ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Mr. Shigeo Muroda (SM)

March 1, 1994

at the residence of Mr. Shigeo Muroda

BY: The Reverend Yoshiaki Fujitani (YF)

YF: Today is March 1, 1994, and this is Yoshiaki Fujitani recording for the Japanese Cultural Center Heritage Program. I am at the moment at the home of Mr. Shigeo Muroda, an old-timer Hongwanji member, leader, from Waianae Hongwanji, and he will tell us about himself.

SM: Okay. I am Shigeo Muroda. I was born in Waianae, son of Taichi Muroda and Tome Muroda. I was born in the year 1905, May the 13th, and I was born right in this Waianae and lived here all my life, and I didn't move out to other place, and I saw the growth of Waianae and the people how they lived from olden days. In the olden days we were working 10 hours a day and they were paid less than 75 cents a day.

YF: Before you go into your work, Mr. Muroda, can you tell us about your growing-up years. You went to language school?

SM: Yeah.

YF: . . .and also public school?

SM: Uh huh.

YF: . . .and things like that. What you did, and so on.

SM: Yes, we had language school and the language school was not too many students because there were very few children here. And we were raised among these immigrants, and they only speak Japanese, and I learned more Japanese than English. When I went to public school, it was funny but I didn't know how to

speak English.

YF: Oh, I see.

SM: Yeah, I didn't know, and then so I had to start from A, B, C. Was very hard for us but we were small student body. The teachers were very good to us and tried to help us in many ways, and my days we had only this in the public school, grammar school, up to 6th grade.

YF: You mentioned the immigrants but the Japanese came to Waianae to work on the plantations? What kind of things did you have here in Waianae?

SM: Well, those immigrants. . .if I can explain how they were living. . .was very sad to say because they were really hard and hard to live and the housing and the facilities, no water pipe, the toilets are outside in the pit, you see. It's all right when the person is not sick, but when they get sick and they have to go outside night time it's pretty hard. And think of going to be around 1919 when the Spanish influenza hit Hawaii, we had funeral everyday.

YF: Oh, lot of people died?

SM: They just go, especially those women that had just given birth, and my mother was a midwife so she tell me to come and help, and I was just about 12 I think, I used to go and help her. And the plantation manager found out that she's helping the people so I remember that he said, "Mama, you go and help people, good, thank you, but you mustn't get sick. So best thing for you to do when you go to the sick person is that you smoke, and I know you smoking." So he gave her a carton of cigarettes and those days people don't smoke cigarettes, only Durham.

YF: That's right.

SM: But she smoked that and then she would go on help. Those babies that came out, the father is sick and the other family is sick so nobody to take care, so Mama had to take her with her and take her home to our house, and we took care of them. And one of the family, three children and the mother died and the father went too, you see, and these three were left

with nobody to take care so the plantation "sewa" people and they say, "Mama, you can take care of these children for a while until we find a way to send them home to Japan?" We say okay, we keep them, so we had these three children with us helping so that they grew up so sent them back to Japan. And they went to Japan and later years they came back, but for landing they had to get somebody to witness that they were born in Waianae or born in Hawaii so Grandma, my mother, went to Immigration Station to get them and landed here. One of the boys was working for Musashiya. Nice family but was really sad. Those people. . .

YF: What kind of work did most of the Japanese do here? Did you have sugar plantation here?

SM: Yeah, sugar plantation.

YF: Oh.

SM: Sugar plantation so all the laborers and of course the Japanese will not only be laborers because smart people so all went to carpentry, or blacksmith, and machine shop. They really learned fast, and they have high position in those areas too, you see, and especially people who cook the juice to get molasses, and they were all Japanese, and they really were good, in a way, smart and good with their hands, and they did but for myself my father was a sick man so he cannot work very much, but my mother was midwife so when she get deliveries she goes and gets a little "orei" for that and we were living. But my father was really suffering. He said he had stomach trouble and this and that but later on they found out that he had liver trouble so naturally off and on he gets sick, you see.

YF: When you mention liver problem, this is generally but at that time did the Japanese workers drink a lot of "osake" and things like that?

SM: Yeah, they were drinking and you know really happy people. They work hard but when they come home they were really happy and make themselves. . .But my father, he didn't drink but he was born with that maybe. So when my grammar school finished, 6th grade, then the elementary started, 7th grade, you

see. So they wanted I go to this elementary but I refused. I said no I gotta take care of my father, my family, so I'm not going, but they forced me and I was there about half a year, but still daddy get so sick so I quit school and then I helped the family. Even the principal, at that time, Mr. Nobriga, he told me he says you go to higher school, you come to this elementary, he says if your father cannot support you I help you. But I said no thank you, I cannot leave the home because I had only one brother. And then we started, so I didn't go school very much. English and Japanese school, too, I went till about 7th grade and that's all.

