



*Rural Isolation
& Dual Cultural Existence*

The Japanese-American
Kona Coffee Community

David K. Abe



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Introduction

THE LIFE OF JAPANESE IMMIGRANTS IN KONA

Kona coffee, known for its distinctive strong flavor, is grown on the Big Island of Hawaii on the slopes of Hualalai. For the past 100 years the descendants of Japanese immigrants have produced the majority of Kona coffee on small-scale family farms which were carved out of the mountain-side by those who fled the terrible conditions of the archipelago's sugar plantations seeking a better life. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, before immigration was restricted due to the Immigration Act of 1924, Japanese men and women immigrated to Hawaii to work in the sugarcane plantations, with the idea of making money and returning to Japan. The conditions in Hawaii were worse than they had expected and it was nearly impossible to save money with which to return home. Faced with the harsh conditions of the plantations, many of the Japanese working along the Hamakua coast on the Big Island broke their contracts and fled to the remote region of Kona. In Kona, they began to farm along the Kona Coffee Belt Road. In the beginning, they attempted to grow various crops—they later settled upon coffee as the most suitable for the conditions of the land. As the years passed, the number of Japanese coffee farmers living along the Kona Coffee Belt Road grew, until they accounted for 80 percent of the coffee farming population. As the ethnic Japanese community grew and aged, they built three Buddhist temples—the Hongwanji Jodo Shin-shu, the Daifukuji Zen Soto-shu, and the Daishi-do Shingon-shu—and two main shrines—Inari and Shinto. They

were able to practice their religions openly, with little outside resistance, due to the large proportion of Japanese in Kona, as well as the rural isolation of the community. It was only after the attack on Pearl Harbor that the outside world took notice of the community's religious practices, and soon after the attack federal officials came and destroyed the shrines they had built. During the following years, the Japanese community in Kona faced an increased stigmatization; yet, instead of destroying their community, the hardships they faced during the war not only strengthened their community, by bringing them together in mutual support, but also saw them adapt and reach out to those outside of their ethnic community.

Otokichi Abe was one of many *Issei* (first-generation) immigrants who came to Kona in this manner, and who became a part of the Japanese coffee farming community. Otokichi was the second-born son of rice farmers in Fukuoka Prefecture, Japan. Despite the democratization of Japan at the time, there were few opportunities for young men in the country. Moreover, as the second son he knew he would not receive anything from his parents in the way of inheritance. While he respected his parents, the uncertainty of a stable future motivated Otokichi to search for a promising opportunity to make his fortune. At the time, work in the sugar plantations of Hawaii seemed to him to offer an easy way to make money. Otokichi believed he could work under several contracts, save money, and return home wealthy enough to buy his own land and start a family. With this in mind, at the age of 18 he signed a two-year contract with a sugar plantation along the Hamakua coast of the Big Island and set out in the summer of 1899 on the SS *Dalmyvostoc*.

Arriving at Honolulu port in October, Otokichi and several other Japanese who had come to work in the sugarcane fields were rounded up like cattle by representatives from the plantation and taken to the Big Island. They still had little information about where exactly there were going and what they would be doing, as the plantation representatives could not speak Japanese—even if they had been able to do so, they showed little interest in communicating with the Japanese workers.

Life on the sugar plantation was much worse than Otokichi had imagined. The climate was hot and humid, and the Portuguese overseers frequently pushed the workers past the point of exhaustion. Harvesting sugarcane required incredible strength and the Japanese laborers were simply not accustomed to this type of hard manual farm work. Nor did they possess the stamina to harvest at the speed the overseers demanded. Each day was a version of hell that might be worsened still further, depending

on the moods of the overseers, who could become angry for any number of reasons and who would frequently take out their anger on those working the fields. In addition, it was impossible to accumulate wealth: the workers were charged for all manner of things, leaving practically nothing left over—certainly not enough to save and return home rich.

Otokichi did his best to serve out his contract and carry out his duties on the plantation. However, he could not stand the slave-like conditions in the sugarcane fields. Before the first year of his contract ended, he made up his mind to try to escape. For those who contemplated running away from the plantations, Kona was the ideal place to head for as it was remote, hard to access, and located on the other side of the island. The large Japanese population there, many of them also runaways, meant that there were many people who would be sympathetic to their plight, and on whom they could rely for help. The density of the foliage in the coffee fields would also provide space to hide in the event that someone from the plantation came looking for them. There were, however, many dangers in attempting an escape from the sugar fields, including the rough terrain of the island and the possibility of being caught and taken back—or even possibly hanged. For those who tried to run there were two possible routes to Kona. The first led them across the barren lava fields and the second took them through the center of the island between Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa, along the Judd Trail. Otokichi decided to try the Judd Trail. After about a week of traveling across the island, finding food and shelter where he could and constantly checking for pursuers from the plantation, he finally emerged in Kona.

Upon arriving in Kona, Otokichi immediately changed his last name from Abe to Kubo¹ in case anyone ever came looking for him. The Nakamaru family took Otokichi in and hired him to work on their coffee farm. The work on the coffee farm, while still hot, hard, and exhausting, was preferable to that in the sugarcane fields. This was due to the existence of a strong Japanese community, in which Otokichi found himself, and to the possibility of actually contributing to this community in various meaningful ways. With such large numbers of Japanese farming along the Kona Coffee Belt Road, a community rich in Japanese traditions was fostered by the farmers. To assist with the unexpected need to arrange funerals and other events over the years, and to create a sense of community coherence, the Japanese farmers organized themselves into *kumi*, neighborhood associations made up of households living in close proximity to each other. In addition to *kumi*, those who managed to find

themselves in Kona, like Otokichi, were also able to utilize *kenjinkai*, organizations whose members consisted of immigrants from the same prefecture in Japan, to find work or establish themselves within the community. As the years went by and the Japanese population grew, the need for spiritual services, outside of those daily rituals being practiced within homes by individuals, became apparent and proper temples, shrines, and graveyards were constructed.

It was here at the Nakamaru farm, within this dense Japanese community, that Otokichi was able to begin to embrace his entrepreneurial spirit. He invented a machine that would simplify and speed up the coffee pulping process. Once his new machine became recognized for its convenience and usefulness, it was in high demand among the Japanese coffee farmers along the Kona Coffee Belt Road. As demand for the machine increased, he leased it to various farmers and would travel up and down the road to fix it when necessary.

This machine gave Otokichi the opportunity to not only earn money but to also become a well-known and respected member of the community. When Otokichi had saved enough money, he eventually bought his own land to farm and sent for a bride from Japan. Tatsu Higuchi, like many other “picture brides”² of the time, arrived in Honolulu, where she was met by Otokichi. The two were quickly married at the Izumo Taishakyo Shrine near the port in Honolulu, along with several other Japanese couples, before making their way back to Kona. Over the next few years, they had five children: Yasu, Chitose, Kikumi, Yukio, and Minoru.

Over the years, Otokichi expanded his coffee farming property, which grew to the size of 20 acres at its peak. Coffee farms in Kona were established on rocky mountain slopes, and covered in greenery that needed to be removed. Even with the land cleared the nature of the terrain made it impossible to plant the coffee trees in neat rows. With the help of hired native Hawaiians, Otokichi was able to clear the land, remove tree stumps and rocks, and plant his coffee trees. He also hired the Hawaiians to help with the maintenance of the farm, including pruning, weeding, and harvesting the coffee beans. Coffee farming was no easier than working in the sugarcane fields—it rained just about every day for short periods at a time, and was hot and humid, even as the work required the use of protective clothing—but there was dignity in it, a solid Japanese community build around it, and it provided a possibility for a better future, particularly for Otokichi’s children. Despite these positive aspects, life was still difficult. The two coffee companies in Kona—American Factor Co. and Captain

Cook Coffee Co.—controlled the price of coffee to such an extent that the Japanese coffee farmers rarely made a profit above what was needed to sustain themselves. They were given just enough to encourage them to continue coffee farming, but not enough to improve their standard of living.

Perhaps because of this, Otokichi was not satisfied and continued to search for other business opportunities to diversify his sources of income. In 1919 he bought a hotel, which served guests who came from various parts of Hawaii. A year after that he opened a pool hall near the hotel. As life improved for Otokichi and his family in Kona, he periodically made sure to send money and goods, such as sugar, coffee, and candy, back to his family in Japan. He felt it important to support his family, especially when, as was the case at the time, the situation in Kona was much better than that in Japan.

Otokichi also considered it important to raise his five children as if they had been born in Japan. Great effort was made to teach them about the traditional Japanese culture and language. To do this, Otokichi and Tatsu made sure their children attended the Japanese-language school the community had opened, and they took them to various social events centered around annual religious festivals, including New Year's events and the *Obon*³ festival. In addition to these major events, they also instilled in them *Meiji*-era values: the importance of *oyakoko* (filial piety), *tatemae* (the art of hiding your feelings), *haji* (shame), *on* (appreciation or obligation), and *enryo* (when to say no). Each day, they showed their children the proper way to pray and give offerings before the *butsudan* (Buddhist family altar), as well as the *kamidana* (miniature household altar), near which a picture of the Japanese Emperor and Empress hung. These constant teachings within the Japanese ethnic community may be considered to have prolonged assimilation into mainstream American culture: assimilation would have occurred faster if there had been a larger number of white Americans in Kona or if the children's parents and the community had not placed such a strong emphasis on maintaining their Japanese roots. As a result, the *Nisei* (second-generation immigrant) children in Kona developed a dual identity, one that enabled them to switch between Japanese and American cultural norms based on the situation in which they found themselves.

Things were going well for Otokichi and his family. However, in 1921 he developed appendicitis and was admitted for surgery at the Kona Hospital.

