

JAPANESE CULTURAL CENTER OF HAWAII

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Reverend Kenjyo Ohara (KO)

November 18, 1993

BY: Reverend Yoshiaki Fujitani (YF)

Note: Comments in brackets [] were added by the transcriber for clarification.

YF: The interviewer is Yoshiaki Fujitani; the date is November 18, 1993. We are at the home of Reverend Kenjyo Ohara and Mrs. Ohara. We are going to ask great teacher about his recollections of his life, of his work. He was the last minister in this Hongwanji to have arrived in Hawaii before World War II, and he has many very interesting recollections of the past, including his stay in the detention camp during World War II. So, let me introduce Reverend Ohara.

Mr. Ohara, please tell us, starting with your personal information such as your home in Japan, and everything else.

KO: I was born in Tadokoro-mura, Ochi-gun, Shimane-ken, which was an isolated village in the middle of Chugoku Mountains, in November 26, 1916 (Taisho 5th year). I was the fourth son. My father's name was Santa Ohara, and my mother's first name was Nami. They were engaged in farming, having an ordinary life. My mother's older sister was married into a family of Buddhist temple, and my immediate older brother and I joined the temple at our young age to become priests. While we lived in the temple, we attended middle school at our countryside. We graduated the school, and we did not have much money. We came to attend Chuo Bukkyo Gakuin, which offered intensive training for becoming priests. We studied Buddhism there, and entered the Buddhist priesthood. Name of my immediate older brother was Kenryo... Kenryo Ohara. After he completed his training at the Bukkyo Gakuin, he learned missionary work at Fukyo Kenkyujo, and, afterwards, moved to Taiwan to do missionary work. It was the time of Japan-China War, and he was drafted into the army, fighting in the South Seas. He caught malaria there. At that time, malaria was a serious illness. He had been kept under medical treatment after he came back to Japan, but he died. I was also in Taiwan for about one year, which was immediately before I came to Hawaii. At that time, our Bishop [in Hawaii] was Gikyo Kuchiba. He also came from a Buddhist temple near Shimane-ken, and he knew about my older brother and me. Bishop Kuchiba had asked my older brother to be a missionary in Hawaii. After my older brother died, he requested me to become a missionary in Hawaii. This was how I became a missionary in Hawaii at the recommendation of Bishop Kuchiba.

YF: Excuse me, before you talk about your missionary era, could you give us some reminiscences of your childhood in Japan, such as your education at elementary school, games you played, etc.?

KO: Elementary school? Mine was a country elementary school, just ordinary school. Jinjo [elementary school] was up to 6th grade, followed by middle school. Our middle school was equivalent to high school here [in Hawaii].

Although it is now called high school, it was called middle school those days, with five-year term. It is like combining intermediate school and high school here for total term of five years. Education in Japan those days was intense, even in elementary school. Military training was a part of curriculum, even at middle school. Japan-China War had just started, just before the world war. Although there was no military training in elementary school, we were hammered loyalty to the nation and filial piety to our parents into our head. Loyalty and filial piety was persistent theme in the elementary school in Japan those days. I was a young Buddhist monk, learning sutra at the temple. Our parents wanted my immediate older brother and me to be apprenticed at the temple. Thus, we were very familiar with life in a Buddhist temple at our early age of elementary school.

YF: Was your father engaged in farming?

KO: Yes, he was.

YF: Did you help him in the field?

KO: Yes, we helped him at our farm and rice field. We were kids, mostly playing for fun. Since my mother's elder sister lived at the temple, we sometimes went there to play the mischief.

YF: Then, you went to school, and you were asked to become a missionary in Hawaii.

KO: That's right. My older brother was expected to come to Hawaii. After he died, Bishop Kuchiba told me to come. Those days, his request was voice of authority, and was very difficult to say No. I just kept saying Yes, Yes. Then, I started to prepare to come here. I was in Kyoto at that time, staying at Mr. Iida. He used to be a missionary in Kona. I started to follow the necessary procedures to come to Hawaii. There was American General Consulate in Kobe, and I applied for a visa there. It took me many visits to secure my visa. It was their last for they stopped issuing visa in Kobe after mine. Only American President could issue visa thereafter... which meant nobody could obtain visa. Thus, I was the last one. A few missionaries applied for passport and visa after me could not obtain visa, and were force to give up. I was the last one.

YF: What was the reason for that? The Consulate was probably aware of the deteriorating relationship between Japan and America.

KO: Yes, they knew.

YF: I thought so.

KO: Since he was in Japan, the Consul knew what was going on. He knew war was imminent. America knew, if not when.

YF: Did not know when.

KO: If they knew Pearl Harbor attack by Japanese Navy in advance, they would have prepared for it. Luckily or unluckily, I was not aware of the imminent danger at that time. Although I felt uneasy as the last person to receive visa, I could not cancel my trip. People around me, including my family, cried and begged me not to go. They said I would die if I went to America, and pleaded not to go. I told them I would not change my mind, and boarded ship Yawata-maru sometime in April.

YF: How old were you then?

