you starting your practice when the Commission report came out [1980]? When the movement for Apology and Redress [started]? Where were you when this was going on in the mainland?

CH: I was already practicing law.

MI: Here in Hawaii?

CH: Right.

MI: Were you aware of that story going on, on the mainland?

CH: You know, the only, I was not aware of it. Subsequently, I've become very much aware of it, as I looked and tracked the legislation. And, you know, more than anything else, I'm amazed that Executive Order 9066 was still law for a very long time. But, yeah, it wasn't until later that I started to look... and quite honestly, a lot of it is, when I first got elected to the legislature, I represent Waianae. And I represent the Waianae Coast, basically. From Kani... I used to say, from Kaena Point to Barbers Point, was my area. What happened when I was in my first year, two years in elected office, it's the case called Rice vs. Cayetano, right? Rice vs. Cayetano and because...

MI: Tell us about it. What is it about, briefly?

CH: Rice versus Cayetano was a lawsuit basically filed by a gentleman by the name of Freddie Rice from the Big Island, who was a rancher, who challenged his ability to vote in the OHA [Office of Hawaiian Affairs] elections. In 1978 the Constitutional Convention, what I consider is the state abdicated its responsibility to the Native Hawaiians to the creation of OHA. So that election was ... you had to be Hawaiian to run and you also had to have Hawaiian blood to vote. It didn't have a blood quantum but you just had to be Hawaiian. So there are some people I know who actually said they were Hawaiian though they weren't necessarily Hawaiian if they wanted to vote in that election. Freddie Rice challenged it on the basis that his lineal descendancy goes back to the Constitutional Monarchy in Hawaii's history. And because of the arguments that were being made, it was very ironic. Because Hawaii and Hawaiians still do not have recognition like other, like Indian tribes or Alaska natives. What they said is that, because it was a political relationship and not a race-based relationship, it survived the challenge under the 14th amendment of the Constitution. It was, I had to, Rice vs. Cayetano decision came down, well, it was in my second year as a legislator. So I took the hearing because I was Chairman of the committee called Water, Land and Hawaiian Affairs. So I took this, it was the first time that they allowed hearings to be outside of the Capitol and we took these hearings throughout the state. But, in order to do that, I had to understand what was Freddie Rice's argument and what was in jeopardy. It was truly from that, [trying to] understanding, trying to understand what happened to the Native Hawaiian, that I stumbled upon the fact that the Japanese Americans were not treated any better. The reason was, when you go back to the time of the Queen [Liliuokalani], when the Queen was illegally overthrown, a lot of those who protested for her were the Japanese immigrants. It was the Japanese immigrants who were the ones with the pitchforks and

coming out to fight for their Queen. And, I guess, in a way, that's the plight of the Japanese, right? The reason why Japanese Americans were interned was because of their sense ... they think they have a strong sense of loyalty to Japan or whatever. There's a whole sense of who's their sovereign. And in that case, for the plantation workers, their sovereign was the Queen. So, they were a lot of the major protesters of that time. So it was actually in the process of trying to understand all those different laws that were in place that what was going on and what had happened to the Japanese Americans in Hawaii was, was becoming very relevant and very interesting to me. And then my grandmother...

MI: If I can go back a step, how did you get from law school to politics?

CH: Oh, that wasn't until later. I was, I didn't...quite honestly, after law school, I had no interest in politics. I was probably part of the group who felt people who...

MI: This wasn't too long after you graduated that you ended up...

CH: I graduated in '77 and I graduated and went to...

MI: Elected?

CH: I was elected in 1999, 1998.

MI: Oh, okay.

CH: Almost more than twenty years later.

MI: Oh, I misunderstood.

CH: No. Almost twenty years later and so I practiced law for that period of time.

MI: Okay, okay. I had '72...

CH: No, no, it wasn't really of an interest. And then it just, but when you start to look at the inequities it becomes very, very clear. So one of the things, also, was that I chaired a special committee when I got elected that was called the Felix Investigative Committee. Felix was the special needs kids and the controversy that people may remember was Paul LaMehieu [State Superintendent of Education] and what happened. He was superintendent and then he stepped down. He resigned. But I still remember very clearly one of the testimonies that was given, which was that Hawaiian was prohibited and it was against the law to speak it, during the days of early statehood, and, you know, post-territory, pre-statehood and early statehood. You couldn't speak Hawaiian. That was just a prohibition. It was against the law, practically. So I remember feeling, "How can we do that, right?" Hawaiian is the 1978 Convention, it's the second language. Some say it's one of two official languages. So I was thinking how could we do that? And so you wonder, as when I got elected, "What is the government and what is the government supposed to be doing?" And, "How did that happen?" And then you, the Honouliuli story, plus what they did to Japanese Americans all fit in.

MI: The language, how did that happen?

CH: That was of course, from what I understand, it was an act of the Territorial Government, where they didn't want ...

MI: Do you have a date, roughly?

CH: No, I don't have a date, but I think it was pre-statehood. So it was during the Territorial government that you couldn't speak Hawaiian.

MI: I'm going to hold off on Honouliuli. When did you first learn about [Fred] Korematsu?

CH: You know, Korematsu ... I learned about Korematsu in law school.

MI: They taught it here?

CH: Yeah, I remember reading the case. It wasn't something that I recall...

MI: Wait, this is before, actually, Korematsu.

CH: Yeah. No, no, this is...

MI: This was before, actually Korematsu [Coram nobis, 1983]? You studied the original Korematsu decision.

CH: Right.

MI: But that was not the coram nobis.

CH: No, not the coram nobis. That was after I graduated. I came to look at coram nobis in relationship to another, a case that I was doing, I was assisting on. And so, that's when I stumbled upon coram nobis and...

MI: There was another coram nobis case?

CH: No, no, it...

MI: It's very rare...

CH: It's a very rare and as you know, the ...Eric Yamamoto worked on Korematsu's coram nobis. Yasui had already passed. And Hirabayashi was the one who pushed it. Cause they settled with, they didn't want coram nobis to go, so Korematsu's one [case] settled but Hirabayashi is the one who pushed it all the way, because he was the lawyer of the three, but the....

MI: He wanted it to go to the Supreme Court.