After several weeks of recovery, he was preparing to be discharged when he contracted an infection and died suddenly.

At the time of his death, Otokichi's oldest son Yasu was only 12 and the second brother, Chitose, was 10. Neither of them were old enough to take over their father's many business ventures, and their mother did not have the knowledge or the time to take on these responsibilities while raising five children. Over the next year, the hotel, pool hall, and coffee farm were sold off to pay debts and to raise money to survive. A couple years later Yasu started working for the telephone company in Kona, however after a few years he decided to continue his studies at the University of Hawaii. Before leaving for university, he made sure his younger brother Chitose had the ability to care for the family by giving him his job with the telephone company. Over the next decade, due to the lack of employment and loss of land in Kona, Otokichi's children and wife left Kona in search of better opportunities. Of his five children, only Chitose remained in Kona. In 1933 he married Doris Hamasaki, who was from Honokaa on the Hamakua coast. Like his father, Chitose became well known within the Japanese community in Kona. Despite the low coffee prices and the shortage of many things during the Great Depression, he continued to send money and goods to his father's family back in Japan, viewing it as his responsibility to take over for his father who had died so suddenly.

This connection to his father's homeland, however, was severed when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941. After the attack, the world changed for the Japanese community in Kona: religious leaders, Japanese-language teachers, and all business owners with ties to Japan were rounded up and taken to internment camps, both on Hawaii and on the mainland. The Japanese shrines were destroyed almost overnight and temples were taken over to house the military police. Hatred toward the Japanese among the non-Japanese community in Kona grew and it became impossible for the Japanese to continue openly practicing their religion and culture, or to speak their language. Business transactions and shopping, which had previously been simple tasks, became harder as discrimination became more pronounced.

After war broke out with Japan, many *Nisei* decided to join the military in order to prove their loyalty to America. Chitose's older brother, Yasu, was among them. He served with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team in Europe, which would later become one of the most decorated regiments. Chitose weathered the storm of the war with his family in Kona. He did his best to keep up good relations with the

non-Japanese community, even going as far as calling himself a “local” instead of “Japanese” to help lessen the stigmatism. Despite the scrutiny the Japanese community faced, they pulled together and through various discreet ways utilized the *kumi* (neighborhood associations), *kenjinkai* (prefectural associations), and *fujinkai* (women’s organizations) to assist those families hardest hit by the war.

Further changes in the Japanese community in Kona came about with the end of the war. As full-time coffee farming was now insufficiently lucrative to maintain an acceptable standard of living, many began to seek work outside of the coffee fields. It was not uncommon for the *Nisei* to have a full-time job while also doing some part-time coffee farming, or to supplement their coffee farming income with part-time work. Chitose thought himself lucky because he was able to keep his job with the telephone company through the Depression, the war, and through the following years. Over those years, he managed to save up money and after the war he was able to purchase an acre of land with a new house on it. Although he had not farmed since his father had died, he decided to begin again on this new land. Like many others who had full-time jobs he did this to obtain a supplementary income, but also, in part, to honor the hard work and struggles his father had gone through in the early years of coffee farming in Kona.

The *kumi* were utilized to build solidarity among the Japanese community, and now a new event, the summer gathering, was created for this purpose. Unlike the more traditional New Year’s gatherings, the summer gatherings that began to be held in the post-war period centered around family. They were similar to American beach barbecues. At this time, *kumi* also continued to play a key role in organizing funerals for their members.

In this period, too, Buddhist religious practices were reestablished within the temples—after the military police vacated them at the end of the war. Religious ceremonies resumed, unchanged. However, due to the stigma associated with the Shinto shrines during wartime, the *Nisei* in Kona never rebuilt them, for fear of being seen as un-American. In later years, the *Nisei* would lament the loss of this significant part of their traditional culture.

While Otokichi never had the opportunity to go back to Japan as he had originally planned, he also never got to the point where he realized that he would be staying in Kona for the rest of his life. For many of the *Issei*, like Otokichi, it took years to let go of the dream of returning to Japan, which meant it took them longer to invest in a life in Kona.

However, while they retained this dream of returning to Japan, as the years passed it became harder to leave—life in Kona was so good: the climate was ideal throughout the year and no matter how bad coffee prices might be, there was always plenty of food. Also, there was a dense and closely knit community to which they belonged. Kona offered them a place to stay and prosper, and they eventually came to feel that the opportunities for their children were better in America than they would be back in Japan. In this way, the *Issei* slowly gave up their plans to return and slowly embraced their new lives in Kona. Due to the time it took for them to embrace the permanent nature of their presence in Kona, as well as the large size of the Japanese population, the *children of the Issei* formed a dual cultural identity which enabled them to switch between Japanese culture and American mainstream culture depending on the situation in which they found themselves.

SCOPE OF THIS BOOK

This story of Otokichi and his son Chitose is individual, yet at the same time it is representative of the experiences of the thousands of Japanese immigrants and their children in Kona, Hawaii, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is also a very personal narrative, as Otokichi and Chitose were, respectively, my own great-grandfather and grandfather. Growing up in Kona as a fourth-generation (*Yonsei*) Japanese, these kinds of narrative histories were seldom shared outside the family—they were both ubiquitous, in that each family had one, but also kept silent due to the painful memories they involved, relating to stigmatization, discrimination, and the shame associated with this past. However, now that most of the *Issei* (first generation of Japanese immigrants) have passed away and the *Nisei* (second generation) have advanced in age, these stories are finally being shared openly.

Centered around the personal accounts of the *Nisei*, this book is an ethnographic study of the Japanese coffee farming community in Kona, Hawaii, from the late 1880s to the late 1960s. It explores the lives of Japanese immigrants and their children, who confronted economic adversities, systematic marginalization, and changing social conditions. It integrates aspects of ethnic and religious identity with assimilation theory to explain how the *Nisei* retained a strong sense of Japanese cultural heritage despite the pressures they experienced to integrate into American society. This research sheds light on how the Japanese farming community

responded to changing social issues, which at times led to an increase in ethnic solidarity and, at others, led to assimilation and secularization. It examines how many of these migrants maintained a strong link with their families and culture back in Japan, and it also analyzes the post-war activities of these transnational migrants: as some of them sought to reconnect with their family in Japan, while most decided to make the United States their permanent home.

This study is not the first that has been made of Japanese Americans. However, it is unique in that it studies the Japanese community in Kona. Due to the relative isolation of Kona and the high number of Japanese who settled there, Kona provides a particularly interesting research site: there was no white majority, which led to delayed assimilation into mainstream American culture, as well as helping to foster, among later generations, the creation of two identities, an American and Japanese identity—in other words a dual identity. I have chosen to restrict my analysis to an exploration of the vitality of the *Issei* and *Nisei* immigrants that came to be a part of the Kona Coffee Belt farming community. That is, I investigate a rural coffee farming community that maintained ethnic connectedness across two generations, and that preserved a similar family structure. This research will examine how the Japanese identity in Kona transformed across two generations, the ways in which *Issei* and *Nisei* maintained their ethnic identity through social and religious organizations, and how the *Nisei* defined their Japanese identity.

DATA COLLECTION

The research for this book took approximately seven years to complete, from 2005 to 2012. Approximately 45 days, at various intervals, were spent in the field. This fieldwork focused on collecting interviewees' memories of the 70-year period from the late 1880s until the late 1960s.⁴ Approximately 60 people were interviewed for this study, the majority of whom have resided in Kona District for their entire lives. At the time of the interviews, 3 individuals were full-time coffee farmers, 18 were part-time farmers, and the others were store and hotel owners or held various other occupations. For the life histories of the *Issei*, documents, personal notes, secondary sources, and interview narratives obtained from the voices of the children of the *Issei* are utilized. Childhood recollections from many *Nisei* provided the research with dynamic, rich, and intriguing information concerning the *Issei*'s experiences. Much of the book is devoted to

the narratives of the *Nisei*. In some cases, experiences about the *Nisei* were extracted from their children, the *Sansei*.⁵

Abstracting critical, interesting, rich, and informational narratives proved challenging. Many of the *Nisei* residing in the rural areas of Hawaii retained a high level of two particular *Meiji*-era characteristics: *tatemaie* (the art of hiding your feelings), and a reluctance to share information easily. Gaining the trust of elderly *Nisei* was vital and thus I began first by establishing a connection, utilizing my grandfather's reputation in Kona District. For example, after introducing myself as a researcher, I would say, "I am sure you know my grandfather Chitose Abe. He worked for the telephone company." Following this opening gambit I was soon accepted into the majority of their homes. My access was also helped by the fact that the majority of the *Nisei* knew that if their stories were not told now, they might not get a second chance. As one participant stated, "This is our last chance to make sure we share these stories with the next generation."⁶

It is worth noting that the *Nisei* wanted to be interviewed and to tell their stories because early on in their lives it had been tremendously difficult to talk about subjects that were deemed to be damaging to the community. Now that many *Nisei* are passing away and there are only a few left, many are taking on the responsibility of making sure that these stories are not lost but are shared with the younger generations. Another reason the *Nisei* were willing to tell their stories is because doing so no longer poses a threat: "After all of these years I am not worried about, for example, getting fired or getting weird looks or you know, I just think that I am old now so I am free to say what I want" (Fukushima, interview 2009).⁷ I have therefore been fortunate in my research, in the sense that I have had the opportunity to utilize in-depth narratives to capture the life of the Japanese community in Kona as it then existed.