KO: I was 24 years old... 24. Before that, I was in Taiwan - Takao in Taiwan - for a year. I returned to Kyoto, Japan as soon as I was told to come to Hawaii. Before he became bishop, Bishop Kuchiba was engaged in a missionary work in Taiwan. He was a director at missionary headquarters in Taiwan, and I went to Taiwan following his guidance; therefore, I had known him for a long time. As soon as I returned to Japan [from Taiwan], I started my preparations to come here [to Hawaii]. I was on board Yawata-maru around the middle of April. At that time, every Americans in Japan were pulling out, and there were many Caucasians on board Yawata-maru. There were some Japanese on board, such as workers at the Consulate, Koyu Uchida who later became bishop in charge of missionary work in America. I was a missionary. There were not many Japanese passengers. Because it was a Japanese ship, we were treated well, but the majority passengers were Caucasians fleeing Japan. It took eight days to arrive at Honolulu. There was no war mood [in Hawaii] at that time, and I felt it was a very nice place. Our ship arrived at Alpha Tower, and I stayed at Kobayashi Hotel for a few days. Afterwards, I reported myself at Betsuin to become its missionary. I remember I was very sleepy at my office under hot weather in Hawaii, and I took nap oftentimes.

YF: Was it Hawaii lag?

KO: Hawaii-lag [like jetlag or time lag]? I was truly sleepy when I arrived at Hawaii at that time. I wonder when my wife came to Hawaii.

Mrs. Ohara: I came in June.

KO: Huh, September?

Mrs. Ohara: June.

KO: Oh, did you come in June? Oh, it was almost the last ship.

YF: Did you know your wife at that time?

KO: She attended Josen [Women's College] in Kyoto.

Mrs. Ohara: No, we did not know each other.

KO: Women's University.

YF: Oh, I see.

KO: Now, it is called Kyoto Women's University... used to be called Josen, Women's College.

YF: That's right.

KO: We did not know each other at our head temple [in Japan]. We met here in Hawaii. I came in April, and was a resident at Betsuin... Hawaii Betsuin at that time. Most of the missionaries those days passed away by now.

YF: What was your main work?

KO: At Hawaii Betsuin?

YF: Yes.

KO: Nothing for I just came to Hawaii. At that time, we practiced Gakki at Betsuin as we did in Japan. Every month, we at Betsuin visited our member [parishioner] households on their obit.

YF: To their house?

KO: To their house. One missionary visited two to three households per day...or as many houses as possible. At that time, we did not have cars, and all of us walked in the neighborhood. Some members came to pick us up. This was Gakki, not much different from what we did in Japan. Our members were *issei*, and many of them were devoted Buddhists. They prayed every month at the obit of their parents, or their deceased wife or husband. At that time, it was a common practice to make a devotional pray at obit every month.

YF: Which sutra did they use?

KO: At that time or just before you came today?

YF: At that time.

KO: It was Genmon [?].

YF: I see.

KO: Kogengigi, Genmon. Afterwards, we gave a little talk.

YF: I suppose those missionaries had established close relationships with their members by seeing them all the time.

KO: We can tell there were many devoted members in old times.

YF: That's right. There are no such close contacts with members at present Betsuin.

KO: It is no longer Betsuin - it is just an ordinary temple. Soon after I arrived in Hawaii, Bishop Kuchiba told me that I had to learn English. Earlier, he told me that, as a missionary in Hawaii, I must make Hawaii my final home, and I should not quit and go back to Japan. I could only come if I sworn I would stay [in Hawaii]. At that time, I was not the only one in that situation... "Don't come if you expected to go back to Japan". He also urged me to learn English. I attended Hawaiian Mission... I do not know if it is still there. It was near Jodo Mission... Hawaii Jodo Mission, which was in front of Hawaiian Mission. Many of the students were from Japan, such as *kibei* Nisei who were sent to Japan at their young age to be educated [in Japan].

YF: That's right.

KO: Those from Japan attended Hawaiian Mission to learn English.

YF: Who ran the school?

KO: I am not certain.

YF: Hawaiian Mission...

KO: I do not know.

YF: It was an institute by a Christian group, wasn't it?

KO: Was it Christian? Maybe, Hawaiian Mission was a Christian institute. I went there for three hours in the morning. However, students, those *kibei* Nisei, just sung songs or played around without studying... it was not a school for studying. I wished I had seriously studied English earlier. After spending time in a playing fashion, I returned to the temple around noon to have my lunch. Then, I worked at the temple office - my daily routine for a long time. At the end of August, Sawai, who was a missionary at Higashi Hongwanji and principal of Japanese Language School in Mountain View, was going back to Japan. Thereby, Bishop Kuchiba ordered me to become the principal of Japanese

Language School in Mountain View and deputy missionary at Oloo Hongwanji. At that time, there were about 200 students at the Japanese Language School in Mountain view. There was Mountain View public school in cornfield with a gym--a large one--and the Japan school nearby. The Japan school had 200 students and 4 teachers. Although I was young, I was the principal of the Japan school. The schoolhouse was an old barrack. There was a small room attached behind the barrack, a wooden shack, and I stayed there as the principal of the Japan school. We had three other teachers...one male and two females. The male teacher's mother ran Japanese-style restaurant in Hilo. There was a large pond called Dab [?] with salt water, and the restaurant was near the beach side of the pond. At that time, Japanese restaurant was a good entertainment place, which provided shamisen [or samisen] players and singers like Geisha girls. His mother, although she was the owner, also played Samisen like Geisha, and he commuted to the school from her place. That young teacher, his name was Izumoto, took me to the restaurant to eat dinner by saying, "Let's eat at my house for it would be difficult for you to cook by yourself." This was just one episode at that time. As for the students, they oftentimes played hooky while playing at the gym after their classes at the public school were over, because the gym was located in between the public school and the Japan school. Thereby, I kept standing in front of the gym, preventing those students from entering the gym. Instead of school principal, I was a gate guard. Anyhow, it was the responsibility of the principal. I kept standing guard at the gym, having kept the students away from the place. Then, the students did not come to the Japan school at all for they could not play at the gym. Well, I kept standing guard at the gym. At that time, they hardly studied at the Japanese Language School.