YF: As a child, what kind of things you did for recreation? You didn't have time for too much play, did you?

SM: No only that, I didn't have children to play with. Very few, you see. Our student body was about 50, I think, in Waianae. The community. . .the children, these immigrants they came only men and few wahines so they didn't have very many children.

YF: Did you go to the beach a lot?

SM: Yeah, we go surfing, beach, fishing. In this stream here we used to go and hook this "oopu" and then we string that and we take them to the Chinese and they give us money for that much so. . .

YF: Oh, yeah, yeah. We don't see "oopu" any more.

SM: No, no. We had big ones, like that, you know. Well, anyway, even fruits, this place is away from town and then people don't travel very much, you see, no ways, only the thing that we can travel with was the train from Kahuku right up to Honolulu, you see. So, people don't go to town very much, but my father used to go pretty often because he had to go to doctor and all that and when I was second grade, I think it was, my father's friend came and he had a box of fruits, apple and oranges and all that, and I know apple but many of these children they don't know apple. They never seen an apple, so I asked my father can I have one of these apple. "Oh sure, you going to have all." "No, I like take one to school," "For what?" he said. "I like show my friends that this is an

apple." He said, "Okay, take." I took it and I gave it to my teacher, and she showed that apple to the class and they said this thing smell good.

YF: Rare thing, yeah?

SM: We're in the country, and even peach. I didn't know peach but in Makaha in the valley there a Mr. Holt, they had a home over there and one Chinese man used to keep the place. Mr. Holt he owned all this placed before so I went to the valley. In the valley they have this lilikoi plant, so season time we go and pick the lilikoi so I went there and I went to this Mr. Holt's yard and I see something nice on the tree so I went over there and I look. There's a caretaker, the Chinese man, he say, "What you looking, boy?" "What is this?" "Oh, this is peach." First time I see peach.

YF: Holt that you mentioned, is that related to John Dominis Holt?

SM: Well, maybe, because Holt family is. . .

YF: He had a publishing company in Honolulu. Could be that yeah?

SM: Could be because Holt family is big, see, from Waianae right up to Waialua. He owned all that, see, and had dentist, too. And they were living out in Maili and Mikiloa, all of that was for Holt.

YF: During those days, besides the train that you remember, did a lot of people have cars? How did you travel?

SM: Wagon and horse, horse and wagon.

YF: Oh, horse and wagon.

SM: You see, my father later years he used to peddle, you know, be a peddler and go around and sell things, you see. Well we had good watermelon here so watermelon season he got the watermelon and he put them on his wagon and then take it to other places to Ewa and all that and sell it. But with horse and wagon, takes whole day. And everytime I say this and people would say, "yeah," but in the Maili area we had only six

houses there--the Holts, the Gillilands, the Lucas, and the caretaker of the place and that's all and Nanakuli had only one--Grace Brothers Ranch and caretaker take care of the ranch, feed the cattle, feed the hogs and all that. They had about three Japanese people working over there in one house. Yeah, because plantation days the house, the living quarter is a long building and is divided into about 12 feet I think or 14 feet each, and it's about say about 20 feet, about this width, and one family get only one, one apartment, and the kitchen is outside. Between the kitchen and the home there's a home and there's a kitchen here, and they had road here where that plantation send this mule and dump wagon and bring the supplies such as wood or take away the rubbish. And no water line. They have one big tank on. . .lie this area here we had one out there and everybody had to go there and get the water in this can, five gallon can. This can is you know they say people used to buy kerosene over there for lighting, and so with that they make that into bucket and carry it to the kitchen. That was in those days. Only they had pipe in the bath, community baths. Everybody goes to one bath house to clean themselves.

YF: So during those days you had just one bath or you had two baths, one for women and one for men?

SM: Yeah, one for women and one for men but only had partition. Big tub,"ofuro," and then the partition is right in the center.

YF: Must've been a lot of fun, yeah?

SM: Yeah. Waianae is a little different than the other places and these women with children they used to go work, babies you know. Some big ladies is all right, you see, but those short ladies when the baby get a little long then tall start to drag their feet when they "oppa," and they had big load with them. They had to take diapers and the food and then on top of that they had to take one tent because outside there's no trees so they put four pegs and then put this cover on so the baby can sleep. Really hard time, hard life. But Japanese all right.

YF: They survived. As you were growing up did you have a Hongwanji "otera"?

SM: Yeah, the Hongwanji "otera" was built right here, this area. This was the area for Japanese, you see, because plantation they separate--Japanese, Chinese, and Portuguese, Filipinos. They were all separate area you see. Why they do that is the language barrier. Cannot understand each other, so they kept them all separate. Somebody had to interpret. The Hongwanji was built over there 95 years ago, something like that. It was built by this community, Japanese community, and they were having very few donations, but the material and the labor making that temple the plantation gave.

