

JAPANESE CULTURAL CENTER OF HAWAII

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Kazuto Tomoyasu (KT)

February 23, 2005

BY: Florence Sugimoto (FS)

FS: Please give your name in full and your birth date and your place of birth.

KT: My name is Kazuto Tomoyasu and I was born in 1931, May 16th and it was in Ewa.

FS: May I have your parents' names, the year and the place of birth.

KT: Well, I don't know when they were exactly born but my father's name was Matsutaro Tomoyasu and what I try to figure out is he was born in Yamaguchi ken in about 1879, 1880 thereabouts. And my mother was from Tonomi. In fact when I was a small child and they used to teach us that Tomoyasu Kazuto Sabagun Tonomi mura, you know.

FS: And that would be Yamaguchi ken?

KT: Yamaguchi ken. But then when I went back to Japan to try to trace some of the family, I found out that Sabagun is no more and it is part of Kofu-shi.

FS: And her name was?

KT: I'm sorry?

FS: And her name?

KT: Oh, I'm sorry. Her name was Mitsu Yamamoto. That's the maiden name. And that's the only family contact that we have now.

FS: Were they immigrants when they came here?

KT: My dad first came over in about three or four times they been going back and forth. He was kind of sickly when he was younger and so he'd go back. I guess it was just himself go back and then he'd get treated and he'd come back.

FS: What did he come for?

KT: Well, from what I understand, his parents, my grandparents, were in the shibai business. You know they had this troupe that would go around all the different areas in the western part of Japan. And he didn't have any place to stay so they were always on the move. And when this situation came up he decided to give it a try. I guess he must have been around twenty, twenty or twenty-two, somewhere around there. Because you know Japan has that universal military training and I remember seeing pictures of him in a medical corps you know. And he said he was in Vladivostok.

FS: The Russo-Japanese war?

KT: Yeah, during the Nichiro-senso. And he used to have this picture of the bakudansan yushi. Maybe that's what caused me to go into the military, I don't know (laughs).

FS: Oh, I see. Then he came to Hawaii to work?

KT: Yeah.

FS: As a shibai artist?

KT: No, no. He came as an immigrant and worked in sugar, the sugar field in Ewa. And finally you know that Johnson Act in 1923 or 1925 they were going to stop 'em from coming. So he sent for his family.

FS: Did the whole family come?

KT: Yeah, uh hum.

FS: What about, what about his marriage? Did he get married here?

KT: I think he got married in Japan and like I said he just kept coming here and going back.

FS: In other words, he was already married.

KT: Yeah.

FS: And he was going back and forth.

KT: In fact, my two older siblings are American born. And then my the first two are American born. Then the next three are Japan born and they're all male.

FS: Then when you say, he went back and forth, does that mean he went back and forth with his family? With his wife?

KT: Apparently, yeah.

FS: I see. Oh, so he was already married when he decided to come here.

KT: That's my belief.

FS: I see, okay. What was the language spoken at home?

KT: Oh well, you know like most nisei families among the siblings we'd speak in English or actually pidgin English. And then with the parents we'd speak the inakappei [provincial] Japanese (laughs).

FS: Did you have a lot of Japanese culture in the family, music, art?

KT: Well, I would say the average nisei type you know. We'd do the same thing with shogatsu. We'd pound mochi.

FS: Oh, you did pound mochi?

KT: Yeah. And we had this kenjinkai [local prefectural club], Yamaguchi Kenjin Kai, which was, you know before the war, pretty strong 'cause I remember going to these picnics.

FS: I see.

KT: And then we also had the, what do you call it? It's not the ken but the mura, you know the people that...

FS: Oh, sonjinkai?

KT: Yeah, sonjinkai, that's it.

FS: Oh, I see.

KT: And we would get together at least once a year.

FS: Did your parents emphasize certain things in the family, you know, hard work and going to school and....?

KT: I think you'd pick that up more from observation. Like I'm the suekko [last child], the spoiled brat so I used to get my way more or less.