CH; Right. Because, you know, technically Korematsu's never really did over-rule. It has sort of been over-ruled recently, in another case, but they just sort of treated it with a one-liner [Chief Justice John Roberts, 2018]. But Korematsu or Hirabayashi, as a coram nobis case, never went all the way up. And so those cases, just like Executive Order 9066, it took years before ... and I think Korematsu asked to go. It was very recent and it wasn't sort of like a one-liner that said, you know, what we did was wrong, but that was like, I think within the last ten to fifteen years, if I recall correctly.

MI: I think the Solicitor General, Neal Katyal made a statement about ...

CH: Yeah. But that was...

MI: On behalf of the government.

CH: Yeah, but there was, that was a reference in a Supreme Court decision.

MI: I see.

CH: So it's interesting because I was on a panel with Neal Katyal. But as an aside, he's known

for Hamdi or Hamdan, there's two Hamdi and Hamdan versus Rumsfeld. So it was all the Patriot Act stuff. So that's when he was approached and that's where he cut his teeth in developing a reputation on that. And as an aside, the reason why all of this came to gel for me is because in 2015, the beginning of 2016, between my two stints in Congress, I taught the law school in the fall semester of 2015. They created my title, my class that I taught was called "House of cards" which I never watched until I taught that course. "House of cards: the federal legislative process." I was teaching law students who signed up [about] how laws become laws in the United States Congress. And also, basically, federal law. And that's why they called it "House of cards: the federal legislative process". In the spring semester of 2016, I taught a course and it was—what's his name, what's the newspaper for Jerry Kato [Reporter Honolulu Star Advertiser]—who was part of the group. And he was in both political science and in College of Business. And they told me, "Okay, your course title..." and they don't give me materials, they just give me the title. My course title, and this is of interest to what we're talking about, was "Civil liberties in the time of national crisis." And the reason why was because this was part of the D. K. I. Institute, Daniel K. Inouye Institute and the Library of Congress. I was leading to a panel-like discussion at the Library of Congress in D.C. that was Norman Mineta and Alan Simpson. And, people, of course, did not know because I didn't even know that they were on both sides of the barbed wire fence at Heart Mountain.

MI: Heart Mountain, right.

CH: But I've known Norm for a long time and it never even occurred to me that this was going on. And I was watching Alan Simpson because of the controversial Simpson-Bowles report, in which he was the Republican member that [President] Obama picked with Bowles, to do the issue of how do you bring the federal budget into balance. So, leading to that was this course. My task was, I was not only teaching this course but I was preparing my students to participate by providing questions to Alan Simpson and to Norm Mineta. And we were watching it by satellite here. And that's where it became very clear. So I don't know if you know this but in twenty, August of 2015, there was a case called Hassan versus NYPD. The reason why this case is very fascinating is because there is an amicus brief, a friend of the court brief that was filed by a Korematsu, a Yasui and a Hirabayashi. And I looked at that and I said, "It can't be, cause those guys are dead. How are they doing it?" So when I looked at it and it was filed by a company, law firm called Covington and Burling, good Republican law firm in D.C. So I said, "This is really unusual." So what it turns out to be is, it is the daughters of Korematsu, Hirabayashi and Yasui.

MI: Karen Korematsu.

CH: Yeah. I've gotten to know her since then, but all three of them. So it's an amicus by the three names again, filed in this case that's really being heard in New Jersey. And the reason why is because unlike the Japanese Americans, who were interned, after 9/11, what they did was probably worse in that the surveillance of Arabs and Muslims were being done and people didn't know. So Hassan sued NYPD because NYPD was doing this for all this time since 9/11. And the brief that was filed by Korematsu, Yasui and Hirabayashi in August of 2015, is one of the best, I guess, historical context of what they went through and how they battled the whole thing. So it led to the point ... so that was one of the most critical things that I taught the students at that time was you've got to

understand because ... and the title became so evident with that because the title is “Civil liberties in the time of national crisis” and what is it that we’re willing to give up? So I even taught them the cases that Neal Katyal has done. And I forget who did the other Rumsfeld case. But it was all in relationship to the Patriot Act. But more intriguing than that is our conservative court would go almost unanimously in opposition to the President’s Patriot Act because it was so contrary. And then, so I was trying to explain to the students that you’d be surprised where your allies come from because the people who were opposed to the Patriot Act, it was some group that you would never expect. It was people like the NRA [National Rifle Association], because they viewed it as government intrusion on their rights to bear arms, right? So when you think about these issues and you whittle it down to the bare essence, you can see. But the real question is who’s willing to stand up? Who feels that they can be confident enough in who they are to stand up and do this battle? I said, “That’s the lesson. So, totally unrelated, but in my final exam I told them you can do a couple of things. You can do a presentation to the class, you can do a paper or you can do whatever, something in between. This one woman, older than all the other students, she was a Filipina getting her advanced degree, a Masters, and she signed up for my class. So her project was the Filipino World War II veterans and the abuse that the Filipino World War II veterans took at the hands of Filipino Americans and when they came here and how... She had shown a documentary on how they would tie them to the back porch with chains and take all their Social Security, because after we backed out of our word about them being entitled to benefits for fighting against the Japanese with [General Douglas] MacArthur, all they were entitled to was coming to America and something like citizenship rights, but not the rights to bring their families and whatever else. And also Social Security. That was the only benefit. They weren’t entitled to G.I. Bill or anything like that, any kind of G.I. benefits. So she did that. So I’m hoping that those were the things, but the bottom line, to me, is if we don’t remember the Korematsus, the Hirabayashis, the Yasuis, even for them to have done what they did back then, it is very un-Japanesey (Laughter) when you come down to it. Japanese people don’t tend to do that. That’s why we don’t know, right? They just don’t tend to do that. But thank goodness that they did, or we would have no history of that. So that’s all so...

MI: Let’s go back a bit ... and I appreciate all that you’ve told us, but on the personal level, when did you start becoming aware, interested in, you know, the apology, Redress, Korematsu? This was all happening in the 1980s. What were you doing [at that time]? Were you busy working or...

CH: I wasn’t really as interested or as active in that whole issue. Part of it because I thought the 20,000 dollars [redress payment] was rather insulting, for people who had...

MI: So, you were aware of it.

CH: Yeah, I was aware of it.