PREVIOUS STUDIES ON KONA

The content of this study comes from discussions with members of the Japanese Kona coffee farming community about the pressures they felt to assimilate during the course of their lives. This topic was discussed several decades ago by Andrew Lind,⁸ who described Kona as an isolated rural community that lagged ten years behind other Japanese communities in terms of its participation in mainstream American culture. Consequently, Lind found that the *Nisei* in Kona District acquired a higher Japanese-language proficiency level and greater knowledge of Japanese traditions

and culture in comparison to *Nisei* in other Japanese communities. More specifically, the study also grew out of my own personal interest in telling the fascinating and dynamic stories of the *Issei* (the first-generation Japanese immigrants) and their children. Thus, in this book I hope to paint a detailed picture of the lives of the Japanese coffee farming community in Kona that includes my observations on, and interpretations and analysis of, the social issues, economic despair, ethnic solidarity, and resilience that marked this immigrant community.

Previous anthropological research on the Japanese community in Kona is limited to the work of just a few scholars: most important of which are John Embree's monograph *Acculturation Among the Japanese of Kona, Hawaii*, and Andrew Lind's article "Assimilation in Rural Hawaii," both published in 1939.

Embree's research offered a comprehensive historical overview of the *Issei* and *Nisei* Kona coffee farmers from the beginning of the Japanese labor migration to Kona in the late 1880s. Embree's ethnographic study was the pioneering anthropological fieldwork study in this area. Before his fieldwork in Kona, Embree immersed himself in Japanese culture, residing for a year and a half with his wife⁹ in a small village in Kumamoto, Japan.¹⁰ The result of Embree's anthropological fieldwork was the classic *Suye Mura: A Japanese Village*. Following its publication, he tracked down family members of that village who had migrated to Kona during the international labor migration movement at the turn of the century. Soon after, Embree moved to Kona and immersed himself in this isolated coffee farming community, where the population was approximately 80 percent Japanese, 40 percent of whom came from the prefecture of Kumamoto. The result of this research was Embree's *Acculturation Among the Japanese of Kona, Hawaii*, a monograph dealing with the Japanese farmers¹¹ that focused on "changes in the social organization, the network of social relations, which took place in rural Japanese society when transplanted from Southern Japan to the Island of Hawaii."

Embree examined the importance of social solidarity within the Japanese farming community. He showed how Buddhist temples, Shinto shrines, *kenjinkai*, *kumi* (local groups), as well as various Japanese cultural experiences—such as marriages, funerals, and *Obon*—were vital elements in the social interaction of the Japanese community. Embree's study also explored the interactional dimensions of the *Issei* and the young *Nisei* community. In the monograph, Embree confirms explicit behavioral patterns relating to Japanese norms and values regarding hierarchical structures. Embree's

research was comprehensive in that it was not confined to political issues, but rather dealt mainly with the *Issei*'s pre- and post-immigration lives, which were central to the Kona community's cultural dynamics.

Embree's work is significant because it confirms the nature of the Japanese culture that arrived in Hawaii from Japan. In making clear this dynamic, Embree was incredibly successful in measuring individual acculturation and the maintenance of Japanese cultural heritage within the Kona community. Embree's study examined intricate details regarding the Japanese experience in Kona, and, in many cases, it is possible to revisit his work by applying current anthropological theories. For instance, some elements of his framework are consistent with various assimilation theories. Within the Kona Japanese farming community, assimilation was complex, in the sense that it was multidimensional. In his research, Embree revealed in many instances a dual process of discarding and preserving old traditions, language, and cultural heritage.¹²

Andrew Lind's "Assimilation in Rural Hawaii"¹³ is another ethnographic study of the cultural assimilation of *Issei* and *Nisei* migrant farmers. Lind's article provides a general overview of the Japanese community and focuses heavily on descriptions of, and statistics for, that community. Lind's research examined the *Issei* and *Nisei*'s pre- and post-immigrant life and culture. Lind does make reference to the uniqueness of the research site as having a demographically high concentration of ethnic Japanese, and being geographically rural. Lind explains, "Kona signified 'little Japan' to Island residents for over a generation. Certainly, the language, as the carrier and symbol of culture, has remained predominantly Japanese."¹⁴ Lind contributed to the history of *Issei* and *Nisei* by revealing aspects of religious elements, such as Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines. He also documented the importance of social solidarity by analyzing the way in which the Japanese migrants in Hawaii created their own distinctive Japanese community.

This research strives to continue the work done by Embree and Lind by providing a narrative that brings to life the experience of the *Issei* and *Nisei* living in Kona between the late 1880s and the late 1960s.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDIES ON JAPANESE AMERICANS

The history of anthropological research concerning early *Issei* in Hawaii and the West Coast of the United States focused largely on the early Japanese labor migration,¹⁵ political movements against Japanese immigration,

and the assimilation process. This includes subjects such as immigration and land reform legislation that aimed to halt the migration of Japanese communities to the West Coast, and later to Hawaii.¹⁶ As they became more successful economically, Japanese immigrants became targets of discrimination. The movement against Japanese immigration started on the West Coast with the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907, and finally led to a restriction of Japanese immigration to Hawaii in 1924. In Hawaii, hardship on the sugarcane plantations and the transformation outside the plantation community were popular research topics in the 1980s and 1990s.¹⁷

Since the end of World War II, the majority of Japanese American scholarly works have focused on issues of victimization, xenophobia, and the experience of the West Coast Japanese communities who were forced into internment camps.¹⁸ However, as many of the Japanese Americans in Hawaii were fortunate to escape the terrible and unjust internment, this last issue is less relevant when studying the community in Kona.

In Hawaii, approximately 2000 *Issei* community leaders, Buddhist priests, and storeowners were rounded up and interned, either in five camps on the islands or in several internment camps on the mainland. In terms of research work on Japanese communities during the war, research on the concentration camps in the aftermath of World War II has overshadowed studies of the struggling Japanese *Nisei* communities in Hawaii during the war.¹⁹ For this reason, part of this book is dedicated to an analysis of ethnic solidarity, assimilation, and identity formation in a mostly Japanese homogeneous environment where the inhabitants were not sent to internment camps (although racial discrimination did take place).

Aside from the issues of victimization and the internment camps, a number of scholarly works have focused on adaptation among *Issei* immigrants and *Nisei* on the mainland and in Hawaii. Various studies in this vein have covered subjects such as family, gender, work, resistance, marriage, and Japanese norms and values.²⁰ Traditional Japanese norms and values are important for understanding early *Issei* and *Nisei* community formation and reproduction. Norms are shared standards in a culture that serve to provide the backdrop for communication. For instance, social norms provide a basis for relational behavior, ensuring that an individual appropriately interacts with other members of the community and has the ability to judge the actions of others. Japanese social norms involve very intricate rules regarding social interactions, such as regard for relatively permanent hierarchical status positions and regard for behavioral reserve and discipline. Several scholars have concluded that *Issei* parents

emphasized certain traditional Japanese values and behavior patterns: *oya-koko* (filial piety),²¹ *giri* (ascribed obligation), *ninjo* (humane sensibility), and *enryo* (modesty).²² To further understand the *Issei* and *Nisei*, this book attends to the following behavior elements among the Japanese coffee farming community in Kona: *onshirazu* (lack of obligation), *tatema* (literally, facade), *hajishirazu* (shame), and *bachi* (bad karma). These behavior patterns promoted a highly structured social system among the Kona community, with a conformist and obedient ruled class, and a high degree of order throughout the hierarchical structure. The majority of members of the Japanese community in Kona internalized this system and placed a high value on it.²³

Traditional Japanese values can be seen as beliefs or clusters of attitudes that give direction to behavior.²⁴ Numerous past studies have investigated the values of the Japanese. For example, Mamoru Iga discovered that Japanese values related to group loyalties and identification leaned more toward specific institutions, such as the house, family, or employer—in contrast to more universal value systems, such as religions.²⁵ Other significant values, including traditionalism, regard for conventional behaviors, and obedience to rules and regulations, were learned at home. For example, showing *gaman* (self-control) and *kansha* (gratitude) are highly desirable behaviors. The majority of the *Nisei* community expressed the view that suffering and hard work were necessary components for character building.²⁶

Among the studies that have investigated Japanese values, the majority provide excellent insightful descriptions of traditional Japanese norms and values; however, they do not articulate the status of these norms and values when those who practice them interact with people outside of the Japanese community. These studies have also failed to explore the inner psyche of the *Nisei*—the ways in which the *Nisei* conform to the dynamic dimension of bicultural conditions. The issue of how the *Nisei* struggled to reconcile the dual cross-cultural visions—for example, those presented to them by teachers at school and parents at home—has been insufficiently explored. This is crucial because if we explore this area it will turn our attention to how people construct, exhibit, and feel about their ethnic and religious identities. Utilizing in-depth interviews, visiting people's homes, and compiling participant observation experiences, this new information sheds further light on the processes of the maintenance, attenuation, intensification—and in some cases the revitalization—of ethnic and religious identities within the Japanese community in Kona. Most importantly, in focusing on the narrative accounts of their lives, this book

is able to show how important it was for the residents of this small rural farming community to maintain and build ethnic solidarity.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

The Ethnic Identity Framework

Ethnic identity has been defined in numerous different ways, but the multiple definitions have usually shared certain similarities. The aim here is not to present the complex history of the idea of ethnic identity and to debate the meaning of the term, but rather to make clear which definition will be used for the purposes of this study.