FS: Okay, tell us, tell us about your family now, the children in the family.

KT: Well, I'm the last of eight. The oldest in the family was my sister, Nobuyo. She passed away already. And, my second was Sachiko. She's still alive. And then the third is the chonan [eldest son]; his name is Shoichi. He's still alive. And then Hideo. And then Tatsuo passed away already. And then my sister, Yuriko. And then Akira. And then myself.

FS: I guess they were niseis or....?

KT: Yeah, they were all nisei. They were born except for the three...

FS: They were born here except for the three boys who were born in Japan.

KT: They were born in Japan.

FS: But they still had citizenship?

KT: Yeah, yeah.

FS: I see.

KT: They were naturalized.

FS: Oh, they were naturalized?

KT: Yeah, even my dad, my dad got naturalized after the war.

FS: I see. Do they, did they get naturalized together?

KT: Oh, no no no.

FS: Separately?

KT: Yeah.

FS: What was family life like especially with such a big family?

KT: Oh, good fun (laughs). Yeah well, you know in the old days, you never had enough money so the older boys... I don't remember my two sisters too well, but the eldest was a barber and she was working for a barber shop on River Street. And then later on she opened up her own on School Street, right by the river, Nuuanu Stream. And my second sister, she married Tanaka family in Honouliuli and they had a store. And later on they had, during the war, a restaurant bar in Honouliuli. So they did pretty well. Well, he, you know that Bishop (?) Tanaka was very ambitious type and very hard working, smart business man.

FS: As children, did you play a lot together, did you....

KT: Well....

FS: Did you get a lot of attention from your parents?

KT: Yeah, from the parents I did, but as far as siblings, I only know my sister, Yuriko, and Akira that I grew up with. We're all three years apart.

FS: Everyone?

KT: Yeah, well the one above me is three years and then the one above that is three years. And then after that is another three years and then two, two and three, two. So you know its kind of....

FS: Your mother, your mother wasn't working was she?

KT: Initially she did.

FS: Oh, she did?

KT: From what I hear, yeah.

FS: Oh.

KT: Hapai ko type, you know. Work out in the field. She said she used to carry the kids out with her.

FS: Oh, I see.

KT: Well, you know that, what was that movie, that thing came out? About the, with the Toshiro Mifune?

FS: Oh, "Sanga Moyu"? No? That was on NHK television...

KT: No, no, no. This was a local...

FS: Local movie.

KT: Uh, U.S.

FS: Oh, American movie.

KT: Yeah.

FS: Oh, I can't get....

KT: I think it was 'cause they spoke English. You know about the families that coming over work in the cane field and so on.

FS: Uh, huh, I see. What was your neighborhood like?

KT: Well, you know plantation style, all the Japanese live in one camp, all the Filipinos lived in another camp. We had a little Chinese and some Korean so we had Korean camp,

Chinese camp. And the other places where all the Japanese were ??? camp. Oh, the Portuguese you know, they had Spanish, some of the Spanish, Hawaiians, they lived within the Japanese camp. And the Portuguese were most of the luna, you know the Hawaiians and the Portuguese. And among the Japanese had some pretty bright guys you know so they got to be workers in the office and supervisors.

FS: How did you get along?

KT: Oh, was great! In fact, you know like in any type of segregated living you know you have this, well nowadays they call them racial problems, but it was more just a difference you know. But kids were kids. And during the school, you know, if something came up they wait till the end of school. And at the end of school, there's always everybody getting together and working out their differences, right?

FS: In what way?

KT: Yeah, the next year when you come back you started clean again, you know. There was no animosity or carry on type thing. So I don't know maybe that was unique to plantations. Is that right, no?

FS: I don't know...I really don't know.

KT: See, you, you never had any problems like that in your school?

FS: You're talking about gang fights.

KT: Yeah. I mean not gang, this camp fight.

FS: Camp fight, I see. Where did you go in school as far as Japanese and English school is concerned?

KT: Oh, Ewa, Ewa Elementary.

FS: And then Japanese school?