YF: Could they go to the gym after the Japanese Language School?

KO: After the Japanese Language School... Oh, about gym?

YF: Yes.

KO: They could go to the gym after the school. However, they had to come to the Japanese Language School at two o'clock, immediately after the public school. The gym was right in front of them on their way to the Japan school, tempting them to play at the gym, forgetting about the Japan school. Their parents did not know about that... they thought their kids were at the Japan school, while kids were playing at the gym. Thereby, I had to stand in front of the gym, preventing the kids from entering the gym.

YF: Did the kids play at the gym after the Japan school?

KO: Yeah, they could play after the school. However, their parents usually came to pick the kids up after the school. The problem was that the gym was right in front of the school.

YF: At that time, were you a full-time school principal?

KO: No, no. I had to be present at Oloo Hongwanji in the morning. I had to be in Mountain View before the school started at two o'clock. After the school, I went back to the temple

in Olaa, passing that gym. At that time, we were traveling preachers visiting various camps. Did you know the existence of those camps?

YF: Sure.

KO: There were about twelve camps in Papaikou, scattered in cane fields. Our missionary work included visiting those twelve camps for twelve nights for camp preaching. It was a tough job those days... twelve camps. After the school, I went back to the Olaa temple to do my homework.

YF: Did you have a car at that time?

KO: Yes, soon after I moved to Olaa, I acquired my driver license. It was easy to acquire the license those days.

YF: That's right.

KO: I did not know anything [about car]. There was Tanaka, a road supervisor with a big build, foreman of Hawaii County in charge of road construction. He was very commanding. He was genjisho [?] at Olaa Hongwanji. His name was Tsugio Tanaka. I had to demonstrate my ability in driving to obtain the license. I drove from the temple to the licensing office with Mr. Tanaka in the rear seat and a policeman sitting next to me who said Okay after my drive. I owed Mr. Tanaka for passing the exam. Afterwards, I bought a car, a very old 1941 Chevrolet. I drove that car from Mountain View. At that time, our chief missionary was Toda. Was it December 8, when WWII started... the Second World War?

YF: Uh, seventh.

KO: Seventh? It was Sunday.

YF: That's right.

KO: When did it start... at night? Did it start a night?

YF: No, in the morning.

KO: In the morning? Yeah, in the morning. It was Sunday. There was a branch temple of Olaa [Betsuin] in Pahoa, and I was attending Hoonko [Repaying Kindness Meeting] held by the Women's Association. When I came back, the war had started.

YF: Attack at Pearl Harbor happened around 7 o'clock in the morning.

KO: It was early in the morning. I heard it sometime later, around 12 o'clock when I came back. I did not know until then.

YF: What kind of recollections of that day do you have?

KO: When I came back, I learned about the war, and I felt terrible. On the next day, when I was talking with Mr. Toda at the parlor, FBI came to arrest Mr. Toda... Chief Missionary Toda, and they asked me who I was. FBI guy came with soldiers carrying bayonet.

YF: Uuh, Uuh, bayonet.

KO: He [FBI] persistently asked me, and I told him I was a missionary there. Afterwards, on the outside, he wrote something on his notebook.

YF: They had no record on you at that time.

KO: I came [to Hawaii] in April. Yet, they did not have record on me.

YF: They did not have record on Mr. Aoki either, did they?

KO: Huh?

YF: Mr. Aoki also...

KO: They did not have record on him either. He came from Canada.

YF: That's right.

KO: Mr. Toda was already on the black list. That was why they [FBI] came to arrest him on the next day [of Pearl Harbor attack]. Then, they entered my name on their black list. I was wondering why they were taking time to come [for my arrest], but they came in January. I had prepared for things to carry with me such as suitcase, waiting for them to come. I was single, and felt rather exciting. I felt it could be safer for me under arrest than staying out open. At that time, some Filipinos had threatened us with their knives behind Oloo Hongwanji... frightening experience. I thought I would be rather under arrest than straying at the temple. Well, it took them a long time to come. I guess they had to follow the necessary procedures.

They finally came to arrest me in January. It was around 9 o'clock at night.

I was taken in a car with two soldiers in the front and me in the rear. They drove towards Hilo, although Army was stationed at Volcano... barracks called Volcano Camp. However, we went towards Hilo, and I was wondering where to. We headed towards crematory in Hilo, and I worried they might throw me into the fire for my quick disposal. It eventually turned out that they went there to arrest Matsuo Marutani. He had a house in Hala [?] at the foot of the crematory. Mr. Marutani was the director of Hilo Betsuin... Hilo Hongwanji.

YF: Arthur's?