MI: But you didn’t participate.

CH: I didn’t participate. The only reason I became aware of it is my grandfather ...

MI: Did...

CH: The two grandfathers.

MI: They were both alive and they both got the 20,000.

CH: Yes. They both got the 20,000.

MI: What did they do with their 20,000?

CH: They gave it to their kids.

MI: Just gave it.

CH: Yeah, they....

MI: What did the kids do with it?

CH: I have no idea. I have no idea but you know, it was like, for my Hanabusa grandfather, he had four alive then so I think it was 5,000 dollars each. And my Muroda grandfather, I'm not sure what he did with his, but my Hanabusa....

MI: This was about 1990.

CH: Right.

MI: Did that bring the stories alive?

CH: No. Not really.

MI: The family didn't ask questions about why you're getting this 20,000 dollars?

CH: No, no, no. Well, what they were asking were, what... I know one of my aunts said, "You know, this is kind of insulting for what we all went to. So why?" And then, you know, my Hanabusa grandfather, I think, looked upon it slightly different because, remember, now, he's getting reparation, well not reparation, but he's getting a stipend from the Japanese government for a son...

MI: A son.

CH: Who got killed, right? And the American government gives him 20,000 dollars for whatever and I think...

MI: What about, what about the apology letter? Did that have any meaning to them?

CH: I don't think so. I don't remember it being something that, you know, was coveted or ...

MI: Do you have it?

CH: No, I don't. I don't know anything about it. And I don't think I ever saw it.

MI: Okay.

CH: Other than a form that people got but....

MI: These were two separate things, you have the letter and then the 20,000 dollars?

CH: Right. And I think that for a lot of my aunts and all of them, the one... maybe it was my mother who said, "You know, though my grandmother didn't get taken, that they should give her reparations because of what she had to do to keep the family going. You know, what about her?" But you know, it was very clear as to what you could and you couldn't do, right? And she also said, what about my grandfather's boat and the disruption to what he did? What about that? You know, how are they going to compensate for that? And I

remember her telling me that. She said that they said when she asked these questions, it was like she was being ungrateful. Because, here they are, they're getting 20,000 dollars and you should be very happy to [get it].

MI: So, the feeling and the anger was there, all these years.

CH: Oh, yeah. Yes, I think they were there. And then, what happened was that it was like, "Okay but you know what are you doing? You trying to buy a wrong, by doing this?" And I remember, maybe because she was my mother, I don't know what my other aunts said. She was very upset about the fact that my grandfather couldn't get something for his ... what about his boat? What about what he was able to do [before the internment] and for my grandmother? Because they were all children, yeah? What she had to do to keep the family going. But you know the military, I guess, you know, made sure that my grandmother had laundry to do. So that's what my grandmother said, "They made sure that I had laundry to do." Well, that's why I said so they're different from us.

MI: For you, as a lawyer, educated, did that, the apology process, did it have extra meaning for you, as an American citizen? The reason I mention that, I'm thinking about one of the comments that Dan Inouye made about how no country has ever done this before in the history of civilization, or something to that effect. Did that resonate with you, in that way or was it more personal?

CH: What bothered me ... I'm not the one who was directly affected and I keep that in mind. I'm not the one who was directly affected so I may not have the rights. I didn't go to war like Senator Inouye and the rest, and I wasn't interned. But I wasn't even born. But what bothered me the most was how can a country that's supposedly fighting for democracy and all these things that are supposed to be right in the future and the people should live, coexist in this world, how can that country do such a great wrong to its own people? Here, I think that's the part that bothers me, it's their own people. War is, don't get me wrong, war is terrible. What happened to ... for example the Holocaust and the Jews, I mean, that's just incomprehensible, that, quote "man" could do it, not to be sexist, but man could do it to another man. However, I think, the thing that bothers me the most is here is the country that's touting everything that should be good and everything that should be democratic and the rights of people and that's why we're fighting. How can that country be one of the greatest offenders, because you're acting against your own? You're acting against your own. But then when you think about it, we're also the country that had slavery. We're also the country who had all these things that ... we wiped out the American Indians. You know, I think the thing that bothers me is when you start to ask "What is it?" Not to be quote "unpatriotic" or whatever. If these questions are not asked, then how do you prevent it from happening ever again? From my perspective that's what bothers me. It still bothers me, and that's why the title of the course I taught becomes even more relevant. Because it is in the interest of national crisis that we do these things. But how? You know, you hear people talk about "What about the wall," for example. All these different things that we seem to be having this debate. Why are we even having this debate? Or even what Neal Katyal did for us with the Muslim ban. That was all Neal's work. I saw him in D.C. and you know, when you look at that the question is, why is this country allowing for this? Well, we allow it because we voted someone in as President who's doing it by Executive Order, same mechanism by which 9066 came about. So, why is it that we permit it and we seem to be doing it again?

MI: And what is your answer to your question?

CH: Fear.

MI: Hysteria. Wartime hysteria is one of the ...

CH: Nope, just plain fear.

MI: Fear of what?

CH: Fear of losing the ability to provide your lifestyle. And the easier thing to do is to blame it on a people that doesn't look like you, doesn't act like you and have, in your mind, have a different value system than what you think you have. And, that's what I blame it on. That's what I think it is. Fundamentally, it's fear.

MI: Human nature?

CH: Yes. It's a human nature or it's just the inability to accept or... and I think the problem is, we are not created equal and we grow up being [taught] we are all created equal. We all have opportunities, you work hard, you're going to be rewarded, blah, blah, blah, you know, all those wonderful things, what do they call it, the Protestant work ethic. That's what we have all grown up thinking. But when it comes to reality, it doesn't work. So what do people do? They blame the people who come in who they are different from them, and it's always easier when you look different, and, you know, act different. That's why I think, in going back to Honouliuli, that's the thing about Honouliuli that I thought ... and what happened at Sand Island, what happened in Hawaii more than anyplace else, that was so intriguing was the fact that Germans and Italians were also subjected [to incarceration]. But that's because Hawaii is Hawaii. Everyone is a minority in Hawaii, right? So you can pinpoint who it is by not just because you're AJA, like on the West Coast. It's not that. It's because we are all minorities. So you would think, if any place would have a sense of "This isn't my [country]," it would be here. I would like to think that the reason why my great grandparents didn't go and my grandfathers went was, it was not because they looked different because or they were a threat. Because you would think the first generation people would be more of a threat because they would be the ones with the quote "alliance or allegiance" to Japan. But that wasn't it. Or, even here, when they did the Italians and the Germans. You know, it wasn't basically because we looked different. They looked like a lot of them. But still they were treated that way because I think we're such a community of minorities. But I think the bottom line is to me, the reason why it was done was fear. Just plain fear.