KT: In Ewa.

FS: Right in the English school or right....

KT: No, uh....

FS: Or right within the camp?

KT: Well, you know those days the plantations would set up certain area and they set up the school. And it was always the same style, you know. The school was always second floor. The school rooms are always second floor and underneath you have just like, well,

we used to call it “under house.” Before school started, you’d gather over there, you’d play, talk story, whatever.

FS: This was.., then the Japanese school was actually in the English school?

KT: No, in the plantation...

FS: Separate?

KT: It was separate, it’s about 3 miles apart.

KT: The English school we called “semen” [local Japanese term for cement] gakko because it was made of cement, right? But it’s not “senmon” meaning, you know, trade.

FS: I see. Do you have any other special memories of ...

KT: Oh, plenty.

FS: ...English or Japanese school?

KT: Well, I never did well in Japanese school. I don’t know why. But, you know Japanese style, when you go to school they line you up you know ittoshō [refers to the top students] and then all the way down depending on your grades: Well, out of twenty-six, I was number twenty-six (laughter). You know, way back there right next to the window. You know Japanese school, every Thursday, I mean every Saturday, was exams. Three hours of exams, you know. And I really hated Japanese school, I don’t know why. But when the teacher was writing things on the board, I sneaked up to the window and I’d hang you know second story, right? And when I got my nerve up, I’d let go, drop down, run to the cane field and I’d go crabbing. You know Honouliuli? Okay, they have this place. You know in the old days Pearl Harbor had a lot of crabs. You know watari kani, you know the white one, and also the *puka* crab, the red Hawaiian crab, and used to have clam, you know cockle clam. Anyway that was what I used to do. I used to run away from school and all Saturday I’d be out there catching crab, digging clams, and when I’d come home my brother he’d get the word from the teacher. And my brother, the oldest brother, was more like my mentor than anything else. Oh, he’d give me licking!

FS: (laughter) I guess he acted as your father, more or less.

KT: He did, he did, yeah, because my father was always busy working so my brother was more my ...

FS: How much older was he?

KT: About twelve, fourteen years, something like that.

FS: Then he would have the authority.

KT: Yeah. He used to take judo and kendo so he'd give me good licking. (laughter) I remember that.

FS: I see. Now, when we come to your father's internment, do you recall how old your father was?

KT: Oh, for the internment?

FS: Yes, how old was he?

KT: The war was already going on. Well, one of the first things I remember, this was before he got interned, you know we had to put up a bomb shelter in 1942, '43, somewhere like that. And, one of the techniques was to just dig a pit, you know, straight down and put wooden ties across. And you know, the old Oahu Railway used to change the no-good tie every so often and they just leave them on the side of the road, the railroad. And, my father found some laying around so he brought 'em home. And, for that he got called in by the FBI, you know, for ah, sabotage.

FS: Oh that was...

KT: Something like that I remember. Anyway, it ...

FS: But this was not on December 7th.

KT: No, this was after. The war was already on and it was, to me, just harassment but...

FS: Actually on December 7th then you don't have too many memories.

KT: I have only of myself. See it was on a Sunday right? I'm a Christian and before the Christian church start, I used to go down to the otera [Buddhist temple] and listen to their sermon, you know, stories.

FS: The Christian stories?

KT: The Buddhist ..

FS: The Buddhist stories?

KT: Yeah, you know shushin [morals and ethics] type stories. I used to go listen to that and...

FS: Although you were a Christian at that time?

KT: Yeah.

FS: Okay.

KT: But you know, when I was a kid, I didn't really differentiate, you know.

FS: So you went to the Christian church on Sundays?

KT: Yeah, Sunday school. And before, see Sunday School started at about 8:30, 9 o'clock. But the Hongwanji started earlier. So, it was about 7:30, we were playing around the temple ground and we started seeing all these airplanes. But among the kids that played, there was this guy who was very knowledgeable about airplanes. He used to make models. And he would, ah, he had subscribed to "Air Trails," "Air Progress," you know, and it showed you how to make models and things like that. So, he looked up and he said, "Eh, those are Japanese planes!" I asked him, "Eh, Japan so far, how the airplane going come over?" So anyway, by that time they were starting to drop bombs. The Marine Corps Air Station Mooring Mast were right behind 'bout two, three miles behind the church, you know....