KO: He was Arthur's father. They went there to arrest him. Now, both Marutani and I were taken into the car. They took us to Volcano. Upon arriving at Volcano, we saw many detainees, something like 60 of them. We were confined in a large barrack, and they allowed us to go outside only for about hours for a day. Nobody could go out of the barrack, but I was brought to the FBI office in Hilo every day, at upstairs of the post office. It was a large office on the second floor of the post office. There, they alleged I was a spy, and kept interrogating me there. I had to go there about *nikaijika* [?], everyday under the guard of ((?)) with bayonet. Everyday, they asked the same question, "You must be a spy", and I had kept saying, "No, No".

YF: I wonder what would have happened if you said "Yes"?

KO: If I said "Yes"... (Laughter). In Japan, Christian clergymen from America did not speak Japanese, and they were all spies. Those Christian clergymen were engaged in spying. In the same logic, American FBI must have thought a Buddhism missionary like me was a spy for I came in April, just before the war. Therefore, they believed that I was a spy, and did not believe me when I said "No".

YF: I knew a Methodist clergyman. His name was Hiro Himeno, maybe he was *kibe*. Anyhow, he used to be a soldier in the Japanese Navy, and came back to Hawaii afterwards.

KO: I do not think he was a spy.

YF: I don't know, but... When the war broke out, he also was incarcerated. He was sent to Santa Fe.

KO: Although I told them that Japanese missionaries were not spies... we had nothing to do with spying, but they did not believe me. Accordingly, they took me for questioning day after day. There was an interpreter speaking English. He had a *haole* name although he was Japanese. He urged me to say Yes so that I did not have to come every day. Well, I was not a spy...end of story.

YF: Sure.

KO: I kept saying No. Finally, they must have believed me, and stopped taking me to their office.

YF: Well, I assume they suspected because you came just before the war.

KO: And I was the last missionary [from Japan]. No wonder they suspected me of being a spy. If Japan wanted to send a spy, she would have selected better-qualified person. I could not understand English, and was no use as a spy. Anyway, I was detained at Kilauea Military Camp for about three months, followed by at Sand Island in Honolulu for another three months or so.

YF: What was the condition at Sand Island?

KO: It was rather ordinary, like prisoners. It was an island, and could not escape. There were some *nisei* leaders. Sand Island was a temporary detention facility, not internment camp at that time. There were leaders of Hongwanji such as Mr. Muroda, and leaders of Japan school. They arrested all those leaders, including *nisei* even if they were born in Hawaii.

YF: They were eventually moved to Honouliuli...

KO: Yeah, to Honouliuli... Yeah, to Honouliuli. They did not stay at Sand Island.

YF: They were first at Sand Island, and then...

KO: Moved to Honouliuli.

YF: That's right.

KO: It was special shuensho [?]. Were you familiar with Honouliuli at that time?

YF: No, I was not.

KO: Were you in school?

YF: I was a student.

KO: I remember Lieutenant Sakamaki [Kazuo Sakamaki. He was an ensign of the Japanese Navy and a member of Pearl Harbor attack. He was captured.] He was in Sand Island, just before we were shipped to the mainland. Did you know?

YF: Sure.

KO: His submarine was stranded in Pearl Harbor like asosen [?], and was captured unconscious. He was also detained on Sand Island. He was a Navy pilot and the first prisoner of war. When we were sent to the mainland, he also was on board of the transport ship. His name was Sakamaki, and he was with us on the same transport ship of the American Navy. Two submarines followed our ship as rear guard. Then, Lt. Sakamaki tried to commit suicide. Many internees were on board the ship. At that time, we had to climb up to the deck to go to the dining room for having lunch and dinner, the only time we could watch sun every day. ... it was ((?)) for all other times. At that time, Lt. Sakamaki jumped from the deck hoping to die. However, he had a float on his body... what was the name of that float.

YF: Yeah, it is called life vest...

KO: Since he had his life vest on, he did not sink, and somebody picked him up by grabbing him at behind. After the incident, they did not allow us to go up [on the deck] even for

lunch.

YF: I see.

KO: Even women were confined at the very bottom of the ship. Lt. Sakamaki was kept alone behind iron bars. He was not allowed to go out at all, not upstairs, not to lavatory. Thereby, we had to take care of Lt. Sakamaki, carrying and changing buckets for him. They were very strict on internees on board. Finally, we arrived at San Francisco. What was that place called, Angel...?

YF: Angel Island...

KO: Angel Island. There was Sennin Goya [shack for thousand inmates] on the island, and all the immigrants from Japan were temporarily housed there. Angel Island in San Francisco used to be a jail. We stayed there for about a month. It was an awful place with tons of bedbugs in the bed. They bitten two spots at the same time, and we could tell they were bedbugs. It was awful... nothing else could match it. Their bites would fester with pus... terrible. I had them the first time in my life, and my body turned red [with their bites]. Luckily, I was not that susceptible to their bites. After we stayed there for one month, we were taken to Roseburg ((?)) by train. At Roseburg...

YF: It was ((?)) Lordsburg...

KO: Lordsburg?

YF: In New Mexico.

KO: Lordsburg was in Texas, was it?

YF: Oh, Texas?

KO: Not in Texas... Was it in Texas?

YF: Lordsburg ...

KO: Oh, Arizona, Arizona... next to California, next to California...

YF: Arizona...