YF: Oh, I see. Was the land given to the Hongwanji?

SM: No, just built on the land, and we just and then later when we moved to our present area there then we had to pay $1.00 a year for the rent. That is for some kind of paperwork, I think, so that we don't claim.

YF: So, what kind of services did you have? What did the "bon-san" do?

SM: The "bon-san" gave this, all in Japanese--Shinshu. We built a Shinshu "otera" so the teachings--Takayama-sensei was the first one I think and Numata-sensei and Fukui-sensei all of them came. And Matano-sensei. I was taught by Numata-sensei and Fukui-sensei.

YF: That was Yehan Numata's brother.

SM: Brother? His brother.

YF: I understand he, I think it was in 1916 that Numata, Dr. Numata Yehan sensei came to Hawaii and he was helping his brother.

SM: Yeah, yeah, I knew when he came. I remember that. He was a young boy, and he was here for a while and he went to downtown Hongwanji Betsuin, and from there he went to the mainland.

YF: That's right.

SM: And Numata-sensei from Waianae went with him to help

him to study.

YF: So as a Hongwanji "otera," what kind of service did the minister do for the community? He just took care of the Japanese members?

SM: Japanese members, uh huh. And then before only Waianae we had this "Hoonko" every year and goes to the family, every family.

YF: Oh, "Hoonko" time, not "Obon"?

SM: No "Hoonko" time.

YF: I see.

SM: And they go right around where the Japanese people and the members are and like Sarashina-sensei he used to go on his horse. No cars those days so. . . They worked hard and not salary, see. Only "ofuse." But at that time that was all right because people didn't make too much money, so we can buy things cheap too so that's why, but later on. . .

YF: When World War II began in 1941 you were in your thirties?

SM: Yeah, late thirties.

YF: Late thirties already? So, you were more or less established and very active already within the community?

SM: Yeah, I was with the YBA and then on the plantation I was this construction foreman, taking care of all the buildings in Waianae and then the mill. All that I had to take care and then just before the war a law came that they want to tax the plantation houses so I had to make all the plans for the houses, and send them in to the State--not state but Territory those days.

YF: They taxed the. . .

SM: Yeah, for tax purpose, you know. So I was taking care of all that and then all this irrigation flumes. We had water one pump out from Maili and from there we had flume right out to Hakimo Road in Nanakuli.

That's how we pump out the water to this flume and then just flow down to Nanakuli, but during the winter months storm comes and just knock 'em down.

YF: So, the plantation was still in existence in 1941? When did they close?

SM: 1947.

YF: '47?

SM: After the war. Yeah, 1942 I was interned, see?

YF: Yeah, why were you interned?

SM: We don't know why but either one of the paper that I have says "Internal Security."

YF: Yeah, yeah. Well, that's the reason that they gave. Potentially dangerous.

SM: That's right.

YF: Well, in other people's cases, "potentially dangerous enemy alien," but you were local born.

SM: I know.

YF: I guess, then you had a responsible job with the plantation.

SM: Uh huh, with the plantation. So I was in 1942, September, I was taken in and then 14 months later. . .

YF: Where did you go when you went?

SM: Sand Island.

YF: Sand Island?

SM: Sand Island, and then I was there from September to April next year and they moved the camp to Honouliuli. And at that time I was mess sergeant so the officers they took me to Honouliuli and check the place, and we had to clean up and all that so I took some men then I had to get all the utensils and everything and one day I had to take the cooks before

we transferred to this so that they get ready for cooking and feed the people. Well, we were having a lot of work done but very few POWs from Japan. Had six, about seven.

YF: Were you treated like a POW?

SM: No, no.

YF: You were just detained?

SM: Detained, yeah.

YF: Not a prisoner.

SM: No, not. Well, of course, we were locked in, but they treated us. . .

YF: Yeah, I've seen pictures of that Honouliuli Camp but is there anything remaining there now?

SM: I think so. Some old foundation and kitchen foundation and that still there.

YF: Something like in a gulch like, huh?

SM: Yeah. Very narrow gulch. When we go across that on this side of the gulch there's a camp, all the people living. Now on this side is the kitchen and the mess halls. They had to come over to feed themselves.

YF: What kind of life did you live while you were there for those few months?

SM: Well, I was taking care of the kitchen.

YF: You were kept busy?

SM: Yeah, so. . .

YF: But in the evenings like that?

SM: Evenings just I live with these old people so I speak only Japanese, too, you see. I think that's how I learned Japanese, not through schooling but. . .

YF: Actual use.

SM: Actual use and environment. Like Reverend, after the war, then Reverend Deme came here and I learned a lot from him, too.

YF: Okay, now you're a nisei and you're imprisoned by the American government, what kind of feelings you had?