FS: This is the Marine Corps mooring?

KT: Mooring Mast.

FS: Mast?

KT: Well, Mooring Mast is part of Barbers Point now. They used to have a air field separate from Barbers Point. Barbers Point was navy and Mooring Mast was Marine Mooring Mast Ewa, they used to call it. There was just marines. And so they'd come in, you know; they'd drop their bombs. And after they dropped their bombs, they'd come along and shoot the road and I know Ewa only had one row of stores. And so, they fly along opposite side and shoot, shoot at the road so the bullets would ricochet up into the stores and broke all the glass. Maybe it was just ijiwaru [out f spite]. Then I don't know how many minutes later but you know as soon as the thing started we all rushed home, right? And as I'm peddling up this road ...

FS: On a bicycle?

KT: Yeah, you know before the kids used to put a rubber band on the handle bar, yeah and you'd take a vine and you know you shoot it. Well, one of the bullets hit that rubber band. I could see the, you know, afterwards both the broken ends of the rubber were burnt. So anything that was moving on the road, they'd come by and shoot. And I can clearly remember the guy in the back seat, you know.

FS: Oh, you could see him.

KT: Yeah! And somehow the word got out that the Japanese were attacking. So they said put all the geta and slippers out by the entryway. Did you hear that? No? But that's what we all did. And you know, the shells the navy was firing to bring the airplanes down were all old ammunition and they wouldn't explode when they were supposed to but

when they came down they would explore. Yeah, they'd hit the ground, and several people got killed like that.

FS: So that's why people were killed by what they called "friendly fire".

KT: Yeah. Well this, little funny part, well, I say funny; it's just amusing. Plantations before, even though we had, well most of the old homes didn't have any bathroom, I mean to take a bath in. But most of them had the redwood tubs ....

FS: The ofuro?

KT: Yeah, ofuro. But it was easier to, well, more economical, to have a central bath. So they always had a central bath within the different camps. I think we had one, two, three, about four, five maybe, but anyway one of the bathhouses was hit by this unexploded anti-aircraft shell. And it just peppered the side of the building with a lot of holes, you know. And they didn't have enough material to patch it up. So, it just happened that the blast hit the *wahine* side so all the young guys would line up nighttime (laugh) to get a free show, right? So what happened was all the young girls would go take a bath before the sun went down and all the old ladies would take a bath after dark (laugh) and nobody wanted to watch that kind right? (laugh) Just one of those humorous things.

FS: I see ... and that was after December 7.

KT: Oh yeah, it was. Well, the damage was done during December 7, but because they didn't have material to fix it, for a long time the place was like that.

FS: And I suppose the ladies couldn't go to the next nearest, uh, ....

KT: Oh no, you see, each camp area was designated, you know. They had a system where families would clean up the place once, one week at a time. So, they had all the names, the last names of the families, on a tile style (???). When you did your week's turn you'd just turn it over. So the next one would scrub the cement place, wash the tub out.

FS: That's an interesting story.

KT: If you didn't live on plantation, you missed out.

FT: Now, why was your father arrested? Of course this is several years afterwards.

KT: From what I understand, it was because he had a record of being in the Japanese military. You know, that universal military training. So, I don't know why.

FS: Why not earlier though?

KT: That's what I can't figure out but it was about 1943. Yeah, about 1943, 1944 that they took him.

FS: Oh, I see. Gee, that does seem odd doesn't it?

KT: Yeah, I don't have the specific reason but he wasn't a minister, he wasn't a teacher. He was just a common laborer.

FS: What was your reaction as a family? Did the FBI come in and take your father bodily out?