KO: Was it in Arizona?

YF: Yeah, yeah.

KO: Lordsburg was in the middle of a desert.

YF: Was it in New Mexico?

KO: On the border of New Mexico.

YF: Oh, okay.

KO: Was it in California?

YF: No, no.

KO: Next to California, on the border toward New Mexico.

YF: That's right.

KO: Maybe in Texas? They took us from San Francisco to Lordsburg by train. We were transported as prisoners behind iron koojikan [grid?]. We could not look out. We were not allowed to lift the grid to peek. Then...

YF: After all, you were prisoners.

KO: Sure, we were prisoners... prisoners of war. Our jumpers or shirts were clearly marked POW on the back.

YF: POW?

KO: The letter was printed on the back of our jumpers. Army supplied us all what we worn including shoes. We had those clothes on for ((?)). We got off the train for Lordsburg. It was in the middle of a desert... no train station... nothing. It was at night, and we could not see anything. We wondered where we were heading. We marched in procession. There were about 100 of us. We walked about one hour from rail to camp under the guard by soldiers.

YF: With you baggage?

KO: We carried our baggage on our back... Army bag.

YF: Yeah, duffel bag...

KO: On our way to the camp, one internee was killed for he could not walk one hour long in the desert. Army soldier was angry, and shot him because that internee could not keep up. Afterwards, spokesman of our internees protested, and they had some court hearings to no avail. That internee was placed into a freezer... end of the story. Another internee was killed when he tried to cross over the fence [at Lordsburg]. Lordsburg was a hot place and we had tornado, causing sandstorm. Was it called tornado?

YF: Yes, tornado.

KO: It was awful. Our camp was fixed by rope at the edge. It was too hot to sleep, and we sprayed our shower water. We slept under the bed for it was too hot to sleep on the bed... almost burning. We were there for about three months... maybe more. Then, we moved to Santa Fe. There were bell snakes at Lordsburg, which rattled.

YF: Yeah, yeah, rattlesnake...

KO: We caught them, and roasted them to eat. I had not tried.

YF: Sounds tasty.

KO: Then, we went to Lordsburg ... Lordsburg. It was my first time there. There was CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] center. Oh, no, it was not Lordsburg. It was Santa Fe.

YF: Oh, Santa Fe.

KO: We were at the CCC camp. At that time, there were about six or seven barracks... maybe ten. There was a huge laundry with machines, for it was the CCC camp. All the washing machines were ((?)) and old. We were an early group there, and the number gradually increased to 3,000 internees. You went there to see your father, didn't you?

YF: That's right.

KO: Not to Lordsburg. It was at Santa Fe.

YF: Santa Fe. At that time, I met Pistol Uyetake...

KO: I see. Was he a soldier?

YF: No, no. I think he was working at the office, maybe as an interpreter. He was also *nisei*. He invited me at his house...

KO: Then he was employed there, was he?

YF: No, ((?)).

KO: Came from Mainland?

YF: No, no, he was from Hawaii. The reason why he was called Pistol is that he injured and lost his three fingers. His hand looked like pistol with his crooked little finger. Thus his nickname.

KO: Is his nickname Pistol?

YF: Yes, Pistol.

KO: Was he at the office?

YF: Yeah, at the office.

KO: Yeah, at one time, there were about 3,000 internees. Most of the missionaries were there [at Santa Fe]. They were all singles.

YF: No family?

KO: Only single men. Families were at Relocation Center.

YF: Crystal Center?

KO: Relocation Center.

YF: That's right.

KO: At Crystal. Santa Fe was only for us [single men]. We were there three and a half years. Those who were there...

YF: What did you do every day?

KO: Oh, I worked at the laundry every day. I was a bookkeeper of all the washings of 3,000 internees. There were huge washing machines at the laundry, and I worked as a bookkeeper. They gave us \$3 per month, even if we did not do anything. I think I earned about \$10 per month. It was a nice thing.

YF: Well, it was an offering.

KO: An offering. There had been various incidents. I played baseball, and I was a pitcher.

YF: Were you good at playing golf?

KO: I am lefty.

YF: Oh, yeah.

KO: I was better at coaching.

YF: That's right. That's why...

KO: Various incidents at Santa Fe. Bishop Kuchiba and Bishop Shigefuji gave us lectures on Shoshinge [the most fundamental sutra in Jodo Shinshu], and I chanted Shoshinge. While I was working as a bookkeeper, I organized Shoshinge Club, and Bishop Kuchiba and Bishop Shigefuji took turns to give their lecture once a week. Some internees were very much devoted. I recall one young man from Peru. He was around 20 years old with

shaven head. He was ardent, listening Shoshinge everyday. There were many incidents at Santa Fe. Since I was single, I rather had a good time there. However, it was unfortunate for internees who had family, having been separated from his family. They were fathers of their fifties, and they fell ill...

YF: Oh, they fell ill and then...?

KO: Maybe they fell ill after they returned home. Yeah, like having a stroke...

YF: Then, after they were paroled?

KO: Yeah, they were out in 1945.

YF: After they came back to Hawaii?

KO: After they came back. It is hard to know our fate. If I did not come to Hawaii, I would have been dead or would be a teacher in Japan.

YF: Probably.