SM: Well, just hatred, no? Very angry because they get no business because this is free country and they can express our side anyway as long as we didn't do anything wrong and if they can prove it all right but they get no proof. That's why all the internees that were interned not one of them is convicted because they are not those bad people, so. . .

YF: Who were some of the other people that you might remember connected with say the Hongwanji or some religious groups?

SM: Yeah, like my brother-in-law was one of them and then. . .

YF: What was his name?

SM: Hanabusa.

YF: Oh, Hanabusa.

SM: Yeah, and this, anyway this person from Wahiawa. He's out Kauai now--what was his name--him. Waianae nobody. Died. And then lot of fishermen were. . .

YF: Were there a lot of fishermen in this area?

SM: Yeah. Fishing is one of the industries here, plantation, fishing, and lime company. And then the farmers, truck farming, and then charcoal.

YF: Oh, charcoal.

SM: Yeah, some people have ovens, make charcoal. So at the camp, like Sakamaki, he came with that one-man sub and he was captured.

YF: Sakamaki?

SM: Yeah, Sakamaki. He was at Sand Island and I used to feed him. Get my boys and feed him everyday. But in

the interment camp that's one place we're all naked. We get money, nothing, we get education, nothing. Only you and how good a person you are. It's up to people to decide. But we were over there and this Mr. Sakamaki, he used to stay by himself and come out and take a walk around the place, and after that when we moved to this Honouliuli at that time they took him away to the mainland. They didn't bring him over to this side.

YF: But nobody befriended him?

SM: Cannot. Because he was. . .

YF: He was isolated?

SM: Isolated and if you want to say anything you better make it into a song and. . .that's how they used to do. . .

YF: Oh, I see. Just like the "hore-hore bushi."

SM: Yeah. Well, at the interment camp there's all kind of things you see over there but anyway we come back to Waianae and then this "otera."

YF: Yeah, how was the temple? Did it grow gradually in membership?

SM: Yeah, grew. We had big membership, more than 200, and then before the war, that Matano-sensei time, we had a split.

YF: Before the war?

SM: Yeah before the war.

YF: Oh, is that right? Yeah, what happened? I think lot of people would like to know. You know, what caused it.

SM: Well, they said that the "kaikyoshis" that and this but it is actually it is not that. . .actually it is we had only one temple here in Waianae but there were so many Buddhists of the other sects like "Odaissan, Jodo-shu, Soto-shu." They wanted to use the "otera" for their religious for their sect, but Matano-sensei and we young group we didn't like that idea, because

this temple was built for "Shinshu" and we're going to keep it as "Shinshu." We don't want any other sect coming in. That's one reason and the other reason is that they said Matano-sensei favoritism. They treat my children this and that and the other sensei was here and he tried to make trouble and then get all these people with him so they moved out. When they moved out they took everything we had.

YF: Oh, is that right?

SM: Yeah, because the treasurer was with them.

YF: Oh, I see. Is that the basis of what is known as the "Doshi-Kai"?

SM: Yeah, "Doshi-kai."

YF: So it was organized before the war then.

SM: Right before the war.

YF: And where do these people meet?

SM: The "Doshi-kai" is coming down, down, down so now they have their Reverend, this Shinshu-kyokai no Tatsuguchi-sensei. He comes over, and he's a smart man so no make trouble. But the old ones that got away from us they're all dying off. Only the young ones left now and. . .

YF: The young ones are children of the isseis?

SM: The isseis, yeah. And during the war after I came back from camp then we started to. . .when the plantation was here not too bad but when the plantation closed then the State, the government, they want to get all these graveyards utilized. The Hawaiians they used to bury in their own properties, and they didn't want us to put it in the graveyard so they called me and said, "Who's using?" We using the place, the Japanese community, our graveyard. He said okay, you fence it up so that the animals won't go in there and damage the place.

YF: Where is the cemetery located?

SM: It's near Waianae Valley Road.

YF: Oh, Waianae Valley Road.

SM: And it's on a hill, on a slope, nice place but. . .

YF: Who takes care of it?

SM: Well, now the Doshi-kai and we the Hongwanji. We get together and clean the place and everytime before Mother's Day we clean up, clean up the place, Mother's Day and O-bon, get ready for the people can go for "omairi," but that place is so steep so hard to get up there. No good for old people like us.

YF: You served as president of Waianae Hongwanji. You served as president, didn't you?

SM: Yeah, yeah.

YF: When was that?

SM: After the war. You see, in our camp and then 1942-1943, end of the year, the plantation they sent notice to the government, to the Army, that they want me back. They needed me here so one day I was out in the field and looking at the garden then this office boy said, "Hey, Muroda, come." "Okay." "Bring your tools." And on the way back, "You going home tomorrow." "What?" Unexpectedly he told me that so I said, "Why?" "I don't know." Local boy, see. He said I don't know, but they tell me to pick you up, and then they going send you home tomorrow so we get everything ready so you can go home tomorrow. So I went back, put my tools away, and then I went to the office and then they tell me get all your things ready and we going get you out tomorrow morning. Take you back to Waianae. So I went to my barracks and I picked up all my stuff and put 'em in the bag and get ready, and next morning they picked me up and then took me to Immigration Station and the major was there. He's the one that take care of this interment camp. He said, "Muroda, you can go home." Then he tell to the other guy, "You check up Muroda's account." Muroda's account?