Elsis Smith argues that ethnic identity is the identification “by people who share a common history and culture, who may be identifiable because they share similar physical features and values, and who through the process of interacting with each other and establishing boundaries with others, identify themselves as being a member of that group.”²⁷ Wsevolod Isajiw²⁸ recognizes over 12 elements that can be used to define ethnicity, related to ancestry, culture, religion, race, and language.²⁹ Fredrik Barth³⁰ defines ethnic identity as the role an individual plays. That role depends upon the ascriptive ethnic labeling of oneself, as well as labeling by others. In other words, ethnic identity reflects classifications made by oneself and by others. Thus, depending on the conditions and one’s interaction with others, one’s ethnic identity will change: ethnic identities are “situational.” Joane Nagel describes “ethnic identity as the product of the constant reconstruction of boundaries and meanings surrounding ethnicity.”³¹ She suggests that as ethnicity continues to change and redefine itself, the meaning of one’s ethnic identity also changes. Furthermore, ethnic identity changes due to “variations in the situations and audiences encountered.”³² This study defines ethnic identity as the identification with others who have a perceived shared history and culture, which is dependent upon the context or situation, and upon interaction with others.

Herbert Gans suggests that there is a difference between symbolic identity and ethnic identity. He argues that for white Europeans ethnic identity is “symbolic”³³: for many white Europeans ethnicity is personal and has no real social cost for the individual. It is articulated only through symbolic instances of identification, such as important ethnic events like St. Patrick’s Day for Irish Americans. Symbolic ethnicity has no real social consequences because it does not organize, or impact, everyday lives. Crucially, symbolic ethnicity

is voluntary. Ethnic identity, by contrast, amounts to more than just festivals, holidays, or traditions; it is not something that people can voluntarily assume and it does have social consequences for individuals. For non-white Americans, their ethnicity is something they are constantly reminded of whether they strongly identify with it or not because of their appearance. Simply put, they are not white and therefore they are constantly being reminded of that fact. In addition, ethnic identity is expressed in the languages one speaks, and the cultural and religious customs they practice, and which differ from those of white Americans. For the Japanese American community in Kona, language (the ability to speak some Japanese and Hawaiian Creole) is one identifying factor of their ethnicity. Religious practices (Buddhist and Shinto), as well as cultural practices (such as traditional weddings, funerals and daily practices such as baths and meals) also add to their ethnic identity as members of the Japanese community in Kona. It is this ethnic identity that this study draws attention to and analyzes in regard to the *Issei* and *Nisei*.

For the Japanese community in Kona, their ethnic identity was composed of several dimensions. The *Issei* brought their identity as Japanese, which can be seen, for example, in their possession of *Meiji*-era values, with them to Kona and it is from the *Issei* that the *Nisei* received their identity as Japanese. This dimension was then strengthened by the priests and educators who were brought from Japan to instruct the Japanese community in religious practices and to educate the children of the *Issei* in the Japanese language. Therefore, the relationship of the Japanese community in Kona to the homeland helped them build and maintain their ethnic identity. In addition, their relationship to the white Americans (e.g., the coffee wholesalers, landowners, educators), as well as the relationship to the other ethnic groups in Hawaii, helped to refine and shape their Japanese identity within the community as they were the largest ethnic group living in Kona. In other words, the social status of the Japanese community in relation to the white Americans and other ethnic groups strengthened their identity as Japanese living in Kona. This concept of ethnic identity is drawn from the interviews with the *Nisei*, in which they referred to themselves as “Japanese” instead of “Japanese Americans,” and where they discussed being “pure Japanese” as opposed to having mixed heritage.

Assimilation

In the early- to mid-twentieth century, scholars examining assimilation in the United States were split regarding whether immigrants would melt into an American pot or would preserve their cultures. The main

debate was between assimilationists, who believed assimilation to be inevitable, and the pluralists, who regarded cultural pluralism as more likely.³⁴ Assimilationists advocated a melting-pot theory that assumes immigrants, given time, will transform their original values and other cultural traits into those of the dominant American society.³⁵ The pluralists, rejecting the melting-pot theory, emphasized the persistence of ethnicity within a culturally diverse society.³⁶

Contemporary assimilation theory begins with Robert Park,³⁷ who proposed an orderly life cycle of ethnic contact, competition, accommodation, and eventual assimilation. Park and Ernest Burgess defined assimilation as “a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life.”³⁸ They argued that assimilation is composed of four stages in a “race relations cycle”: contact, competition, conflict, and accommodation.³⁹ In many ways, most scholars concur with Park and Burgess, who argued that assimilation is typically an unconscious process that is more likely to occur within the second generation and at the level of primary social relations: for instance, in the form of friendship and intermarriage. Adaptation, on the other hand, is likely to occur at the secondary level, at such places as schools, the workplace, and social events.

In analyzing the process of assimilation, Milton Gordon⁴⁰ emphasized the need to separate cultural behavior from social structure. To do this, he proposed two analytical categories: cultural assimilation and structural assimilation. Gordon defined cultural assimilation (or simply acculturation) as “a process ... on the part of the immigrants becoming incorporated into mainstream American society in cultural patterns, such as language, behavior, and values.”⁴¹ The first step in Gordon’s model involves the immigrant group’s gradual adoption of the cultural habits of the “core sub-society,” which he defined as white middle class Protestants for the United States. An important part of acculturation is the adoption of the English language, usually followed by a strong preference for English in later generations. Building on this, Kim⁴² proposed a communication-acculturation theory, arguing that acculturation should be judged by the degree of immigrants’ facility in various methods of communication in the dominant culture. Kim articulated certain critical variables, such as the immigrants’ daily environment, the types of interpersonal relationships between immigrants and the host culture, knowledge of the host language, motivation to acculturate, and types of media communication accessed. Moreover, others have proposed that cultural assimilation entails additive and sub-

tractive factors. Additive acculturation occurs when an individual expands his or her existing cultural repertoire without a loss of ancestral cultural practices. Subtractive acculturation occurs when the dominant host culture replaces the ancestral culture.⁴³ For example, Marshall Sklare and Joseph Greenblum noted that North American immigrant Jews carried out their own rituals in a way that permitted both survival and integration.⁴⁴

Gordon's structural assimilation, on the other hand, entails "the full integration of immigrants and their descendants into the major institutions of society; for instance, educational, occupational, political, and into the social cliques, clubs, and institutions of the core society that lead to intimate primary relationships, including intermarriage."⁴⁵ Gordon explained that while acculturation is inevitable, structural assimilation is not. He advocated three possible end-states: (1) Anglo-conformity: adaptation into the dominant core society; (2) melting-pot: various ethnic groups melt into one; and (3) cultural pluralism: the preservation of the immigrant group's culture, alongside political and economic integration into the dominant society.

Other scholars have focused on the structural constraints to the rate of assimilation.⁴⁶ For instance, Warner and Srole's research on European immigrants during World War II argued that upward social mobility was possible only among the most culturally assimilated groups. They concluded that assimilation was quicker for Europeans in comparison to non-Europeans.⁴⁷ Gordon discovered that Anglo-conformity (cultural assimilation) does not always lead to structural assimilation, particularly for the non-white population. He claimed that American society is a structurally pluralistic one, where primary group-level interactions among different ethnic group members are substantially limited. Thus, entrance into the clubs, cliques, and institutions of the host society at the primary level is hindered and delayed—leading to structural segregation.

The debates between assimilationists and pluralists resulted in two opposing approaches to measuring acculturation. The one-dimensional approach assumes adaptation to the new culture necessarily means weakening ties with the original culture. In contrast, the multidimensional approach either involves assessing the individual's cultural orientation toward both their home and host cultures, or recognizes that the acculturation process encompasses multiple acculturation domains, including language, customs, self-identification, preferences, attitudes, and values.⁴⁸ Herbert Gans, drawing on ideas formulated by Warner and Srole,⁴⁹ emphasized the role of generational changes in driving the assimilation process—commonly described as straight-line assimilation.⁵⁰ While a certain degree of acculturation occurs among the first-generation immigrants,

straight-line theory describes the group-level process of assimilation as being primarily a function of generational replacement. Each succeeding generation is considered to be further detached from the culture of their homeland, and closer to becoming, in the context about which Gans was writing, completely “American.”

In understanding the concept of assimilation, it is also vital to note its mutual counterpart, dissimilation, or the process by which “intrasocietal differences are maintained and created around sub-cultural groups.”⁵¹ According to Milton Yinger, assimilation functions as a multidimensional process of boundary reduction that occurs between two or more societies. As mentioned previously, while various scholars have argued about whether or not the assimilation process is inevitable, it has also been argued that assimilation is rarely completed. Therefore, understanding assimilation involves understanding the dual processes of discarding while preserving traditions, languages, and cultures. For instance, when the population of the ethnic group is small, relative to the dominant population, assimilation might occur more quickly than in the case of an ethnic group with larger numbers. Likewise, West Coast Japanese American *Nisei* communities, which possessed various economic opportunities, were more likely to assimilate faster than the rural *Nisei* community in Hawaii, which had limited resources. Kona, where this research was conducted, is one of the few places with a large ethnic Japanese community with nonlinear results, due to multidimensional elements within the community. Therefore, in order to understand the assimilation process of the Japanese community in Kona, it is vital to consider that process as also including dissimilation. This is because, as Yinger has stated, “To study the conditions under which the cultural lines of division within a society are weakened is at the same time to study the conditions under which they are reinforced.”⁵²

Japanese American Assimilation

Various scholars have realized that increases in the social acceptance of West Coast and Hawaiian Japanese communities, and of their socioeconomic status, were an “out-and-out double-edged sword”—societal rewards were received at the expense of ethnic culture and attachments.⁵³ On the other hand, other researchers have found that the acculturation process of Japanese immigrants did not weaken Japanese ties, but, rather, facilitated a creative altering of ethnic modalities and alternative displays of ethnic attachment.⁵⁴ This section considers Japanese experiences in Kona within the context of assimilation debates, including questions surrounding

criteria for measuring Japanese identity, the competing interpretations of relevant data, and possible sources of Japanese affection and disaffection.