KT: You know I can't really remember. I think he was notified just to show up at this certain place and then they took him because I vaguely remember my mother getting all the stuff and putting them into the furoshiki [wrapping cloth], you know.

FS: And that was the day that he ....

KT: .... he left, went. But there was some kind of paper work. I don't think there is, I don't think they even had a court. They just told him to show up and they took him.

FS: Oh, so, he never came back that day then that he was taken.

KT: No, I think, the way I remember, he was told to report to a certain place so he took everything with him. I think that's how he went. I can't really remember.

FS: Did your neighbors know about or did they find out about this at all?

KT: That he was, uh ....

FS: In ....

KT: Incarcerated?

FS: Yeah.

KT: Yeah, they knew.

FS: Did that change the, the relationship between ....

KT: No, no.

FS: .... you and your neighbors? Not at all?

KT: Not that I'm aware of. No.

FS: So to review, he was taken and then you did not get to see him until the first notice of a visitation?

KT: Yeah.

FS: I see. How were you notified?

KT: I think we got a letter saying, you know, we could come visit. And they gave you the, it was a Sunday. Yeah, all, all the visits were on Sundays if I remember correctly.

FS: Uh huh. The notice came on Sunday also.

KT: No, it came before, you know. Like, maybe a week. And it said okay, on a certain date you can visit.

FS: I see. Which camp was this?

KT: I think it was every other Sunday.

FS: Every other Sunday. Oh ....

KT: The way I remember.

FS: Uh hum, and it would be at what time? In the morning?

KT: Usually right after lunch.

FS: Oh, right after lunch.

KT: Eleven o' clock. It was short, you know. Two hours I think at the most.

FS: Two hours.

KT: Yeah, two or three hours.

FS: Did they specify where you were to meet?

KT: No, it just said, "Come." We knew where the camp was so we just drove up.

FS: When you say drove, what do you mean? Did your mother drive?

KT: No, my, my eldest brother. We had a model A.

FS: Oh ....

KT: And it was maybe five, six miles. Maybe less than that. 'Cause you know everybody in Honouliuli, there was a reservoir we used to call Mori Reservoir like I was telling you earlier. So we just went up that road, okay, continue and go into the valley. And then they had this gate. And a barbed wire gate. Sometimes when you get, they only open the gate at certain time, the time that they told you. But to make it, to be able to visit as long

as we could well we go a little early and my mother always used to get car sick. So it gave her a little time to kind of settle down. And once the gates open, all the cars we just drive in, park along side, go to the cafeteria, the building, mess hall.

FS: Yeah, that's what I understand. It was the mess hall that you had the visitations.

KT: Typical Army, World War II Army mess hall.

FS: Then there was no security check at the gate.

KT: No, once the gate was open, you just drove in.

FS: There were no restrictions?

KT: Not that I can remember.

FS: Do you recall whether only the family could visit or ....

KT: Yeah.

FS: Or whether friends ....

KT: Only family. Immediate family. And I think the, there was a restriction on the number that could go at one time.

FS: Oh, for example, three?

KT: Three or four. Four I think was, yeah.

FS: I see. Did you have any word from your father before your first visit?

KT: No.

FS: Not at all?

KT: Not that I remember.

FS: I see. What did you take with you, on that first visit?

KT: Oh, bento [lunch box].

FS: What was in the bento?

KT: Musubi, sometime nitsuke [boiled food], sometime chicken, barbeque meat, and the regular fare.

FS: The typical plate lunch.

KT: Yeah, but, New Years time, we make mochi and take mochi.

FS: Besides the gate, do you recall anything else? What were your impressions of that first visit?

KT: More or less we just accepted it you know. The condition of the time.

FS: But you really didn't know exactly why he was there.

KT: Mm, mm.

FS: Was there any explanation given by your father at that time?

KT: No, no.

FS: Did he have anything special to say?

KT: Well, you know, the, the people that were incarcerated actually didn't have to work but uh those that worked got paid, you know. And I remember the old man saying, well he smoked, see, so he needed money to buy cigarettes and tobacco. Well, those days he used to roll his own Bull Durham [bagged tobacco] so if you work you got so much. I think was 45 cents. The others just got 10 cents a day. That was the minimum amount that you would get even if you didn't work.