MI: Let me, why don't you tell us about your Honouliuli story? How, where and how did it start?

CH: You know the... I just knew that Honouliuli existed somewhere.

MI: How did you know that?

CH: When my grandfathers started to talk about it.

MI: Okay.

CH: That was like when they were in their 80s. My grandfather would be a 110, now, maybe 20 or 30 years ago was when I first started to realize. And then, to me, the bad part is, I equated Honouliuli with the Honouliuli Sewage Treatment Plant, right? Because that's

the only name that I know that has Honouliuli associated with it. It didn't occur to me. I never heard *jigoku dani* [Hell Valley] until actually you [Jane Kurahara] started to read what they had to say. But, so it was in the context of that that I started to think ... well, what is this? Then I remember trying to drive around and find it. There isn't anything there.

JK: No, you...

CH: I went down to where ...

MI: Tell me that story? How and why did you decide to try to find it? And how did you try to find it?

CH: I just assumed that it would be someplace near the sewage treatment plant.

MI: Where is the sewage treatment plant?

CH: It's actually on the other side of ... it on the lower part of Ewa.

MI: What part of the Honouliuli town?

CH: No, there's no Honouliuli town. They just call it Honouliuli Sewage Treatment plant. It's sort of, it's like in Ewa. You can, in the old days, you could smell it. (Laughter) You would find it.

MI: That's where you started.

CH: Yes, I had no idea.

MI: You didn't do any research?

CH: No. I didn't do any research as to where it was. I just assumed that if they took the name Honouliuli, it's gotta be near that and I also assumed, wrongfully, that it would be marked. That it would be, you know, something that ...

MI: There would be a sign

CH: If didn't grow up in Ewa I wouldn't know it. So to me, Honouliuli was Ewa and it was something that, you know, I could [find].

MI: So you just got in your car...

CH: Yeah, yeah, drove around trying to find it.

MI: On that drive?

CH: I found the sewage treatment plant and I found a lot of kiawe bushes, but that's it. (Laughter) Nothing. And then I thought, maybe next time I'll go look at a map or I'll do this and you never get around to doing it. I guess I expected to see a sign.

MI: What year was it when you did this?

CH: Oh, I think this was after, probably in the early '90s.

MI: Early '90s.

CH: '80s, you know, when all this stuff started. Oh, I thought I wanna see what it was like because my grandfather that was at Honouliuli, he never really said much about the living conditions to us. It was just the food exchanges and things like that that he did. So I never

had any preconceived notion of what it was. I assumed that it was hot because it was Ewa. Ewa's like Waianae, you know... So that's what I assumed, but I never...

MI: So you couldn't find it and you just put it aside.

CH: I put it aside. I put it aside.

MI: Then what happened?

CH: Then I think, yeah, it wasn't until later when there was the talk about Honouliuli. It was quite a bit later. It was when, I'm not sure, but I was elected yet, but it was probably in the '90s, late '90s when I started to hear more about it again. But a lot...

MI: In the newspapers?

CH: No, it was just people talking because....

MI: Why were people talking about it?

CH: Because there was always a desire. See, at the same time, there was the potential Barbers Point [closure] and what was going to happen to Barbers Point and whether, you know, they were going to BRAC, of course, Barbers Point. BRACing...

MI: What was that?

CH: Base Closure.

MI: Oh.

CH: It's actually Base Realignment and Closure. So that's what at one time they were going to BRAC Pearl Harbor. That was in the, I forget when it was. It was in the '90s because they were thinking it was just a matter of saving money. By the way, it never saves money but they were going to do that. So, that's why Pearl Harbor is now a joint base, Pearl Harbor-Hickam to try and consolidate it. So, as these discussions happened and then you hear about Honouliuli only in terms of maybe it should become a historic site because...

MI: So it was part of the discussion of that?

CH: Yes, it was part of the discussion. That's, I mean, the next time that I recall hearing it was that and what we'd do because....

MI: So, they knew where it was, whoever it was.

CH: They knew, they knew...

MI: Where it was.

CH: They knew.

MI: They had a map.

CH: Well, I don't know if they had a map but they knew where it was. And the conflicting idea at the time was down in what is now Kalaeloa or Ewa, in the Kapolei area, there was a runway, a historic runway.

MI: Oh, yes.

CH: So, remember. There was a guy called John Bond who was, who was really interested.

MI: B-O-N-D?

CH: B-O-N-D. So when he, I, he starts to talk about it...

MI: What was he? Who was he?

CH: He, he was like an engineer. You will see him if you were to google him, he'll come out in particular against the rail in that area because he's interested in the...

MI: Preservation.

CH: Yeah, the preservation and he was very interested in this historic runway. What he considered to be historic. And the reason, by then, I think, I was elected because one of his criticisms was that Honouliuli would get the local support and that runway would not. And so, there was this tension being developed and, you know, ex-military versus quote, "the local people" kind of an issue.

MI: Military versus civilian?

CH: Right. But the military wasn't even in favor of the preservation. And of course, like everything else, people were more concerned back then about Senator Inouye stepping in and preserving one and they wanted him to preserve the other. And so that discussion was going on. But, you know, there was also ...he was, Senator Inouye had put a lot of effort also in the Japanese American National Museum at that point and they built a new museum plus they had ... and I remember the church only because my, I remember as a little kid, going there for some relative's wedding when I was in, or somebody close because we would fly to L.A. for this wedding. Somebody got married and I remember the church in and if you've seen the Japanese American National Museum, the church next door was the museum, for a long time. And then they built this new structure. And when I went to visit the new structure, the new structure is where you have, I believe it's one of those barracks from Tule Lake, I think... That was put in there. And, I still remember being asked, "How long do you think this thing took to build?" And I looked at it and I said, "Not very long."

MI: You mean the barracks?