In a survey of literature on Japanese American identity and immigrant adaptation in the United States, Harry Kitano⁵⁵ confirmed that Japanese Americans had rapidly advanced to middle class status—measured by factors of income, education, and occupation. He identified Japanese Americans as having more education and a higher annual income than non-Asian groups in the United States. Several scholars have suggested that the short time within which Japanese Americans achieved acculturation is remarkable.⁵⁶ For example, just two years after the war, most *Nisei* in Illinois held white-collar and skilled trade jobs.⁵⁷ There are several reasons for the short time it took for Japanese Americans to acculturate. Prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, as friction between Japan and the United States began to escalate, many Japanese Americans strongly declared their loyalty to the United States, sensing that their allegiance would be questioned. Moreover, the internment of Japanese Americans during the war has been referred to as one of the most significant factors that fostered an accelerated process of acculturation.⁵⁸ Approximately 20,000 Japanese Americans interned on the West Coast chose, after their release, to move east or to settle in the Midwest so as to avoid further suffering and humiliation.⁵⁹ This increased their contact with Midwesterners, which fostered their acculturation. As Caudill and DeVos indicated, the Japanese were accepted more readily by the white American middle class in the Midwest because their value systems were comparable.⁶⁰

Another area of similarity between the Japanese immigrants and the white American community was education. Leonard Broom and John Kitsuse⁶¹ have credited the rapid acculturation of Japanese Americans to the similar emphasis placed on formal education by both American and Japanese cultures, and the general accessibility of formal education for the Japanese in America. The median level of education for the *Nisei* in the Chicago area was similar to that of the West Coast Japanese communities: they obtained some form of higher education. It has been noted that the *Issei* had a surprisingly high level of education for immigrants: a median of ten years according to Caudill and DeVos.⁶² Meanwhile, the majority who did not have the opportunity to enter college signed up for vocational training in order to become secretaries, laboratory technicians, beauticians, or skilled workers.

By contrast to the relatively rapid acculturation of Japanese immigrant communities on the West Coast and in the Midwest, assimilation was

a much slower process for rural Japanese communities in Kona. Eileen Tamura has stated that the *Issei* in Hawaii interacted among themselves, while shunning those who deviated from Japanese norms.⁶³ Many Japanese lived in segregated camps on the sugar plantations, and when they left the plantations, they continued to live largely within their *Issei* communities. The Japanese communities retained many of their own customs, with the support of *kenjinkai*,⁶⁴ Buddhist temples, and language schools.

Education was a strong factor in the rapid acculturation of Japanese in the mainland United States.⁶⁵ In the case of the Hawaiian experience,⁶⁶ however, while the quality of education appears to have been good, it does not appear to have promoted acculturation. Eileen Tamura has utilized numerous success stories to illustrate the influence of the *Issei* on the *Nisei*'s involvement in early and higher education. Her analysis portrays young *Nisei* as being high achievers in education: she shows that they formulated this achievement as being "Japanese" or as "the Japanese way." However, despite the fact that Hawaii had an equal—or in some rural areas superior—education system to that on the mainland, and despite that the Japanese in Hawaii prided themselves on their educational achievement, nevertheless Tamura's research concluded that the Japanese in Hawaii did not experience rapid acculturation as a result of their education levels.

Jurgen Ruesch⁶⁷ has suggested that acculturation to the core American culture is a function of a number of cues and responses that an individual possesses in common with the dominant social group. In support of Ruesch's hypothesis, William Caudill⁶⁸ has implied that the values and morals of the Japanese culture are compatible with the cultural value system of the American middle class. Elements that fostered acculturation by Japanese immigrants were respect for *oyakoko* (authority and parental wishes), *on* (the importance of keeping up appearances, the utilization of similar adaptive mechanisms such as extreme sensitivity to cues from the external world and adjusting behavior accordingly), and *tatemaie* (the suppression of desires and real emotional feelings). Studies by Kikuchi and Gordon⁶⁹ had similar results: in comparing Japanese and American interpersonal values in a cross-cultural study, they discovered that even though the values of the Japanese and Americans differed, there was a high degree of similarity in the overall value system.

Retaining certain traditional values allowed Japanese in the United States to retain a Japanese ethnic identity. Joyce Hieshima and Barbara Schneider⁷⁰ have stated that the retention of Japanese cultural values was strongly connected to the deep-rooted nature of those values and the tacit

mechanisms by which they were transmitted. After the war, the concentration of Japanese ethnic communities on the West Coast dwindled considerably, corresponding to a decline of Japanese cultural values.⁷¹ Despite these expectations, family solidarity and identification remained significant factors among Japanese American families.⁷² Colleen Johnson has found that family solidarity continued to be present in Japanese American families, even where structural changes (from a patrilineal family structure to a bilateral American structure) had taken place.⁷³ Changes in inheritance rules and filial obligations to include the entire sibling group may have possibly increased family solidarity.

Minoru Masuda, Gary Matsumoto, and Gerald Meredith,⁷⁴ have assessed the degree of ethnic identification among three generations of Japanese Americans on the West Coast. They suggested that ethnic identification was prominent among the *Sansei*. The *Sansei* showed pride in their Japanese ancestry, an appreciation of the value of Japanese cultural contributions, and a desire to maintain and enjoy their Japanese cultural heritage. Furthermore, a study conducted by Barbara Newton, Elizabeth Buck, Don Kunimura, Carol Colfer, and Deborah Scholsberg⁷⁵ revealed that higher ethnicity scores than in previous studies suggested that ethnic identification among Japanese Americans in Hawaii was on the increase in the 1970s.

For Japanese Americans, the issue of being “in-between” is important for understanding the processes of assimilation. Many *Issei* in Hawaii registered their children with the Japanese consulate, meaning that the majority of *Nisei* possessed dual citizenship.⁷⁶ Dual US and Japanese citizenship remained common even after Japan liberalized its nationality law. However, despite the overwhelming consensus that expatriation from the United States to Japan was the right and proper thing to do, and despite the fact that many *Nisei* had Japanese citizenship, as the years passed and the *Nisei* came of age, they were exceptionally slow to make the move. They therefore remained adapted to two cultures. This did not represent a substantial liability for the Japanese *Issei* and *Nisei*. Yuji Ichioka⁷⁷ refers to this condition as “dualism.” Dualism gave *Nisei*, for the most part, the flexibility to embrace one nation without rejecting the other. It also placed *Nisei* in the unique position of acting as “bridges of understanding” between the United States and Japan during a critical historical moment. David Yoo⁷⁸ has argued that the majority of *Nisei* were at times hesitant and unwilling to utilize their dual roles because they envisioned no other opportunities, as they were marginal in both America and Japan.

Other scholars, including Lon Kurashige,⁷⁹ have concluded that among the Japanese American community “biculturalism” was a strategy (usually manifested in the form of public “Japanese” celebrations) that was designed to boost the ethnic economy as well as to create an impression of a unified Japanese American community.

In regard to the Japanese communities on the West Coast, it has been shown that in such a complex culture inhabited by several ethnic minorities, individuals may experience forms of “identity diffusion,” where there is an inner experience of internal conflict between inconsistent or contrasting directives and values, as well as an internal sense of devaluation.⁸⁰ Because of their desire to assimilate to mainstream American society, in some instances the West Coast *Nisei* began to minimize and discredit their own Japanese cultural heritage, becoming victims (and perpetrators) of “self-hate.”⁸¹ However, as Daisuke Kitagawa’s studies have showed, it was impossible for the *Nisei* not to be Japanese: it seems that the more anti-Japanese they were, the more Japanese they became. Kitagawa found that the *Nisei* saw themselves as superior to other minorities and that their value system was very Japanese in the fact that they placed an enormous emphasis on hierarchy.⁸² Ironically, for the most part the *Nisei* took their Japanese cultural heritage much more seriously than the *Issei*. Moreover, despite their struggles with their own identity, the *Nisei* did not abandon the Japanese community. In fact, the *Nisei* prevented individual *Nisei* becoming too Americanized: an individual that strayed in this way would be ostracized by his or her peer group. The *Nisei* were very sensitive to the censure of the Japanese community: what others thought of them mattered. It was not acceptable to be different from other *Nisei*.

Assimilation in Kona

Social science research on ethnic identity and assimilation is key to this study of *Issei* and *Nisei* in Kona, not only because of the study’s reference to the previous work by John Embree and Andrew Lind, but also because these are recurring themes that appear in the personal narratives of the people interviewed for this study—they are the conceptual or analytical categories of scholars studying immigrants as well as frameworks that the immigrant Japanese in Kona use to situate their experiences. This literature review has discussed some of the complexity involved in the process of assimilation in the United States, both generally and specifically for Japanese Americans in Hawaii and the mainland. The

present section expands upon this review to explain how and why the Japanese immigrant experiences in Kona are in many ways unique. The practical differences, already mentioned above, are the isolated and rural location of Kona, which separated their day-to-day experiences from those of mainstream American society, the propensity to become landowners, which allowed for relatively independent modes of economic production, the large proportion of the Japanese population (as high as 80 percent), which developed into a tight-knit community, and the avoidance of the mass internment during World War II that disrupted the continuity of many other Japanese immigrant communities. The effect of these differences was not just a delay in the assimilation process, as has been argued by Lind, but a distinct assimilation experience that fostered a situational or dual cultural identity that was, at once, both Japanese and American.