FS: Oh .... What kind of work did he do?

KT: Well, usually pick up rocks or clean up. Like they had to maintain the roads. Some guys would make gardens. Stuff like that. Just menial work. Sweep...rake.

FS: Did he say anything about the food there?

KT: The food? No but was all, uh, well, you know, you can imagine mess hall type. That's why when we brought bento, you know, we always share among the people that sat at the same desk, the table was about this size, you know, with the bench connected onto it.

FS: Would that be one family at a bench?

KT: Well, supposed to be one family but lot of time you just sat where there was room so I wasn't really aware of that.

FS: Hmm. Then there would be a whole group of people in the mess hall?

KT: Oh yeah. I would say over hundred, over hundred people. And you know, the men folks that were incarcerated, to spend their time, they make marbles, hand craft things. And you remember the, uh, plastic rings they make with toothbrush handle? Things like that.

FS: Did you father make some of them?

KT: Ah, I don't know if he did but I remember and they would sell it when people came to visit. I remember getting a model airplane. Suppose to be a B-25 but the back end look more like a B-26 'cause the B-25 has two tails and this one had only one tail. And yet they had the ????, you know.

FS: Where did they get the materials to make?

KT: Kiawe, kiawe wood. They carve them out of kiawe wood then sand them down and paint 'em, varnish 'em.

FS: And the paint would come from the military?

KT: Well, they must have bought it. That's why they needed the money. They had like a commissary where you could buy cigarette, chocolate candy, canned goods, stuff like that. Oh yeah, we used to take canned goods, you know canned fruit, fruit cocktail like you know. And oh, security. They did check 'cause you know whatever bag you had they'd look into. I remember that now.

FS: Uh huh. I wonder what they would have confiscated?

KT: I don't know, because while they ate, you know they had paring knives right on the table. 'Cause I remember peeling mango; we used to take mango in season. So, I don't know.

FS: Maybe, maybe weapons? They were afraid of certain kinds of weapons?

KT: Yeah, basically that's what they would've checked for, you know. But it wasn't a real thorough search. You just had to open the bag. They didn't do any body search or anything. Going into the airport now is more, more strict.

FS: (laughs) Oh, I see. Did your mother take anything else with her or to her husband besides food?

KT: No.

FS: Sugar?

KT: Not that, not that I remember. Maybe they did. You know coffee, cocoa, and sugar, cream.

FS: Even tea?

KT: Huh?

FS: Even tea, you know.

KT: Yeah.

FS: Was your father particular about his food?

KT: No.

FS: Didn't he request any kind of supplies from your mother?

KT: No, I mean, you know, we just went and visit him but ....

FS: It was more like a hospital visit, you think, than, than a real, uhm, you know ....

KT: Yeah, we just sat around and you talk.

FS: How long was your father detained at Honouliuli?

KT: I think if I'm not mistaken about a year. Or maybe less.

FS: Or maybe less.

KT: I can't really remember.

FS: If you were to try counting back, how many visits would you say you made? About ....

KT: How many I times I went to visit him? Oh, maybe ten times.

FS: And every other Sunday, you said.

KT: Well, yeah. See, the reason is I was also learning how to drive so, you know, being in the cane field I'd do the driving.

FS: That means you were about how old?

KT: Fourteen, fifteen.

FS: Did anything about the place impress you, kind of?

KT: Well, you know, I grew up in that area so I knew basically what it would look like. But it was just a little, shallow valley with rocks on the side.

FS: And tents?

KT: Oh, you mean the camp itself? Yeah. Well, you know, I didn't really see too much of the tent. The tent I saw was, as you go in from the main gate toward the mess hall there were no tents on the left side around the road and those were, uh, they had the German and Italian and Japanese prisoners in there. I remember this one German prisoner, he had caught a baby mongoose and he had 'em as a pet and he'd call the thing and it would come right on his lap and he would feed 'em. Yeah, cute. But the mongoose wouldn't go to anybody else. You could go right up to the cabin and talk to them, they wouldn't say anything. He only spoke German but.