CH: The barracks itself. And they said, it was like seven hours to put it up. Because there's no floor, all wood. There's not even slats instead of walls. Probably the most difficult thing they did was planting the poles, the four corners. And everything else, the whole thing went up in about seven hours. But, you know, so I think that was in the context of where it starts to revive itself again, is that whole discussion. And the other why is that I think in Hawaii, we never really knew Honouliuli. We knew internment, we knew what happened on the internment because, of course, as you know, by then, movies like Farewell to Manzanar were coming out. There were a lot of different books, so the idea of what happened was something that I knew about as we went along. Honouliuli, though, I don't know about until my grandfather talks about it at dinner and when he's 80 something years old. Then you realize it was here. A lot of people still don't know that they had camps on all the islands, for example. And people don't know that. A lot of people don't even know about Honouliuli. I mean, the awareness is growing but ... and the reason why it should be so relevant to us in Hawaii is because we are a state of minorities and how could this happen? You know, but of course, we weren't a state yet, but it was martial law coming in. That's it, that's what happened.

MI: Okay. So, personally, what happens next as far as your learning or becoming involved in the Honouliuli story.

CH: So I watched it ... so when they actually did the monument designation, I was, I think, more interested ...

MI: That's 2015, right?

CH: Yes, 2015.

MI: But you were involved even before that?

CH: Yeah, but it's not a constant involvement. It's not something that...

MI: Tell us about that, before you get to 2015.

CH: So, it is more a matter of trying to understand and it's really more of a legal kind of thing.

MI: Were you hearing about things going on at the Japanese Cultural Center...?

CH: Yeah. We were hearing about this...

MI: The JACL [Japanese American Citizens League]? What were you hearing?

CH: Well, see, I knew people from, who were active in the JACL here.

MI: Like who?

CH: One in the '90s it was like his last name was, oh, I can't remember his first name. His last name Okino. And he's actually kotonk. Steve Okino. He's kotonk, he's from the mainland because I remember ...

MI: He was part of the Honolulu ...?

CH: He was part of the JACL. Very active. And the reason I remember that was because I think he may have been one of the people my mother talked to. (Laughter) So when she was trying to ... and this is in the '90s, you know ...

MI: What was your mother trying to do?

CH: She was trying to figure out why my grandmother wouldn't get compensated and my grandfather wouldn't get compensated for his boat.

MI: So she actually took action.

CH: Yes. She called people who were representatives. And I think Steve was one.

MI: How did that end up?

CH: That was when they said that, "This is what it is", basically. And other people, everyone has, you know, somebody told ... I don't know if it was Steve who said that his parents or someone lost a store and all they're getting is \$20,000 dollars or whatever. And so everybody has a bad story... And that was basically what it is. And unless they were in an internment camp, they're not going to get any kind of compensation. So I remember her saying that she talked to JACL and she talked and I told her ...

MI: So, actually, that's where you got some of what you are.

CH: (Laughter) Maybe, maybe. And that's what she really couldn't understand.

MI: Up to that point, it seemed like she was just a simple Japanese woman.

CH: Yes. (Laughter) Well, my mother was always somebody who ran the family business. So she wasn't afraid to ask questions and, and try to make sure that things were right. That's her. But the thing is, I was raised by my grandparents. I wasn't raised by my mother. My mother's parents raised me. And so that's when I recall a more intense and regular discussion about [internment] and, in this case, Honouliuli was related only because that was where my Muroda grandfather went. But my Hanabusa grandfather was in Santa Fe. So it was just the internment itself. And I think the awareness, because of all of that, was coming to be. The other context is that in 2001 when the—I think it was 2001. I was just looking at the gentleman when the Medal of Honors were awarded. I was the only one, I think, from the Hawaii Legislature that was invited. And I still don't know why.

MI: To Washington D.C.

CH: Yes, to Washington D.C.

MI: To honor the 442nd.

CH: Right. And I don't know why. Because my father wasn't 442. I had no one, really, a part of the 442, but I was invited and I have....

MI: To represent the state?

CH: No, but just a personal invitation. I have no idea. Till today, I still don't know how I got invited. And then in a—I think it was two years later. Anyway, I was the keynote at the 59th anniversary at the Punchbowl [National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific]. You know, the 442nd, when they get together, so I was asked to do the speech at Punchbowl. I still remember that only because the woman who came to see me said, "Look, you can't turn this down because you have no idea what it takes to select a speaker. And if you say 'No', we're going to have to go back to one of those guys and they're going to have to speak and they're not going to be happy. So, you just have to say 'Yes' and give the speech." (Laughter) I said, "You know ..." as I explained to her, "I have no ties to the 442, other than a deep sense of respect." And I was already elected. I said, "My father didn't serve" and I went through this whole thing and she goes, "Don't ask me. They met, they picked, and you're it." I gave them and the reason I remember...

MI: Tell us about your speech, for someone who was not connected.

CH: I have a copy of it somewhere. I should go find it and send it to you, but it was really ... my speech was more a matter of saying "Thank you," but to tell them that the true obligations are not over. I said, "Your true obligation is to tell your story." And I said, "The failure on your part to tell your story is what exposes us to a repeat." And I told them that I don't know why I got selected to go but I did go. And I watched two people from Waianae, one posthumously receive it [Congressional Medal of Honor]. That was Mr. Nagamine, Shinye, I think. The second person who was there, who received it in person, was Yeiki Kobashigawa. And I said "I know Mr. Kobashigawa because his son and I were classmates in Waianae Elementary School." And the son told me the story about how, if his sister wasn't home and the White House called, didn't call back and ask why he didn't RSVP, they would not have known. Because he threw away the invitation. (Laughter) Because basically he said...

MI: He knew what it was and he didn't want anything to do with it?

CH: Yeah. And he had a Silver Star. They [the family] never knew he had [been awarded] a Silver Star. And the unfortunate part is, as you know, especially as a Medal of Honor recipient, he would have had special rights at Walter Reed [Medical Center] and all of that, you know. He still carried shrapnel. He had shrapnel in him. But, like he said, he served a country that didn't consider him an enemy alien so that his sons would never have to see war. And that was his whole ... and I thought that one statement summarized this generation and why they are called "The Greatest Generation". And I said that was part of it. And so I told them this and I think I ended my speech by saying, "I just have to be honest. If I were a guy," I said, "I don't think I have what it takes to do what they all did." Because I would just be angry." So this may sound strange but one of the things that I felt not so bad about, after I heard about the 60 "No-No" boys at, on the mainland ...