Theoretically, these differences can be explained by reference to the work of Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu's work has been useful in the research of many scholars studying immigration over the past two decades.⁸³ Bourdieu's "Theory of Practice"⁸⁴ examines the interrelationship between structure and agency—the ways that, on the one hand, society sets rules that control and delimit the behaviors of people, and, on the other, the ability of an individual to make independent decisions regarding the best course of action in any particular situation. Generally, Bourdieu's work is concerned with the dynamics surrounding power and class that stem from inequality in access to resources. In application to immigration and assimilation studies, his work has been useful in drawing "attention to the dynamic transformations of social actor's values, orientations, beliefs and behaviors in relation to the field to which he or she becomes and is a part of."⁸⁵ Bourdieu's practice theory shows how the individual decisions and adjustments made while adapting to life in the United States are constrained by the broader social, economic, and political settings in which immigrants carve out their new lives. Immigrants are neither free to live their lives as they wish (as they have to "play by the rules" of their settings), nor are they simply bound by the rules and fated to assimilate uniformly. The three foundational, and interlinked, aspects of Bourdieu's theory explained here are field, capital, and habitus.⁸⁶

Bourdieu explains that the actions of individuals take place within a social space that provides the backdrop for their meaning, intent, and purpose. Social spaces contain several social fields—such as the fields of art, literature, or science—that may be further divided into subfields.

According to Bourdieu, fields serve as a “universe or microcosm in which the agents and institutions are integrated and interact with each other in accordance with field-specific rules.”⁸⁷ Each field is autonomous, as the rules for one field are distinct from others—but only to the extent that any one field is conditioned by the broader social space (e.g., politics, religion, or economy) in which it is embedded. The rules of a field are generally not explicit or formalized, but rather are internalized by agents into what Bourdieu calls the “doxa”—the embodied sense of place and the implicit understanding of what actions are possible, necessary, or relevant, and those that are not. In regard to this study of the Japanese community in Kona, Bourdieu’s notion of social space and field helps explain why the trajectory of assimilation of the Japanese *Issei* and *Nisei* in Kona was at once similar to the experiences of Japanese (and other ethnic groups) elsewhere in the United States, but also unique in the way it unfolded. As Hawaii was a territory of the United States (it became a state in 1959), its residents shared the broader economic, political, and cultural experiences of those elsewhere. Yet the geographic and historical distance of Hawaii from the mainland, alongside the isolation of Kona on the island of Hawaii itself, is part of the reason why life in Kona provided distinct opportunities and expectations (e.g., fields) that structured the actions of its residents.

Fields are understood as a locus for struggles between dominant and dominated classes. One’s position within a field or social space, or even the right to participate within a field, is related to the resources that one is able to invest in it. Bourdieu calls these resources capital, and the three forms capital takes are: “as *economic capital*, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; as *cultural capital*, which ... may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and as *social capital*, made up of social obligations ... and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility.”⁸⁸ While each form of capital has different qualities that distinguish it, the forms are closely related such that each type of capital serves as a kind of currency that may be exchanged for another.⁸⁹ Cultural capital consists of three different types: “embodied” forms, which are the dispositions, mannerisms, tastes, and language that are instilled through one’s upbringing; “objectified” forms, which include books, art, and other objects that may be purchased; and “institutionalized” cultural capital, which is garnered through formal education and academic credentials. Social capital is described as “the sum of the resources, actual or virtual,

that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition.”⁹⁰ Social capital is acquired through the maintenance of relationships within a group and having it allows one access to the resources, information, and knowledge held by the group.

The assimilation process for the Japanese residents in Kona can thus be understood as having been shaped not only by the unique social space and fields available, but also by the distinct practices of capital acquisition and transformation that were deemed necessary in order to achieve success. Of foremost importance is that Kona provided opportunities for the *Issei* and *Nisei* to own or lease land for coffee farming—meaning that they had a relatively independent means of producing economic capital. This distinguishes the experience of Japanese immigrants in Kona from those in other parts of Hawaii or the US mainland where farm work, as well as white-collar work, demanded adapting behavior to the expectations of (white) American employers. This independence extended into other jobs and economic ventures, as the fact that the majority population was Japanese immigrants meant one could build and run (or work for) a business directed primarily to Japanese customers. As for cultural capital, a proper upbringing and dedication to educational achievement is a core theme in this book, one that is shared with several studies of Japanese American immigrants. Throughout the Japanese community, the accumulation of cultural capital through the tertiary education of *Nisei* children (often only one child) was a preferred strategy for social advancement that was pursued despite the financial hardships it might involve.

It is in the arena of social capital that the particularities of the Japanese Kona community come to light. Where the above review of structural acculturation and social mobility emphasized the integration of immigrants into the social groups and institutions of the host society, in the context of Kona the continuation of Japanese customs and modes of interpersonal relationships were not simply holdovers of traditional culture. Rather, participating in organizations such as the *kumi* and *kenjinkai*, taking time off work to attend festivals or weddings, and even learning the Japanese language at language schools can all be seen as actions that built social capital. As the primary network of day-to-day relations were largely other Japanese immigrants, the maintenance of these relationships was just as important as, if not more so than, fitting into the expectations of American society as a whole. The social capital gained by active involvement in the community allowed one access to the resources the

community could provide. These resources included advice on how to enter a university, financial support in times of trouble, or connections to potential employers. From this understanding of social capital, it is possible to see that the efforts put into fostering a Japanese community and ethnic identity were intertwined with the process of adapting to life in America—for members of that community, being “Japanese” provided a necessary form of capital to succeed in the States.

The final component of Bourdieu’s practice theory is habitus, which he defines as “systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations.”⁹¹ In other words, the habitus functions to organize an individual’s perception of the world and acts as a predisposition that unintentionally guides one’s actions in any given situation. Habitus and the field are closely related, in that habitus is seen as the guiding principle, one that is largely unconscious, for how to invest the appropriate amount and type of capital in a social field.⁹² It functions much like the grammar of a language in that, being shared by individuals from similar social backgrounds (e.g., class), it at once sets the rules for acceptable behaviors while at the same time it allows for an “infinite yet strictly limited generative capacity.”⁹³ The habitus develops in an individual through a process of primary and secondary socialization. The primary habitus (or class habitus) is acquired during childhood and primarily reflects the parents’ positions within the broader social space, while the secondary habitus results from education at school, work, and other life experiences.⁹⁴ Despite the constantly evolving nature of habitus, Bourdieu emphasizes that the habitus tends to resist change over time. This distinction between a rather inert primary habitus and a diverse or individual secondary habitus is useful for understanding the assimilation process in Kona. In the new social setting provided by Kona, immigrants needed to learn and adapt to the new rules of the social fields available to them. This did not, however, lead to an abandonment of their shared habitus that was brought from Japan. This can especially be seen in the case of the *Nisei*: different—although not always conflicting—expectations were placed on them in their homes and later in school and work settings. This implicit understanding of the rules of the Japanese community of Kona and those of the wider American society is described by informants throughout this book as constituting a “dual identity,” an ability to “fit in” and move between different cultural expectations.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter 2 provides a contextualization of the research site, by examining the *Issei* and the community they built (in which the *Nisei* were raised)—beginning with the formation of the Japanese community in Kona, and covering interracial dynamics, labor and economic conditions, and the challenges the community faced. Early immigration of Japanese to Hawaii began in the late 1880s. The majority of these immigrants were men who had been hired as contract workers for the sugarcane plantations. Many came with the expectation of staying for several years, saving money, and returning to Japan wealthy. However, the conditions that met them at the sugar plantations were extremely harsh due to the weather, long hours of strenuous work, and the relentless actions of the overseers, who were often brutal toward the Japanese workers. Many of the workers would attempt to escape these conditions by heading to Kona, which was located on the opposite side of the island from the sugar plantations and was difficult to reach. Those who reached Kona usually changed their names and found work on the small coffee farms run by Japanese farmers, who were sympathetic toward them. As the community grew, the first social organizations to be established were the *kenjinkai* (prefectural associations). The membership of these associations was made up of men who came from the same prefecture within Japan. The community also organized itself into groups called *kumi*, which were based on geographical proximity. In Kona, however, life was not as bad as it had been on the sugarcane plantations and there were opportunities for men to start their own farms, which was seen as a way to gain independence and was preferable due to the fact that the farmers were in a sense working for themselves. Over the years the Japanese coffee farming community grew, so that it stretched along the Kona Coffee Belt, an area of approximately 25 miles. During this period the majority of people living in Kona were Japanese: they made up 80 percent of the population. However, those who held the most power within the overall community in Kona were white Americans and Europeans (the majority of whom were Portuguese), who owned most of the land in the area. In addition, there were also native Hawaiian communities, Filipinos, some Koreans, and Chinese.

In the beginning, the Japanese got their land from the native Hawaiians. However, this land was not the best, as the prime farming land had already been taken by the white Americans, Chinese, and Portuguese. After the sugar market crashed in 1905, the Chinese and Portuguese abandoned

their farms, which were taken over by the white American landowners and banks, who would then lease the land to the *Issei*. Since the *Issei* did not have very much capital, the majority of the contracts gave the tenants housing, food, and farm necessities on credit in return for one-third to half of the crop. Due to this system, there was little incentive for farmers to improve the land because any improvements would not directly benefit the tenants. Coffee prices were extremely volatile: the prices usually fixed by the two coffee processing plants in Kona and often the farmers barely made a profit. In addition to farming, the *Issei* also supplemented their income with various side jobs such as *laubala* (pandanus leaf) weaving and fishing. In carrying out these side jobs, the *Issei* found themselves interacting with the native Hawaiian community regularly and the two communities got along well.