FS: So where were the regular internees in if the German ....

KT: I'd say maybe about, oh maybe half a mile in, yeah. Quarter mile, half a mile.

FS: I see.

KT: From the main gate. And outside the main gate was a sort of a wide parking area, you know so the cars could park before they open the gate. And once you got .... oh, wait a minute, maybe we just walked in. Yeah, I think we walked in. Not drive in, we walked in.

FS: You drove up to the gate?

KT: Yeah, we had to leave the car outside.

FS: And then walked in?

KT: Yeah, that's how it was.

FS: And the mess hall was near the gate so that you did not have to go all the way in through the tents.

KT: No, we didn't, we never went to the tent. All the people in there would already be waiting at the mess hall and you'd just met your parties over there. Yeah, we never did get to the tents.

FS: Did your father have anything special to say to each of you?

KT: No, no. Just normal "how are you" type.

FS: Did you get any feeling that he was happy or unhappy in that situation?

KT: He didn't seem to be any, uh, he didn't show any remorse or any sadness, you know.

FS: Then, he was, he took everything very well.

- KT: Yeah, yeah, he did, he did. Even after being released, you know, he never said much about his stay there.
- FS: So you have no idea how he spent his time.
- KT: No, mm, mm.
- FS: Other than doing odd jobs.
- KT: No, but he said he needed money for the tobacco and stuff so he was working and that would keep him busy too.
- FS: And he wasn't a heavy drinker or ....
- KT: No. In fact I don't think he ever drank. But he smoked quite a bit.
- FS: How did his absence affect you at home?
- KT: Not at all.
- FS: I guess with a large family like yours it wouldn't be so noticeable.
- KT: Yeah, we had a big family so, you know.
- FS: How did your mother react though. It must have been difficult for her.
- KT: Not that I noticed. I mean from my standpoint I didn't notice any change.
- FS: Uhhh, uhhh. She didn't seem to have any difficulties carrying on.
- KT: No.
- FS: She worked as usual.
- KT: Yeah.
- FS: And you managed, uh, to survive without your father's income then?
- KT: Oh yeah. My other siblings in a way helped out.
- FS: By that time were your brothers, your oldest brother, working?
- KT: Yeah, they were all working. They'd have been in 20's, 30's, something in that neighborhood. And my mother used to do laundry, you know. She'd take in laundry from the Marines that were stationed there. I remember they had, they had about three or four guys that would bring their laundry in every week.

- FS: Did she have the facilities for that much laundry work?
- KT: Just regular washing machine where the, you know, that Easy washing machine? The one with the wringer, wringer dryer.
- FS: I remember that. And she managed ....
- KT: ABC they called that, ABC.
- FS: And she managed all that laundry with that one machine?
- KT: Yeah, every day she was washing. And we, you know when she sorted it out she had to make a list of what was in there.
- FS: That's a tremendous job.
- KT: In fact, when they brought it in, I used to be the one that would write down what was in the bag. So then if the guy agree, he just initial and then when she did the laundry, they would just line up the same things.
- FS: Then she must have been doing laundry all day long.
- KT: Yeah, almost every day, yeah.
- FS: That's really something. How did your classmates react to your father's being away?
- KT: I don't think they even knew. Well, only the neighbors, you know, the neighbors didn't change because my dad was in. Eh, you know the more I think about it, I don't think there was anybody else in the plantation that got pulled in; I don't know.
- FS: Ohhh....
- KT: 'Cause, uh, maybe earlier they did, you know. But I don't remember anybody else being in there.
- FS: This would be in 1943 or forty....
- KT: Late '43, '44, yeah.
- FS: Oh, I see.
- KT: You try take a look at this, this island. Was it in the appendix? Oh, yeah, okay.
- FS: It's a fairly long list.