MI: Heart Mountain.

CH: Yeah, because it made me realize that I'm not a disgrace for being a Japanese American who wouldn't go. You know, I said there are 60 of them who were tried for treason because they just wouldn't go. Why should they fight for a country that treated them like that? When I remember their story...

MI: And it wasn't just them, it was their families.

CH: Right, yeah. But when you think about it, what is ... you can't take away from those who fought and especially those who died giving their lives for a country that considered them enemy aliens. And worse yet, in Hawaii, to fight for the right to fight. That to me was amazing. Why would you fight for the right to fight? And that's what they did. [100/442nd] But when you think about that, what part of you does that, you know?

MI: Okay, well, remind me to ask her about the allegiance that they have that day. But, okay, so I still want to get the [Honouliuli] story. You've been out to Honouliuli?

MI: Tell me that story.

CH: You know, if it wasn't for Jane [Kurahara]. (Laughter) If it wasn't for her. She came when they offered me a trip out there. It was still under Monsanto's control then. And so I went to see it and Jane had this folder and I still remember it. It was just amazing. She had my grandfather's words [Robert Muroda] and she would read me what they said in their interviews and give me the background of where we were and ... we were on, I remember, the concrete slab and I remember seeing the water trough. Water troughs meant something to me only because ...

MI: The aqueduct.

CH: Yes, the aqueduct. They're really to build ... I call them water troughs because my Muroda grandfather's job for the plantation was to move water from Makaha and Waianae, which had water, to Lualualei, which is Nanakuli, which had no water. Because they had to bring the water to grow the cane. So the reason, of course, that they grew cane on our side of the island is because they could control water. You cannot control the sun, the sunlight. That's why Windward [side of the island] was always bad. Because Windward had rain and water. They had water, sporadic rain, but that wasn't good for the crops. They needed the sunlight. So the reason why, this is gonna... I learned this from

the sugar industry when I was in D.C. is that the reason why Hawaii is special is because Hawaii has one more growing season than any place else because of our sun. So my Muroda grandfather was the one whose job was to bring the water. So water troughs, when I saw that, it reminded me of such a link to him because that's exactly ... so ...

MI: Bring the water from the Waiahole system?

CH: No, no, no. This is Waianae. Waianae and Makaha had water.

MI: They had water.

CH: A lot of water. And so he took the water from there and brought them in to Lualualei, which is Nanakuli. No, they didn't have to go through ... the water, the Waiahole Ditch which of course is McCandless. Waiahole Ditch fed [the] Ewa Plains. But Waianae and Lualualei was fed by Makaha and Waianae. And Makaha's water, by the way, became owned by Chin Ho. He actually owned the water rights, after the war. He went in and actually bought the valley and he bought the water rights. That's how come they built Makaha golf courses, cause he had the water rights there. But that was my grandfather. That's why, seeing that, I thought of him and what he did. And then, of course, further down is where they had the mess hall which is where he was. And I think that it was ... the only thing that bothered me, and I think I told this to Jane, I said, "I know this area. It is a deceivingly cool and deceivingly green because it wasn't, you know." *Jigoku Dani*. I said it should have been blazing hot and it shouldn't have had all the greenery because that's just not the area. And not what I pictured it as. But it was actually pleasant, but, you know... It didn't have the structures...

MI: What was the occasion when she went out? Was it a Day of Remembrance?

JK: No,

CH: They were just kind enough to take me.

MI: Just a regular tour.

JK: Yes.

MI: What year was this?

CH: Bit after the dedication, so it was fairly recent.

JK: Yes.

CH: And I think that...

MI: Oh, I see.

CH: And then...

MI: That recently.

CH: And then I went again 2000, just recently, 2017, maybe. I went with UH West Oahu because they were doing the archeological studies. So I met the author who wrote that book, who had no idea. Interesting, I told him because I was telling him some of the stories that Jane told me. He said, "Where did you hear that?" I said, "You should go to the Japanese Cultural Center and go see their resource because they really ..." But he was there, and he was the professor who did some archeological things.

JK: Was that Bill Belcher?

CH: Maybe, maybe. So anyway....

MI: So they went back, did you get to read his interview from 1980?

CH: My [Muroda] grandfather's interview? Yes, I did. Well, there were two. They were done. One was Gale Honda and the other one was Bishop Fujitani.

MI: Mid '90s [Bishop Fujitani].

CH: Mid '90s, right. And that's why I said, "If it wasn't for Bishop Fujitani, I don't know ..."

and I mean, and I didn't know about Gale Honda's interview at that time. But I knew about Bishop Fujitani's.

MI: Did you get to hear his voice or just read?

CH: I just read it. It was, to me, well, Gale Honda has a relationship with my, one of my aunts because her, my uncle, her husband, is a dentist, like Gale Honda's father is a dentist. And Honda is Honda Tofu in Wahiawa. Yeah, so that was the relationship. So I—totally unrelated—so when I was running for Congress, Dr. Honda and my uncle used to sign-wave together in Wahiawa for me. (Laughter) That's how I knew who Gale Honda was. She passed away, right?

JK: Yes, she passed away.

CH: But if it wasn't for that, then it became real. Because then you see what ... And I didn't know but for the accounts that they gave me, that my grandfather was taken out and brought back. It was crazy enough to take him out because if he's a threat to national security, why would you let him fix a mill that you need for the production of sugar and then bring him back [into the interment camp]? That's what seems so strange to me. And then, my grandfather's story about, you know, feeding the military guards, and then when they, he took him home, they wouldn't put him in his shackles or whatever, handcuff him. He got home and then he made my grandmother feed them and drank beer with them and all of that. It just sounds so much like them. And, I don't know whether if that's a function ... I think I told this to Jane ... I don't know if that's a function of the fact that what I think put them in there to begin with was the establishment of the Buddhist church. I don't know if that's their Buddhist mentality, you know, what they believe in. Because, I remember the whole thing about "shikata ga nai". And, you know, remember my grandfather was the one who took the single man into the house because he didn't want anyone to hurt him. Because people do stupid things during war. That was my grandfather's whole thing, people do stupid things during war. But then you realize why, maybe, there wasn't as much anger and the ability to forgive and forget, which I don't think we would be able to do (Laughter) or I wouldn't be able to do that.