YF: Whether you owed something or not?

SM: No, you see at interment camp if you do anything and

go work every day the Red Cross give us 10 cents an hour, and I was there 14 months so the thing came out to $250 so many dollars. So he said you have this much money with us so we send you a check so, and the boys that took me in says you take him back to Waianae. He'll lead you the way and they were coming out, and they had this pistol with them and this commander said, "Now, boys, take off your weapon. Leave it here. He's no prisoner any more." So I came home. My folks doesn't know, too, because nobody knows. They just came and picked me up and then I came home so, surprising everybody. That's all right but next day, that day the camp police came and they tell me, "Muroda, manager say for you to come work tomorrow." "Tomorrow? I just came back." "Yeah, but they need you." So I went, next morning I went. And the engineer was right by my shop, standing by my shop and said, "Welcome home." "Thank you." "We get work for you." "That's why you call me back?" "Yeah." Then he gave me a plan. He want to make this. It was a cane cleaner. In Waianae we don't have much water so we cannot wash it like other plantations so what we gotta do is we gotta dry clean this cane so we get the stone and then other unnecessary stuff and by clumps and cut it up with the knife and that flows away the other way and the cane come this way--that machine, 40 feet high. I gotta make that. So I started to make that and during the off season I have to finish that, finish that job. That's the reason they get me from the camp. That was in 1946 so I worked on the plantation, in 1945 when the war ended then at that time the Army they used our Japanese school for recreation and they fixed up and all that and still the plantation owned that whole area. Our "otera" was destroyed by the soldiers. They had about 25,000 soldiers in the rec area. In the meantime they come to the "otera" and they go and then take our "butsudan" and the "hotoke-san" and all the things in the "otera" were destroyed and only Mrs. Matano was here. Nobody to watch. And Mrs. Matano wouldn't go out because too dangerous. Then after the war the officers of that time they tell us because we the younger group and working on the plantation we're the ones that can talk to the manager. We talked to the manager and then we claim for and that we want to use the place. He said, "Oh, sure, you folks can use that place. You folks were using it before, huh?

You can use that place." So we got it back, so naturally we had to reactivate the "otera," so we had to make officers and all that. Some of them they stay on the mainland and they don't want to come back, but those who were left, the isseis said from now on I think we have to get the niseis to take care the "otera" so we want you boys to take care, and then my group all said I think so, we have to take care. "Okay, Muroda, you bilingual, you can speak both Japanese and English so why don't you be the president" "Oh, no, no, it's too much work for me." They said I think you're the only one can do it, so they made me president and then I started to activate the "otera" and the Fujin-Kai and the Sunday school. First thing I did was Sunday school, then Fujin-kai, then we need "kaikyoshi." We gotta get "kaikyoshi." We went to "Betsuin" and asked for one "kaikyoshi." They said no more "kaikyoshi," too short of "kaikyoshi." So why don't you ask Reverend Deme from Waipahu to take care of your place, too. If it's okay with you it's okay with us. So that was Kashiwa-sensei? Kashiwa-sensei. Then we got Deme-sensei to come and take care of Waianae. Deme-sensei down to earth "kaikyoshi." He helped all the people, but he's so busy, that's why when any funeral he get the funeral and next day he gotta come for "age mairi" so he said if we can finish up in one day it's better for him because he's busy going back and forth. Those days not like now, the cars are. . .so I says okay we try. Then we take our funerals, most of our funerals were Kukui and when Kukui was in Kalihi and so after the funeral they start to cremate and I have to wait until they finish the cremation, I bring back the ashes, finish the "age mairi" that night. That's what we were doing. And then Deme-sensei says I think we better start Japanese school. I said yeah, good. If you can have a "sensei" we can. Anyway we try, one summer we try and if everything goes all right then we go and do something, so we tried. He brought his "sensei" from Waipahu, and then plenty people, children came, so we started Japanese school, and then after the summer then this Hasegawa came from Japan, Deme-sensei's nephew. He came to Deme-sensei's place and so Deme-sensei said more better get my nephew to Waianae. He came to Waianae to teach and then in the meantime he went to downtown to study English, and he was going back and forth and then he comes to my

place, too. We feed him, my wife used to do all that. Then she was taking care of Sunday school so. . .

YF: Your daughter Lillian?