While the lives of the *Issei* were difficult, they still sent money and goods back to their families in Japan, where the situation was thought to be worse. Community organizations also collected funds and clothing to send to the Japanese soldiers during military campaigns in China and Korea. The *Issei* also created Japanese-language schools, which were important to them because they still wanted to return to Japan. However, after their experience on the sugarcane plantations, and then escaping to Kona where they began to farm coffee, they were ultimately unable to save enough money to make the return trip. Thus, they raised their families, and spent the rest of their lives, in Hawaii.

In Chap. 3 the examination shifts to the maintenance of the *Issei* cultural heritage through religious and social community practices. Due to the fact that only a small number of white Americans lived in Kona, the *Issei* were able to create social communities similar to those in Japan, as well as to practice and maintain their religions—not only within their homes but openly as a community. Chapter 3 begins by looking at two social organizations formed by the *Issei*. The first is the *kenjinkai*—associations made up of men who came from the same prefecture within Japan. These organizations were formal in nature, and consisted of a board of directors, lists of members, and membership fees. While the *kenjinkai* could have several functions, the general purpose of the association was to assist members by providing them with a social group, and economic and employment support. In Kona there were four main *kenjinkai*: Fukuoka, Hiroshima, Kumamoto, and Yamaguchi. The second social organization looked at in this chapter is the *kumi* or *kumiai*. *Kumi* consisted of a number of households: they were formed on a geographic basis, with houses in

relatively close proximity making up one *kumi*. *Kumi* provided moral and financial support to their members, promoted social events, and played a major role in assisting with funerals. *Kumi* had a one-dollar membership fee; however, the bulk of their funds came from donations.

Along with these social organizations, the *Issei* in Kona also brought their religious practices to Kona, and built shrines and Buddhist temples to facilitate these practices. In Kona the *Issei* built two shrines: one Shinto, dedicated to various gods of the Shinto religion, and one Inari, dedicated specifically to the god Inari. The shrines were the site of wedding ceremonies, and New Year's and mid-summer festivals, and they were places where *ofuda* (talismans) and *omamori* (charms) were obtained, which were acquired to protect the household. In addition to the two shrines, each *Issei* family had a *kamidana* (miniature shrine) within their home, where they would offer water, food, and prayers each day. Along with the shrines, the *Issei* also built Buddhist temples, and would carry out Buddhist rituals, particularly in response to the death of a family member. Certain Japanese Buddhist practices relate to the afterlife and offer a means of connecting to family members who have passed away. As community members and family members died, the *Issei* began to think more about their connection to the afterlife, and turned to the temples and priests to assist them with the proper rituals, such as those concerning *butsudan* (the Buddhist altar in the home) and *ohakamairi* (visiting the family grave). In Kona, there are three Buddhist sects: the Kona Hongwanji Jodo Shin-Shu Sect, the Kona Daifukuji Zen Soto-Shu Temple, and the Kona Daishi-do Shingon-shu. During the period discussed in this book, the first two sects were the largest and eventually temples were constructed by followers of these sects, who also organized community outreach programs, such as *fujinkai* (women's associations). In general, the *Issei* belonged to one or other of these two sects. The Kona Daishi-do Shingon-shu was much smaller and did not actually have a main temple. Instead, miniature temples were constructed along the Kona Coffee Belt Road, where practitioners could pray and make offerings. The temples also played an important role in funerals, and *hoji* (memorial services). Like the *kamidana*, the *butsudan* were altars maintained within the homes of the *Issei*: they were given daily offerings, and prayers were said before them. Depending on the family, *ohakamairi* could take place as often as once a week and would consist of family members traveling to the family grave, praying, and cleaning it.

Chapter 4 looks at the *Nisei*, the children of the *Issei*, and their experience growing up in Kona. This chapter explores the extent of the

development of a dual cultural identity within this generation—the *Nisei*'s ability to switch between mainstream American and Japanese cultural practices. To better examine the *Nisei*, analysis of this generation requires splitting them into three groups: Early *Nisei* (N1), Middle *Nisei* (N2), and Late *Nisei* (N3), based on when the individual concerned was born—from 1887 to the 1960s. There are distinct features of each group of *Nisei*. A *Nisei* born in the early 1900s had very different experiences compared to a *Nisei* who was born during the 1950s. The N1 *Nisei* tended to have closer ties to their Japanese cultural heritage, and to Japan, and could read, write, listen, and speak in both Japanese and English; they also typically obtained an eighth-grade education. Many of the N1 *Nisei* worked as coffee farmers, benefiting from the coffee price peak of 1923 to 1926 but also suffering greatly during the Great Depression. The N2 *Nisei* was the largest group due to the large numbers of Japanese women who arrived in Hawaii after the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907. While most of the N2 *Nisei* would attend Japanese school, in many cases they lacked the ability to write the language. Similar to the N1 *Nisei*, most of the N2 *Nisei* had an eighth-grade education. N2 *Nisei* made up the majority of Japanese who volunteered to fight during the war, but they still managed to have a strong sense of Japanese-ness, especially within their communities. The N3 *Nisei* had the lowest Japanese-language ability, in part due to the fact that they were raised during and after the war, which greatly affected their desire to learn the language. This group of *Nisei*, however, experienced greater prosperity, and many of them were educated to high school level. Early assimilation into mainstream American culture took place at the public schools, where the *Nisei* were instructed not to speak Japanese, to carry religious artifacts, or to include Japanese food in their school lunches.

Nisei names varied depending on the when they were born. The majority of the N1 *Nisei* had a Japanese first and last name, while it was more common for the N2 *Nisei* to be given an English middle name, and for the N3 *Nisei* to have an English first name. Since the number of Japanese families living in Kona was extremely high, these cultural lessons were reinforced by the community and strengthened their ties to their cultural heritage. Many of the *Nisei* participated in arranged marriages and were expected to marry within their race; therefore, interracial marriages were extremely rare. Even after the number of arranged marriages decreased, the *Nisei* continued to prefer endogamous marriages. As has been stated, the majority of the N1 *Nisei* continued to farm coffee full-time; however, the N2 *Nisei* began to

take jobs outside of farming—though they continued to farm part-time as an economic insurance and out of respect for their parents.

Chapter 5 discusses the effects of World War II on the Japanese community in Kona, beginning after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Several hours after that attack, FBI agents and the military police arrested the leaders of the Japanese community in Hawaii, including school teachers, Buddhist priests, store owners, and anyone thought to have ties with Japan and the Japanese Consulate. While these people were taken to a military holding facility in Kilauea and then later transferred to internment camps on the mainland, a roundup of all 150,000 Japanese people living in Hawaii at the time did not occur. Reasons for this included the difficulty of transporting and relocating such large numbers of people; the fact that martial law had already been declared by the Hawaii territorial government; and the fact that the territory was economically dependent on the Japanese community for laborers. In the face of food shortages, due to shipping limitations, the coffee farmers in Kona expanded their vegetable gardens. Other difficulties of daily life included blackouts, curfews, and transportation limitations from gasoline shortages. While the Japanese in Kona tended to keep a low profile within the greater community, they did encounter varying levels of discrimination. For example, some butchers refused to sell meat to them; and owners of fishing holes prohibited the entry of Japanese. Despite these challenges, the Japanese community living in Kona banded together, with the *kumi* taking on the role of offering support to member families. They continued to grow coffee and send their children to public schools to continue their education.

In addition to the rounding up of the Japanese community leaders, FBI agents returned to destroy the Shinto shrines, which were never rebuilt by the *Nisei* even after the end of the war. The Buddhist temples were closed as places of worship, and, in some cases, they were used as headquarters for the military police. Since the priests had been taken to internment camps, volunteers from the community, who had little training, stepped in to lead ritual ceremonies within their homes, and later in some of the temples that were allowed to reopen. While technically they were allowed to continue practicing, few actually attended ceremonies held at the temples, for fear of being seen as enemy aliens. An exception was made for funerals.

Prior to the war, the *Issei* had sent goods and money back to their families in Japan; however, after the war broke out this practice ended. In addition, the desire for the young *Nisei* to learn the Japanese language severely declined.

In response to the outbreak of war, some *Nisei* decided to prove their loyalty to America by joining the US military. Those *Nisei* who signed up were either used as translators (if their language ability was good enough) with the Military Intelligence Service, or became combat soldiers who would later fight in Europe as part of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team (442nd RTC)/100th Infantry Battalion. The 442nd RCT/100th Infantry Battalion would return from the war in Europe as heroes, having fought in eight major campaigns in Europe, one of which included rescuing the Texan 1st Battalion of the 141st Regiment in the Vosges Mountains in October of 1944. After the war, the veterans of the 442nd RCT/100th Infantry Battalion returned to Hawaii to their previous lives, but many of them remained in close contact with each other and established an annual gathering at the Punch Bowl Memorial Cemetery. In later years, the children of these veterans formed an organization known as the Sons and Daughters of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, which strove to continue holding events to bring the veterans together, as well as to preserve their stories for future generations. Only recently has the US government recognized the heroism of the soldiers: President Barack Obama signed a bill granting the Congressional Gold Medal collectively to the 442nd RCT/100th Infantry Battalion and the *Nisei* interpreters of the Military Intelligence Service.

Not all of the *Nisei*, however, chose to fight in the war for the United States. Those who decided not to cited several reasons, including the feeling that it was obscene for the government to ask the Japanese community to volunteer, the feeling that there was nothing to be gained by dying, and the belief that even if they returned as heroes there would be no guarantee of upward mobility in the society.