KT: See, I don't.

FS: How did you classmates treat you? Any differently from before?

KT: No, no, because most of my classmates didn't know, I don't think.

FS: Uh, uh. The same with the teachers?

KT: Yeah, teachers had no idea.

FS: I see. Now when you found out about your father being released, did you get any word from anyone?

KT: Well, I think there must have been some word because I think we went to just pick him up.

FS: Oh.

KT: Yeah.

FS: It was a really simple process, then. Very simple procedure.

KT: Yeah, yeah. There was no elaborate, you know.

FS: Do you remember the date?

KT: No, I sure don't. But I think it was during the summer, summer or early fall.

FS: Of 1945?

KT: '44, I think.

FS: '44? I see. Did your father give you any reason as to why he was being released before the end of the war?

KT: No, no. Not that I remember.

FS: I see. Your father readjusted to home ...

KT: You know, I don't really remember anything different. Just carried on from where he left off I think.

FS: Did he resume his work at the plantation?

KT: Yeah, yeah, he went back to the plantation. He worked in the plantation. You know in my mind, I don't remember anything that was any different.

FS: He just picked up the pieces very nicely then.

KT: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

FS: And the family, did they notice, did you notice any changes or differences?

KT: No, no.

FS: Just the same. Did it seem like a short absence, like a short trip away then?

KT: More or less, yeah. Nothing worth noting..

FS: And your father never spoke about this to you at all?

KT: No.

FS: Until he passed away?

KT: Yeah. Never did. Well, not to me anyway.

FS: Did your brothers or anyone else in the family mention it?

KT: Never did.

FS: Okay. Do you have any final things that you'd like to say about the internment of your father?

KT: No ...

FS: Questions or ...?

KT: Well, maybe because of uh, you know the age that I was at, I didn't think anything about it. Or even when I went into the military, one of the questions they ask on your character background is, "Do you have any reason why you would have animosity against the U.S. government?" And I told them that my dad was pulled in but I had no animosity. But, uh, I remember, uh, my dad telling me, said if he's going to go into the military, he says, you'd better cut off your, uh, you know before the niseis used to have dual citizenship.

FS: Yes.

KT: So he told me specifically if I was going to go in the military that I should cut off the Japanese citizenship. And I remember, you know Komatsuya Hotel, they used to handle all that so I remember going in there and filling out some forms. I was already at the University of Hawaii; I must have been in the second year, eighteen, nineteen, something like that. And I did that. But a lot of the other people that, you know, were in the same

situation as I was never did and it didn't affect them. So it was just maybe an unnecessary precaution.

FS: I guess maybe because of the experience that your father had he was afraid that the Japanese government might one day call you in.

KT: You know, one thing that sticks to me, sticks in my mind, when I told him I'd be going in the military. And he says you know when he was in the army they had taught him that if you see a bomb falling, you'd point at it and if it climbs up over your finger, don't worry it's going to fall behind you. And if drops down below your finger, it's going to fall short. And they say if it comes right down your finger, you'd better run like hell. (laughs) Which is true, you know. Yeah. (laughs)

FS: Your father had a good sense of humor.

KT: Oh, he did, he did. I really enjoyed my old man.

FS: Oh ...

KT: Although I didn't spend too much time with him, you know. Right after college, I went to the mainland, going through military training and all that. So I'd stop by every so often, three, four, five years in between.

FS: During the rotation period?

KT: Yeah.

FS: Well, if there are no final comments about the internment ...

KT: No, I don't think I have anything. You know, I don't think it was a good thing but it's one of those things that happened that. I have lot of things against, not against but lot of opinions as far the treatment of the nisei during the war but, you know, that's neither here nor there.

FS: Well, thank you very much ...

KT: You're welcome, you're welcome.

FS: ... for your very interesting experiences. It is certainly a pleasure to talk to someone who knows so much about plantation life.

KT: Well, I tell you if you haven't lived on the plantation, you missed a lot.

FS: Actually, I did.

KT: Yeah.