SM: Yeah, Lillian. So they came close and they said they want to get married, I says okay. That's how we started the Japanese school here, and then I was with that "otera" 17 years as its president. Finally when I think we need one "kaikyoshi," we better get one "kaikyoshi," so we got Fukushima-sensei. Fukushima-sensei was the first "sensei" who came with his wife. Because I told that time was not your father? Who was the Bishop?

YF: What year was that?

SM: When Fukushima-sensei came? Oh. . .

YF: Ohara?

SM: No, not Ohara-sensei.

YF: Morikawa?

SM: Yeah Morikawa, Morikawa-sensei. Morikawa-sensei but some of the "kaikyoshi" they get smart and they like something in this Fukushima-sensei so he start to make trouble. So I says I'm ready to retire. Okay, so I'll be resting for a while so I took off for about five years, I think, when Fukushima-sensei was here. And after Fukushima-sensei moved out then not Yamasato-sensei, Kahuku no, what was his name. . .Matsukuma-sensei, Matsukuma-sensei's friend from Kahuku, he went to Japan.

YF: Iwai?

SM: Yeah, Iwai-sensei.

YF: Iwai-sensei was here too?

SM: No, no. Matsukuma-sensei and Iwai-sensei came to my place and they tell me we're going to send this Yamasato-sensei here. Can you help him? I said oh, sure, I can help him. Then Yamasato-sensei came and we helped him and I went back and then Fujii-sensei

all of them came see, but now nobody.

YF: Didn't you have any activities to which the whole community was invited to participate, like even bon dance and things like that.

SM: Yeah, bon dance, and later years more the Oahu Rengo Kai, they started to get this obon rotating in different places and they all go the places. Even now we're doing that see. That happens. But only too bad our Japanese school we had to close because no students. I wanted it to last, and even the Sunday school closed down. The reason is because those people who had babies, like myself too, all the babies grew up. We don't need Sunday school, but this thing is really something that I have to think and I don't know. I have good ideas but I think we're going to say that in here. But anyway, that's how we started. Coming back to the old plantation days, the Portuguese came here first, then the Chinese, then the Japanese, then the Okinawan people came, but they were in different places we set them up. Then the Filipinos came. The Filipinos came, the Visayans came first, the Illocanos, and the Tagalogs but they were in different areas too. We cannot keep them in one place, because the language, cannot understand each other, and that caused all that, and one time when the first tidal wave was April 1st, what year was that?

YF: 1946.

SM: 1946? That thing hit Waianae, too, see. And then in Waianae we had this Section Camp, Section 3 and 4, and that was by Iroquois Point, and there were four or five houses over there, and that was destroyed too by the tidal wave. It's Lilikoi Point and then on this side, below this side, Waianae Valley Road, that's where the Filipino camp, and this Army had old barracks, portions of the building, all stacked up. Well, the waves came and then lifted up and float that whole thing and came into the camp and knocked down the houses, 13 houses. And on the first house there were some men who work in this mill, and we wanted to know how much damage and I was over there with the camp police and he says I checked this one Filipino from the mill, he didn't show up to work today so I went to find him, and "which house he was

living." "In this first house." And the first house the whole thing collapsed, the roof was right down, so we said must be under there. So we were looking around and we can't find 'em, and finally I saw this shoes standing up this way and the sole, I can see the sole of the shoes standing up this way. How can the shoes stand up like that? It came to me, I said hey, buddy, come, the camp police you see. You look over there, you see the two shoes standing up like that? How can the shoes stand up like that. Must be somebody inside there in the shoes. He said I think so, and we look around and we found a hoe, and get the hoe and I poke and doesn't move. "Ah yah, somebody's there, maybe the Filipino is inside there." So it was under the house, in the house. What happened was he got up and he got everything ready, he made his lunch, and then he look at the time, maybe he had few minutes he can spare so he went back to the bunk and lie down, and he went to sleep. That's when the wave came and then bring down the house so no chance for him to go away. Then I got my men to clean up and clean up and we got him out. That was really sad for him so. . .those things happened, and after that so many waves came but no damage. That was the biggest one anyway, something like Kauai.

YF: When you were hit by Hurricane Iwa, Iniki. . .

SM: Only this stream here on the other side the stream come this way and curve, the wave hit this corner here and the bank make a hole over there see. That's about the damage, and then one of the wave came into my yard, hit over there and then came inside here. That's all. No more other damage.

YF: Yeah, I was wondering the role of the Hongwanji religious organization within the community. It took care of course of the members, of the Japanese, that was it. You didn't go beyond into the Portuguese or to the Filipino or the community.

SM: Temple took care only of the Japanese because the other community, the other people, they were kind of afraid of Buddhism. They take it some other way, something like a devil or something. They only believe in God, anything outside of God is, very rude to say but, their enemy. They didn't like that.

YF: Well, we have just a few more minutes, maybe about 10 minutes more, but you've been active in the cultural world also. You've taught "ikebana." Is that of the "Ikenobo" school?