KO: Most of our age became teachers if they had survived in the Japanese Army. I was 27 years old at that time. I had pushed my way to come here as the last missionary [from Japan]. Although I was ((?)), I survived, experiencing many incidents.

YF: At Santa Fe, there was Toda who was the Chief Missionary at Olaa Hongwanji. He applied for the Exchange Ship returning to Japan. I also applied for it. Luckily, he was given a passage on the ship. He was exhilarated, telling us he could go home, and he left for Japan. At that time, he was swaggering, telling us he would return to Japan, making us mortifying. However, his ship, instead of sailing to Japan, went to South Sea.

YF: Maybe Singapore.

KO: Singapore? Yeah, Singapore. The ship went to Singapore, and he was promptly drafted into the Japanese Army there, and was killed in action. If he were not on board the Exchange Ship, he would have been alive. When he left [Santa Fe], he was exhilarating, and we envied him. We never know our fate.

YF: Yeah, I recall Richard Sakakida who was an American spy. I heard he was stationed in Philippines, sending information on the Japanese back to America. According to Mr. Sakakida, he felt sorry for being a spy when he happened to meet with his teacher of his middle school in Hawaii. He really felt that way. His teacher was teaching in Philippines at that time.

KO: I see.

YF: Sakakida was captured [by Japanese].

KO: I was an internee for three and a half years. I had put up with various incidents in the meantime. As a human being, I have formed my outlook of life through those experiences. I have thought about many things such as my internee experiences. The first thing happened when I came back after my internee life... At that time, your father was Bishop, was he?

YF: Yes, it was in 1947.

KO: 1947? I came back in [19]46. I was stationed at Hilo Hongwanji when I came back in [19]46.

YF: Was Mr. Kashiwa there?

KO: Mr. Kashiwa? He was there a short time, wasn't he?

YF: Yeah, about two years.

KO: Then, Mr. Kashiwa was there right after the war.

YF: That's right.

KO: At that time, I became a resident at Hilo Betsuin.

YF: My father was there from [19]48 to [19]52.

KO: At that time, we could not use Hilo Betsuin for it was confiscated by the Army. We could not use the main building. There was Kilauea Street at the front of the building. One street below, there was a barrack of Tei [?]. I do not know what it was, maybe a factory. We repaired and cleaned the barrack to be our missionary institute. Mr. Aoki was a resident there during the war. He was not arrested [for the mainland]. He was incarcerated in Honouliuli. He came back to Hilo Betsuin, and that barrack was our missionary institute... his missionary institute. I was also a missionary at Hilo Betsuin. Mr. Aoki, Doro Kanda, and I served there on a rotation basis. About that time when I came to the temple, we had a big tidal wave in April.

YF: Oh, [19]46?

KO: Yeah, tidal wave. I rented one room at an average house near Betsuin. I commuted to the temple. When the tidal wave hit, water came to Halima (?) just below the temple. We saw many fishes in the water. It was the first time I saw tsunami. One time, the tsunami reached over large houses near the beach. At that time, there was a young director called Kono at Hilo Betsuin...

YF: Hiraki [?]....

KO: Hiraki? His father was the head of our missionary institute. He died by drowning in the tsunami. The first time I saw tsunami... it was awful.

YF: At the time of that tsunami, I was on board the ship coming back from Japan. Thereby, I felt nothing.

KO: I know. Tsunami is nothing if you were out at sea... only at the beach. Tsunami pulled everything such as gasoline [cars?] into the ocean. When the tsunami was over, we learned about 300 persons died in Hilo, and houses were greatly [damaged]... After the tsunami, I was transferred to Papaikou in 1948. Mr. Shodo Umehara moved to Lihue or some such place. At that time, your father was Bishop.

YF: Yes, in [19]48.

KO: I moved to Papaikou in 1948.

YF: Then, when were you married?

KO: Oh, our marriage was in 1946. Mr. Aoki was a matchmaker.

YF: [To Mrs. Ohara] Where were you at that time?

Mrs. Ohara: I was at Hilo Hongwanji. I was a helper at the nursery school. (inaudible)

KO: [To Mrs. Ohara] Weren't you at Hakalau just before we married?

Mrs. Ohara: Hilo Hongwanji...

YF: Oh, I see.

KO: Then, it was in 1947... Oh, in September [19]46. Our first daughter was born in [19]47... Jasmine... at that place in Aiea. We moved back to Papaikou Hongwanji in [19]48. Papaikou Hongwanji was burned down during the war, but there was a large temple nearby, missionary institute of Shingon Buddhism. It was ((?)), and we moved there. We acquired the temple and changed it to Hongwanji, and we stayed there. At that time, we owned a car called Nash.

YF: Oh, Nash, big one.

KO: It was ((?)) car. We had no choice. We had to place our number in advance to receive a car whichever came next. Ours was Nash. It would have been expensive if we had it now.

YF: It was a fancy car.

KO: Not many of us stayed at one temple for thirty years.

YF: Thereby, you would know your members very well, and, at the same time, they would know you very well.

KO: Almost all of the Papaikou members... what kind of families, their personalities, how devoted they were... I knew almost all of them for I was there for 30 years. Papaikou had relatively high number of devoted followers... about 150 of them. Although it was a small number, most of them came to the temple. Many temples had about 100 devoted followers out of 300 members. However, most of Papaikou members were ardent followers. Former missionary was very ((?)) ardent, and it was rather easy for me to have many devoted members. Partly because of our kids, we ended up staying there for 30 years. Relatively speaking, people in Hawaii Island were more ardent followers [compared with other islands].