MI: From your perspective, how do you think they shaped your life and what you are today? Because, you know, you differ with them on some of these things ...

CH: Oh, yeah. I differ with them a lot.

MI: So how...

CH: You should ask Jane that. You should ask Jane that because Jane told me and I remember this, Jane told me after we went to the tour, she said, "I know now why you are the way

you are.” You remember telling me that, Jane?

JK: I don’t remember that. (Laughter)

CH: I remember her telling me.

MI: And what was the reason?

CH: She just... That’s all she said.

MI: She didn’t tell you?

CH: She didn’t tell me. She said “I know now, why you turned out the way you did” or something to that effect. Or, “I know now, why you are the way you are,” or something. And it was in context of my grandparents.

MI: And did you understand what she was saying?

CH: No, I didn’t because I thought I was very different. (Laughter) You know, I thought that I was very different. I never viewed myself as somebody who would be accepting of your ...“*shikata ga nai*” ... I never expected ... I think I...

MI: You don’t think that’s a part of you?

CH: I think it is to a certain extent, but I think it’s almost like there’s an adage, right? Something about, you know, “Give me the strength to change what I can, but to accept what I can’t” or something like that. I think that’s almost, maybe more an Anglicized way of saying “*shikata ga nai*,” but, yeah, maybe to a certain extent. But I also would like to think—I’m not saying that I’m positive that I am—I would like to think that I would be more like a Korematsu, a Yasui, or a Hirabayashi and then I would be as somebody who would just accept it and go along. And whatever, but that’s, but that’s not to say that what they did is wrong. Cause I tell you, what they did in terms of serving the country as they did is just phenomenal.

MI: But you learned... go ahead [to Jane].

JK: I don’t think I meant that. (Laughter) What I see in you is, you know, because we just hear about the political part and the surface part, I see a deeper level and the insights come out when we were on the tour. And I realized that here’s the surface that I’d read about but here’s the real person underneath. The deeper part. And it had nothing to do with whether you’d be angry or not because I think both sides are legitimate.

CH: Right.

JK: It had more to do with how you were insightful in what you were experiencing in life and seeing beyond the surface.

MI: Well, I guess, you learned at Priory about democracy, equal justice, equal rights. So, you’re that version of them.

CH: You know, you just reminded me of something. My Hanabusa grandpa, I remember, and he was probably more the one who didn’t say much. I remember one time he told me. He says, “I will give you whatever money I have if you will run and be ...” In his mind, and this is the thing that was interesting, cause I told him, “She’s a Republican.” He said if you become a Patsy Saiki. Because that was more somebody, I guess, his age, right? So he said, “If you you run for office and be like a Patricia Saiki,” he says, “I’ll give you all

my money.” And that was my Hanabusa grandfather. So I think that to him, he understood the political ramifications of what was going on. I don’t think my Muroda grandfather was like that, except that his brother, who was killed, and he was very political. And he used to drive around, they told me, [Neal] Blaisdell and people like that. That was my Muroda side, but not my Muroda grandfather. But my Hanabusa grandfather, I still remember that. I thought that was so unusual. And I think the reason it sticks in my mind is because she’s a Republican. (Laughter) He just must of felt that the political ramifications of what can happen and what you need to do.

MI: How did you go from lawyer to politician?

CH: You know, it’s, it is a funny story and it sounds really corny, but it’s absolutely true. (Laughter) When I was growing up in Waianae, we didn’t have much of anything, as you can imagine. So I remember as a little kid, one of the things, well not little, maybe seven or eight years old, one of the most coveted Christmas presents I ever got was roller skates with those metal wheels. And so the key was the thing. You know, kids today don’t even understand what I’m talking about because they only know roller blades, right? And I remember that in Waianae, we would jump on the road and skate and jump off if there’s a car coming and keep going that way and we thought it was so great, you know. And I also remember what I thought it was amazing was when Waianae got sidewalks, which weren’t sidewalks cause they were like extra asphalt. So they kinda made a mound and I thought that was great because you didn’t have to skate in the mud or in the dirt and whatever else. But it went from the Hanabusa Service Station maybe down to here and then you turn around and you go back. So then I remember going to play with my cousins. They lived in what I was told was Kaimuki and they had concrete sidewalks that went right around their house, their whole block. I remember had concrete sidewalks that, right or wrong, you know, that whole block and I remember skating on that and thinking, “Wow, this is really neat.” But I told people, the best part is ... when you fall down, when you fall down on asphalt, you gotta dig out the black stuff from your knees, right? If you fall on concrete, maybe you have a little strawberry but you don’t really get hurt as badly as with the black stuff. And I remember thinking that was so unfair. And I’m going back and I’m going, “My God, the raised asphalt is all we got. And then there is nothing that goes around the block. That’s all we’ve got. And the other side of the street, still no sidewalks.” So it’s like, the inequity of it all is what I think what made me decide once and for all, I’m going to do it. And I ran against an incumbent and a teacher, so I was the third candidate. And I felt that at that point, it favors the incumbent because the incumbent should have a base and with the way the results came out, it was like I was the incumbent. I got the highest votes, 500 votes above the incumbent who then got another 500 votes against the other guy, who was challenging in the Democratic primary, which decided out in the Waianae area..

MI: So, this is your mother [in you].

CH: No, no. (Laughter) I’m not sure who it is that’s in me that did that. But what was interesting to me was. It was that “Let’s see what happens.” I’ve always said, “What’s the worse thing that can happen?” And I’ve always had that attitude, that if you don’t try, what are you going to know? I remember I was doing a big case for free. I do a lot of that (Laughter) for some people and I needed ...they told me the transcripts would cost about \$10,000. I said, “I’m doing this case for free. I don’t have the \$10,000 to buy the

transcripts, because the transcripts just easier it for me. I can go down and read it and then whatever. So I said, “Well, you know what, I’ll go and ask the opposing counsel because he has a rich client and they get two copies of everything. Maybe he’ll lend me it.” So I called him and I said, “Hey ...” I think his name was Tom ... I said “You can tell me ‘No,’ I won’t be offended” but I said I figure if I don’t ask, I don’t have any gain on this. I said, “Can I borrow your transcripts, since you have two sets? And if you need them to be returned the next morning, I’ll be happy to do that. And you can lend me one or two at a time, that’s fine.” And he just busted out laughing and he told me, “You know, nobody would have the nerve to ask, but you.” So he said, “For that, yeah. You can have my extra set.” So I got the extra set.