SM: "Ikenobo" school.

YF: Tell us about that.

SM: Well, "Ikenobo" school was started by this Reverend Oda.

YF: Hakuai Oda.

SM: Yeah, Hakuai Oda. And he's the man that brought this "Ikenobo" here, and he was really active and his first demonstration that he had he told me that the worst thing he had and the most trouble he had was the vases for arranging the arrangment, he's short of that. That gave him lotta trouble, so I said, "Sensei" what did you use?" I asked the people for the "karase" to "suru" "omiso" and all that, he asked that, bucket, and then "shoyu daru" he said and the pail "shoyu" come in he get that and he arranged that. He made about 100 arrangements the first time. That's the beginning, then his students, two of them are still active, and then after that they wanted to get recognition from "Ikenobo Iemoto" but they cannot get together, the Hawaii "Ikenobo" teachers.

YF: Oh, is that right?

SM: Yeah, and they make all this certain kind of excuse, or trouble you know, but in 1966 I went to Japan and then I went to "Ikenobo" and I met one teacher over there and then I learned something over there, but. . .

YF: How old were you then?

SM: I don't know. Sixty some many. . .because I started flower arrangement because of my granddaughter and my "otera." First, my "otera" when the Gomonshu, Kosho-sensei, he came to Hawaii and he went around all these temples and I was taking care of Waianae so I had to take care of my arrange flowers and all that. But we didn't have that "otera." We just had

this Japanese school use it for "otera." By that time, just before he came, the YBA bought the "butsudan" and cost them that time only $1,500, and then Waipahu had their "otera" so Waipahu "otera" the Gomonshu did the "nyubutsushiki" over there. But he came Waianae and he said "koko mo atarashii desu ne. Chotto nyubutsushiki no katachi ni. . ." At that time I arranged the flower I had hard time because I don't know how. I stick the flower inside so Oda-sensei came back and I said, "Sensei, are de iin desuka?" "Ah, kekko, kekko." But I wasn't satisfied so. Then my granddaughter was taking he was teaching her but she finished intermediate and started to go high so every Saturday I used to take the kids and go downtown and then go and drop in show and all that but only expense for me see. Hey, I think I gotta do something and teach these children, and then you know she's getting a little too old so she better learn something. So I asked her what do you want to learn? She said oh I want to learn. . .I tell her you want music? She doesn't want. Then you like "ohana"? Yeah, "ohana" all right. Then I say, I know a Dr. Oda so we can go to him, so we go then. Saturday we go to "ohana," and we practice "ohana," then after that drop in to shows and we come home. That's how we started.

YF: So it's your grandaughter--that's Dana?

SM: No, no, that's Colleen. Collen Hanabusa.

YF: Oh, Colleen Hanabusa.

SM: She's a lawyer now, and she's the oldest granddaughter for me, and then she started and then she got this teacher's, instructor's diploma so when she went to university, Pacific College in Stockton, they asked her to give some kind of art that she knows so her friend's mother had a vase so she borrowed and she arranged a. . . That's how I started my "ohana" in '66 I went to Japan and went to Ueno-sensei and then learned from him.

YF: Did you know a Reverend Oda well?

SM: Yeah, he's from Aiea, you see. That's how we get together because when meetings, especially Gisei-kai. The first Gisei-kai after the war I was there.

Reverend Aoki from Hilo said how we going to get this kind of convention when we don't have money? So, I said we better collect some money, so I pass on the hat and we got hundred so many dollars, I can't remember what it was. Then we started out the Gisei-kai so all the time I knew this Oda-sensei.

YF: He was teaching "ohana" for a long time.

SM: Yeah, long time. I'm one of the young student for him.

YF: Who were some of the other "Ikenobo" teachers here in town?

SM: Sakamoto-sensei and then Kurishige-sensei and all that but they can't get along.

YF: That's too bad.

SM: So 1978 that was I went to Japan again, and then I went to "Ikenobo" for more studies and the "Iemoto" they called me and they tell me I like start up a "shibu" in Honolulu. At that time we had all the, Hilo had all the "shibu," so they tell me can you help me to get the "shibu" in Honolulu? I say, oh, that's big job for me. I can try then. I came back and I got all these people, first Oda-sensei's class and I was telling them what do you think about this thing. They say we tried but we cannot do it 'til now. I say okay, let me try. I got all this notice to the sensei and then they came and talked with them. Especially Sakamoto-sensei gave me plenty trouble and make them understand. Okay, then, we go try start, then, I forgot her name, she was Japanese school teacher at Kahuku so she's good in writing so she know that I'm not educated so I say you go be secretary and you get all this correspondence returned to "honbu." Okay, okay, I help you. And then we started out. We all say okay, and then the headquarters said okay. Then in 1980 we started out the Honolulu "shibu." But it's going to be 15 years pretty soon. Next year I think we have to get another entry. Yesterday I went to look at this instructor from Japan come two times a year, and yesterday he came. We started--I arranged that one, that is how in there now.