YF: I remember some of the members, such as Okimoto family, Morigaki, and Nakano.

KO: Morigaki's father was a devoted follower. I had Jidan [one to one mutual communication] with him. You know about Jidan, do you?

YF: Yeah, yeah.

KO: It was a face-to-face communication, and a member did Kohoku [open his mind] during the conversation. That was Jidan.

YF: Yes.

KO: One did ((?)).

YF: One on one.

KO: In old times, before the war, we had lots of Jidan in Kona... at its coffee fields. Members had their houses in the coffee fields. When they were not busy harvesting coffee... not season, members were engaged in Jidan all day and all night without sleeping. It was mostly grumbling session for them. Jidan in Kona was a well-known practice. It started around the time of Mr. Iida, and it had continued as their tradition.

YF: They were Myokonin [devoted followers of Jodo Buddhism].

KO: Myokonin. Earlier...

YF: Such as Mr. Sasaki.

KO: Although imitation is not a right word, they were very eager [to do Jidan like in old times]. Thereby, when Mr. Aoki was in service, I took him there with me driving. Kona was eager to have Mr. Aoki, for he was very good in preaching, some in Japanese style. Therefore, he was very popular for his style of good preaching. Members in Kona kept asking Mr. Aoki to come for Jidan. Thereby, I drove there with Mr. Aoki. Once we were

there, they did not sleep for three or four days... from morning until night, through all night without sleeping. I was very surprised to find such devoted followers.

YF: Like Matsuda family now.

KO: Yes, Matsuda is a very devoted follower. There were many ardent followers. They had been trained in Jidan to my surprise. At Papaikou, Morigagi's father was much devoted... also Nakatsu who was the father of Ron there. Yuichi Takemoto was also ardent. There were many devoted followers there. They listened to our sermon very attentively... many of them. I was there for 30 years, and managed to rebuild our temple that was burned earlier. Though you might ((?)).

YF: So you visited all the camps, giving your sermon.

KO: Yes, I went to the camps... twelve of them. Kaimauli was at the highest elevation. I went through cornfields all the way to the mountain. Kaimauli was at the foot of the mountain. I also held Sunday school there, once a month. I went there, and gathered children for Sunday school before my sermon. After the school, I did my preaching. It was very clear day then. I had my 12-millimeter movies with me. When I was ready to go home, light rain started, and I could not move my car in the muddy cornfield. I could not go home... it was not possible to walk home in the cornfield. This was the experience I sometimes had. At that time, missionaries experienced full of troubles. Missionary work required lots of effort with small amount of pay. At that time, it was taken for granted that missionaries must serve because we were engaged in religious work.

YF: That's right.

KO: It was the same for Shinto. We had to be contented with our missionary work regardless of our income. Thereby, we occasionally had nothing to eat, such as when I borrowed money to build Papaikou Temple. I donated 400 dollars, which was a big money those days, and my family and I could hardly afford to eat. It was expected that missionaries must sacrifice themselves for doing missionary work... idea brought from Japan. We would be the last generation under this kind of concept. I think it was much worse before the war... before I came... at your father's days.

YF: Yes.

KO: I think it was terrible. During the time of *issei* and *nisei*, there was no entertainment for them because they had to toil in the cane fields all the time. Under those conditions, temple was an entertainment place, and people gathered there, established social relationships. Accordingly, missionaries were required to play a leading role [in the society]. However, as for their income, they were expected to sacrifice themselves largely because of their religious ((?)). It is hard to understand nowadays. Missionaries in those days went through very hardships.

YF: I remember that kind of situation. It also depended on members. For instance, some

ministers of early days questions why today's ministers are greedy. I know sumo [?], and the other day, one of them asked me why ministers loved to drink, knowing I rather liked to drink *sake*. I explained him that ministers tended to accommodate our members if they offered us *sake*. I think this kind of situation was quite common in old days.

KO: Sure, in the old days.

YF: It is hard to refuse their offerings.

KO: In old days, it was customary for members to offer *sake* upon receiving his minister.

YF: That's right.

KO: I think that was correct. The first generation of the Japanese went through plenty of hardships with small income, and they might expect their missionaries endure the same hardships they had. These days, members think differently. Even if they might think that way, it is of little importance to them, and all of them eventually go back to Japan.

YF: That's right.

KO: Well, true missionary work is to spread our teachings among those of indifferent generation. In old days, Kai-kyoshi were messengers of our teachings, "open" [Kai] to everybody. Whereas, nowadays, they are Tsui-kyoshi who "chase" [Tsui] easier candidates who are already initiated.

YF: Some people say they are now Hei-kyoshi whose activities are "closed" [Hei] to non-members.

KO: Heikyoshi. True Kaikyoshi in the old days were to spread our teachings to all types of people, while sacrificing themselves, even sacrificing their monetary rewards. They were the true Kaikyoshi [missionary].

YF: That's right.

KO: They should not be called Kaikyoshi these days, because they are Tsuikyoshi. It has changed with the times. Well, I came to Waipahu...

YF: When did you come to Waipahu?

KO: I was at Waipahu [should be Papaikou] from [19]48 to [19]78, exactly for 30 years. I came to Waipahu in [19]89 or [19]88.