MI: Who was this person?

CH: I think his name was Tom Williams.

MI: Williams.

CH: Tom Williams and he was the Hawaiian Electric’s attorney at the time and he told me, “Sure, why not. You’ve got the nerve to ask. I’ll lend it” and he did. And so, I guess, that’s me, more than anything else. But you know I figure I have nothing to lose, I’m going to ask, not expecting that he’ll say yes but unless I ask, I don’t know.

MI: It sounds like your mother to me. (Laughter)

CH: My mother would be very happy to hear that.

MI: Okay, we’re getting close but have you seen “Allegiance”?

CH: You know, no...

MI: Did you get to see it?

CH: I didn’t get to see it.

MI: Not at all?

CH: I didn’t get to see it. But I do know George Takei and his husband. I’ve been to that. He’s had fundraisers for me at his home.

MI: Wow.

CH: So I’ve been very...

MI: You’ve already touched on the issue...

CH: Right, right. Yeah.

MI: Resistors versus the ((?)).

CH: Right, yeah. That’s one of the things I wanted to go see but I never made it. And I was going to send a letter of apology to Dr. [Mark] Mugiishi, who’s been a great friend and I know he’s put so much in to it. I wanted to see it on Broadway but it closed down too quickly.

JK: Yeah.

CH: Yeah. Yeah, I just realized coming over here that it was last week was the last performance [in Hawaii].

JK: That's right.

MI: Sunday.

CH: Yeah, yeah. My mom fell and I was kind of tied up with that. So it's one of those things, you know.

MI: Okay, do you want to add anything more?

CH: No, except for the fact that I really do wonder and it is a concern of mine, as to how people, the generations after me, are going to deal with the fact that we are Japanese. You know, no matter what we do, we're not going to change the way we look and no matter what we say, we are who we are and we are affected by that which we have all grown up with. And I wonder how much of what Jane may have kindly said about me, is a function of the environment in which I grew up. I grew up in a plantation house because that was where my grandparents lived. And, how much of that and I still remember, you know, walking out to the garage and the *furo* is there. That's part of where I grew up. And you look at the generations to come, they're not going to have any of those experiences. None at all. And they're not going to know, I think, what it even smells like, to have, I think, the best tasting rice is the one that's cooked over the open stove, *koge* [burnt] rice, right? (Laughter) Exactly. I love *koge* rice. They don't understand that. You know, they don't understand that you need that open flame with the pot and when you take the rice out, you cannot take the *koge* part but that's the best *musubi* [rice ball] you can possibly eat. And I wonder how much of the generations to come are going to lose that. I say that only in the context of, then do they lose that which we're all trying so hard to protect here? We're trying to protect the memory so it doesn't occur again. But premised on protecting the memory is the fact that we all assume that it matters. And it would matter to them. Is it going to matter to them as Japanese Americans? Any part of them that may be Japanese American? Or is it going to matter to them as, we'd all like to think that it just matters to them as human beings. But unfortunately, we know that that's not what happens. The memories are not that transcend; the memories have got to be unique to who you are or who defines you. And that's my greatest concern. Like I know fear is what I think motivates or has made President Trump as successful as he is. I also feel that the loss of the identity is probably as great a challenge for the future because the loss of the identity then, I think, loses the heart, and the soul. And what do we become if we lose that heart and that soul? That's what bothers me.

JK: Do you see, perhaps here in Hawaii, rather than retaining our Japanese identity, that perhaps the future generations are going to retain a local identity?

CH: That's an interesting point. And the question is: what is that local identity, right? So, as unfortunate as it is, I watched how native Hawaiians have evolved over time because we have, unfortunately the government created this, but we have two classes of native Hawaiians. We have those who are homesteaders, which are 50% blood quantum, which by the way is no different than what in 1934, if you were not part of a recognized tribe, you had to have 50% blood quantum Indian in the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act. So you have that and you have those who are none. And then you also have the whole issue of the culture and what is it and how do we evolve, right? The problem that I see among the next generation of Japanese Americans and the one thing that even if I used to think this is crazy and I would never admit to my friends that I would go every Saturday to do

ikebana, right? You know, it's still something that to me, you talk about something that frames the way you think and everything. It really is something disciplined like that. They're not going to have that. They're not going to have that. They may take a class here and there but it's not something that's ingrained in them. So, the question also is the generations, you know ... like I was fortunate, though my grandparents were Nisei, they were of the older generation Nisei, so they had a different kind of outlook. And so, what happens if I were a parent, for example, or my nieces as parents, they have, I watched them with their kids. They have no sense. No sense. The only thing that, at best, we do together, maybe, *bon odori* [Buddhist celebration of the dead]. But they don't even understand why we do *bon odori*. They just know that if somebody in the family dies, the next *bon odori* is very important. That's what they understand. But they don't understand why. So if we were to emerge into a universal culture, I think, if we look at what happens to the native Hawaiians and you have the issue of is it the environmental issues, is it all these other issues, what is it that defines them? I think the thing that we all have to be willing to accept is fundamentally what's going to probably propel more than anything else, is the economic stability of the individual. So if the person is just eking out a living, they're not going to have time for this. Or even to be considering this. So, the economic stability, the sustainability of how we are as a culture, then preserves things. And if we cannot do that, then we're going to lose it. It's not going to be a universal outcome of some kind. It's going to be self preservation. It's going to be, all the things... survival. And fear will take over.

JK: Yeah.

CH: And those are the things that I think are what may happen, unfortunately. Because I don't know where we go.

JK: Thank you.

CH: Anyway, that's just my thoughts.

MI: Yeah, thank you so much for taking the time.

CH: Oh, no, thank you again for doing this. I don't know if it'll be of any help. (Laughter)

MI: It will be. The next generation, they will learn.