YF: Very beautiful. Doesn't "Ikenobo" style of "ikebana" sort of fit the altar decoration?

SM: Yes. "Ikenobo" is the original "ikebana" in Japan. So it started from "butsudan ohana."

YF: I see, I see.

SM: Because "butsudan" before they had "migusoku" so. . .

YF: "Ohana," candle and incense.

SM: Yeah. So that "ohana" the "kaikyoshi" wanted to make all kind but they say "Ikenobo" is "Yasuda" so he was the reverend for "Rokkudo."

YF: I see, I see.

SM: And right in front of that "Rokkudo" there was a pond, see, and Shotoku Taishi passed by and he see this reverend sitting everytime and then watching the Kyoto so he named him "Ikenobo," "Ike no Bonsan." That's how "Ikenobo" came out, then this Reverend he got the scenery of Kyoto, and he wrote pictures and all down and then he arranged this "orikka." From "orikka" then it branched off "oshoka" and "moribana," "nageire," all that. "Nageire" started by Toyotomi Hideyoshi's time and then at the warfront this "ocha no sensei" Sen. . .

YF: "Sen no Rikyu."

SM: Yeah, "Sen no Rikyu." He served him "ocha" but everytime the custom is when they serve "ocha" they have to get flower arranged you see, but he said outside in the field so he just got one iris and he then got that small knife and just poke the knife there and then he threw that into a bucket, add some water. Because the knife is there down so when he "throw 'em in there" the flower stood up, heavy the knife so that's how that "nageire" started. And then this "oshoka" is part of "orika," though it's another part, branch, and all that is for "oshoka." That is the "Ikenobo," from there then people, sensei and then they get this other schools you see. But. . .

YF: Are you still teaching?

SM: I don't have much, only myself and you know country like this they don't have time. They rather go "karaoke," "odori," all that kind of entertainment but cultural stuff so I want to get my daughter, I want to get her train her in for "ohana" for "otera." I don't know when we can get "kaikyoshi" here. We do all that for. . . but I'm happy.

YF: You've had a full life though, you did all kinds of things.

SM: All kind, really.

YF: Yeah, one question I have is the role religion played in the life of the early immigrants, people who came to Hawaii early. How important it was. I notice in your house, for instance, you have the "obutsudan" and even if you don't talk about your religious life, you're living it, you might say. You just take it for granted but when you stop to think about it, how important was Buddhism in your life?

SM: In my life Buddhism is one religion that I love, and my mother used to be really lover of this Buddhism, Shinshu, you see, and she comes from Mukaigawa in Japan, Hiroshima, Mukaigawa. Well, when my children started to understand then she used to tell to my children, come, come, and everytime when she goes to the "butsudan" and not this kind "butsudan" she had before, but this one I had 'em, not I but my father had 'em when he was 61 years old, so this is about 50 years old now, and my mother cannot read and write but she memorized all the "ryogemon" and "moro moro no zogyo," she started to recite that and the children follow her. That's how my children, that's why now my children all Buddhists, you see. They don't go, they don't know other religion, too. Only one year my doctor, and that doctor is a Christian see, but she doesn't go church with him. All the children that I have when they come here, my wife died last year see, they go "omairi," everyone of them, and I see that but now more different than before. Before I had my Buddhism for my guided power. I could be guided you see, but that's why I go to "otera" every service that they had, and I like Buddhism, so true that for our living and as reverend always says and Shinran Shonin says, "Jiriki no kokoro wo furisutete. . .", and I think that is

really right. No sense you pray to God and ask him for help and all that, well you cannot get it.

YF: It's a different attitude, yeah? Okay, Muroda-san, we're running out of tape so we'll have to conclude here, but you wish to add anything?

SM: Not exactly. Was all right?

YF: Yeah. What about the future, days ahead, anything you would like to have your children and grandchildren think about or do?

SM: Well, I don't know my grandchildren, but funny you know. You see on that "butsudan" there, the little folded "tsuru" and all that kind of paper? My great granddaughter she does that and then she had 'em in the car so I told her, what you gonna do with this? Ah, this is for my great grandma.

YF: Oh, "osonae."

SM: And then put it on the "butsudan," and she pray and then. . .

YF: Very nice.

SM: That's why Buddhism is not that you're going to teach them. It's what they going get out of you, what you're doing.

YF: Learn from what you are.

SM: Yeah, and that is the easiest way and that is the most solid way of understanding Buddhism.

YF: Muroda-san, thank you so much for all this time. This will be transcribed and I'll get a copy to you. Thank you very much.

SM: Well, I wonder if I'll be asking for any help.

YF: No, wonderful. This makes good record.