YF: Then, you served as a missionary for 41 years.

KO: 47 years.

YF: It was a long period.

KO: Including my internee period... ((?)), four to five years.

YF: If you add those years, it would be 37 years.

KO: Thirty-seven... a long period. Mr. Kiku probably held the record of the longest stay at one place. Mr. Kiku resided in Naalehu for 40 years.

YF: That's right. It was a long period.

KO: At Waipahu, I was newly initiated to a city temple.

YF: Was it very different from Papaikou?

KO: Atmosphere was different, and ideas by members were different. Papaikou was in the countryside. Although it depended on the island, country temple and city temple were different on the island of Oahu. I think people in Hawaii Island had the strongest religious faith.

YF: That's right. I have felt so...

KO: As for shiarai [?], it reflected the locality. This Oahu island was rather a city [than country], and people's way of thinking was different, including the way they looked at the temple... it was more business like.

YF: That's right.

KO: Business like. Temple at the countryside was more like sociable and ((?)) place than business, whereas, in the city, they had many other entertainment places, and people did not see temple as a sociable place.

YF: Greatly different.

KO: It was business... operated as business like in Oahu. Hongwanji might gradually disappear unless it makes serious efforts for survival.

YF: I agree.

KO: Number of temples would become less. At present, we have six or seven missionaries in Hawaii Island compared to thirteen in old days. As they consolidate temples, they shall have less and less need for missionaries. At present, Naalehu-Pahara has ((?)), which is just about right.

YF: That's right. In old days, we used to say Gohogi [?] all the time, but we no longer hear the word, and ...

KO: These days, they can speak English...

YF: And members' way of thinking had changed largely. In old days, members were ardent to listen to Buddha's teachings, whereas, these days, they would rather do something visible than listening to Buddha's teachings.

KO: Some business...

YF: Yes, business...

KO: Bazaar and...

YF: Something significant. In other words, it is meaningless for them just listening to Buddha's teachings.

KO: They find not much meaning in listening to our sermon.

YF: Members want to do something else.

KO: Something concrete.

YF: Yes. I think it is important for us to meet their desire. Our ministers...

KO: Their way of thinking has changed. Member's mind has been changing these days. Therefore, we need to come up with some method that would meet with their desire. We need to build something visible, and, then, ((?)). We need to seize an opportunity for it. We need to do something. Sermon alone is not sufficient. We have less and less members visiting our temple. Our speaking English is not sufficient to overcome the current crisis. Do you agree?

YF: That's right.

KO: It would not be true that we will have more members visiting our temple if we use English. Even if we used English, we would have less and less members. This is the issue we have to cope with.

YF: Yes.

KO: Even if we are concerned with, nothing anybody could do if young people have come to be indifferent to religion...including Christianity and all other religions. Religion would have no ((?)) in young people's way of thinking.

YF: Well, then something, such as more conservative religious sect, may appear. It is not that there is no hope in the future. After being dissatisfied with the existing religious practices, people will seek something else, which could be Soka-gakkai, Risho-koseikai,

or Shin-nyoen. As for Christianity...

KO: New religion...

YF: Yes, something conservative, such as Jehovah's Witness.

KO: One thing about Hongwanji, we do not push for prayers or various religious services. We do not and cannot tell people what to do. We do not advocate salvation by faith. We value regeneration by our own efforts...self-reliance with ((?)). This distinction may guide us to look at those new religions. They [new religions] provide various practices. For example, they promise some type of rewards to those who stayed and studied hard at their headquarters for certain number of days. Some of their methods may have certain merits in the present circumstances. However, Hongwanji do not offer those religious training classes...visible practices. Our teachings are rather invisible. Therefore...

YF: I think the current ministers at Hongwanji need to make more efforts for those visible practices.

KO: Those are means. Our missionaries could hire some to achieve their goals.

YF: That's right. They are skillful means.

KO: Yeah, yeah. We need to employ such means to attain our goals. We do not have to give a flat refusal to studying or praying [for salvation by faith]. We can encourage our members to seek some means for their own benefit. Well, I am afraid this kind of comment may anger our ministers.

YF: We could suggest there are some methods...

KO: If we go too far, it will become salvation by faith, and young people would totally ignore us.

YF: That's right.

KO: Young people these days are not stupid. They can measure rewards in proportion to their efforts.

YF: That's right.

KO: It would be difficult to achieve anything unless we recognize that aspect [about young people]. This is a difficult task to Hongwanji.

YF: They [Hongwanji] could employ some reasonable methods.

KO: Sure, reasonable.

YF: For example, we could ask some experts such as psychologists to help us find reasonable approach.

KO: You also could help them for you have many years ahead...

YF: Well, I am also well along in years.

KO: Hongwanji would benefit if you could help in those areas even after your retirement.

YF: It would be nice if I could do that.

KO: They need English speakers.

YF: Well, it's about time to wrap it up. Do you have any other last words?

KO: My last words are what I just mentioned.

YF: Yeah, very good.

KO: This interview was for Japanese... Japanese association...

YF: Japanese Cultural Center.

KO: Oh, culture? Cultural?

YF: Yeah. Thank you very much for your precious recollections.

KO: They were just my frank observations. I wonder...

YF: Well, thank you very much.