The final chapter of the book examines the changes in the Japanese community in Kona after the end of World War II, and how the *Nisei* adjusted to the different atmosphere faced by Japanese immigrants in America at that time. While the *Issei* had been predominately coffee farmers, the *Nisei* in the post-war period began to diversify their forms of income by downsizing their farms to part-time operations and working other jobs. The post-war period also saw changes in the responsibilities of the *kumi*, which primarily came to focus on helping with funerals and organizing a summer meeting or party. In the early 1950s and 1960s, there were a few changes in the houses in which the *Nisei* lived. Electricity and piped water began to be available—but progress here was slow, due to the lack of a network and the ability to pay expensive utility bills. Food

customs also gradually transformed as certain types of traditional foods from Japan were not available during the war. This caused an increase in the amount of American food products, such as canned goods, which were consumed by the *Nisei*.

Against the backdrop of these daily changes, the Buddhist traditions of the Japanese community in Kona changed little from what they had been prior to the war. However, temples began to hold services on Sunday, like Christian churches, and they also became the site of weddings in the absence of the shrines which had been destroyed during the war. As the community became wealthier in the post-war era, they began to fund temple renovation projects that brought the appearance of the temples closer to the traditional Japanese design. During this period, traditional funeral practices declined, replaced by Western-style funerals in which a mortuary was hired to prepare the deceased's body. As the *Issei* began to pass away, the custom of having a family *butsudan* in the home was introduced to the *Nisei*, who bought the *butsudan* and all the related items from importers in Honolulu or Hilo. Along with acquiring a *butsudan*, the *Nisei* also developed a greater desire to actually learn about the Buddhist belief system and rituals. Thus the *Nisei* in Kona were remarkably faithful in carrying out the rituals involving the *butsudan*, undertaking *ohakamairi* (taking care of the family gravesite), and participating in the temple community. While the Buddhist religion continued to be practiced within the community after the war, the same could not be said for the Shinto religion: due to the stigma surrounding Shintoism in America, the *Nisei* in Kona decided not to rebuild the shrines, although many continued to maintain a *kamidana* within their homes.

NOTES

1. Peter Kawahara. "Peter Kawahara's Research" (Private Collection, Kona Historical Society, 1988).
2. As previously mentioned, the picture brides arrived after the passage of the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907. Prior to that, Japanese women were scarce in Kona District.
3. *Obon* is a festival of the dead, when those who have passed away are honored.
4. Note that the timeframe of the study, between the late 1880s and the late 1960s, means that some of the memories recorded were passed down to *Nisei* from their *Issei* parents.

5. Many of the interviewees were elderly *Nisei*. Some informants' memories had faded and facts had blurred, making them potentially unreliable sources. To resolve these issues of reliability and validity, I utilized multiple sources of data to confirm reliability. For example, storytelling to the *Sansei* children was one of the primary ways of confirming information. Documents, personal memos, and other items were also utilized to confirm accounts. After the data collection was completed, in some cases I needed to confirm small variations in dates. In these cases, the participants usually verified that the dates could not be confirmed. For instance: "I can't remember when but..." These minor variations and discrepancies pose no real problems for reliability in qualitative research.
6. Occasionally it was possible to interview more than one individual at once, or to arrange a focus group. In retrospect, these were some of the most valuable interviews. Realizing this, I began searching out opportunities to meet with more than one person at a time. These interviews allowed for dialog: many times I realized participants were negotiating the meaning of past events or critically reflecting on the "hows and whys" of a situation.
7. Yoshie Fukushima, an N2 *Nisei*, grew up on a coffee farm in Kealahou on the Kona Coffee Belt Road. She was a semi-active member of the Hongwanji. She had very limited time for additional social activities because her family was one of the very few *Nisei* that farmed Kona Coffee full-time.
8. Andrew W. Lind, "Assimilation in Rural Hawaii," *The American Journal of Sociology* 45, no. 2 (1939): 200-214.
9. Ella Lury Embree (later, Wiswell) grew up in Kobe, conducted research in Suye Mura, alongside her husband, and subsequently published her own ethnographical work on the subject, *The Women of Suye Mura*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.
10. John F. Embree, *Suye Mura, A Japanese Village* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939a).
11. John F. Embree, "Acculturation among the Japanese of Kona, Hawaii," *American Anthropologist* 43, no. 4 (1941).
12. Tragically, after the publication of "Acculturation among the Japanese of Kona," John Embree and his only daughter Clare were struck by an automobile and instantly killed on December 22, 1950. Numerous *Nisei* still remember that "Haole professor that wrote a book about Japanese in Kona." In the spirit of Dr. Embree, anthropological researcher of the Japanese community in Kona, I wish to attempt to continue the story that he started to tell over 70 years ago.
13. Lind, "Assimilation in Rural Hawaii," 200-214.
14. Lind, "Assimilation in Rural Hawaii," 209. It was, however, a hybrid Japanese that resulted from the interplay of the different provincial

- Japanese dialects and the extensive borrowing of Hawaiian and English expressions.
15. Paul Spickard, *Japanese Americans: The Formation and Transformations of an Ethnic Group* (New York: Twayne, 1996). The majority of Japanese immigrants came with the intentions of being *dekasegi* (Japanese labor migrants). These Japanese migrant workers believed that they could earn higher wages in America than in Japan.
 16. Harry Kitano, *Japanese Americans: The Evolution of a Subculture, Second Edition* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1976); Peter Irons, *Justice at War: The Story of Title Japanese American Internment Cases* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983); Bill Hosokawa, *Nisei: The Quiet Americans* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1969); Roland Kotani, *The Japanese in Hawaii: A Century of Struggle* (Honolulu: The Hawaii Hocht, Ltd., 1985).
 17. Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore* (Boston: Little Brown, 1989); Edward D. Beechert, *Working in Hawaii: A Labor History* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985); Dennis Ogawa, *Kodomo no tame ni* (For the Sake of the Children): *The Japanese American Experience in Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1978); Gary Y. Okihiro, *Cane Fires: The Anti-Japanese Movement in Hawaii, 1865–1945* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1992).
 18. Examples of these include: Rodger Daniels, *Concentration Camps USA: Japanese American and World War II* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972); Audrey Girdner and Anne Loftisi, *The Great Betrayal: The Evacuation of the Japanese American During World War II* (New York: Macmillan, 1969); Hosokawa, *Nisei: The Quiet Americans*; Toru Matsumoto, *Beyond Prejudice: The Chinese and Japanese Experience in America. 2nd ed.* (New York: Arno Press, 1978); Jacobus Ten Broek, *Prejudice, War, and the Constitution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958); Michi Weglyn, *Years of Infamy: The Untold Story of America's Concentration Camps* (New York: Morrow, 1976); John Tateishi, *And Justice For All: An Oral History of the Japanese American Detention Camps* (New York: Random House, 1984); Nelson W. Douglas, *Heart Mountain: The History of an American Concentration Camp* (Madison, WI: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1976). With regard to my own family, my great-grandfather Hamasaki was shipped over to the mainland and interned. This was due to the fact that he was a storeowner and an influential *Issei* community leader in the Waipio Valley area. Because my family experienced the atrocities in the concentration camps, the events were often spoken of in my family.
 19. Studies of Japanese communities in Hawaii during the war include Ronald Takaki, *Pau Hana: Plantation Lift and Labor in Hawaii 1835–1920*

- (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983); Okihiro, *Cane Fires*; Eileen H. Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity: The Nisei Generation in Hawaii* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994); and Ogawa, *Kodomo no tame ni*.
20. Yuji Ichioka, *The Issei: The World of the First Generation of Japanese Americans, 1885–1924* (New York: Free Press, 1988); Valerie Matsumoto, *Farming the Home place: A Japanese American Community in California, 1919–1982* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993); Nakano Evelyn Glenn, *Issei, Nisei, War Bride: Three Generations of Japanese American Women in Domestic Service* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1986); Linda Tamura, *The Hood River Issei: An Oral History of Japanese Settlers in Oregon's Hood River Valley* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Sylvia Junko Yanagisako, *Transforming the Past: Tradition and Kinship among Japanese Americans* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985); Mamoru Iga, "The Japanese Social Structure and the Source of Mental Strains of Japanese Immigrants in the United States," *Social Forces* 35 (1957): 271–278; John Connor, "Value continuities and change in three generations of Japanese Americans," *Ethos* 2 (1974b): 232–264; Abe Arkoff, "Need Patterns in Two Generations of Japanese Americans in Hawaii," *Journal of Social Psychology* 50 (1959): 75–79.
 21. Takie Lebra, *Japanese Patterns of Behavior* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1976).
 22. Harry Kitano, *Generations and Identity: The Japanese American* (Needham Heights, MA: Ginn Press, 1993); Mamoru Iga, "Changes in value orientation of Japanese Americans" (paper read at the Western Psychological Association Meeting, Long Beach, California, April 1966); Yasuko Takezawa, *Breaking Silence: Ethnicity and Redress among Japanese American* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); William Caudill, and Helen Weinstein, "Maternal care and infant behavior in Japan and America," *Psychiatry* 32 (1969): 12–43.
 23. Ibid.; Spickard, *Japanese Americans*.
 24. Kitano, *Generations and Identity*.
 25. Iga, "Changes in value orientation of Japanese Americans."
 26. Ibid.
 27. Elsie Smith, "Ethnic Identity Development: Toward the Development of a Theory within the Context of Majority/Minority Status," *Journal of Counseling and Development* 70 (1991): 181–188.
 28. Wsevolod Isajiw, "Definitions of Ethnicity," in *Ethnicity and Ethnic Relations in Canada, Second Edition*, ed. Rita Bienvenue and Jay Goldstein (Toronto: Butterworth, 1985), 5–17.
 29. "Ethnic group" and "ethnicity" did not appear in dictionaries until the 1960s. Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting*

- Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1970).
30. Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Boston: Little Brown, 1969).
 31. Joane Nagel, "Constructing Ethnicity: Creating and Recreating Ethnic Identity and Culture," *Social Problems* 41 (1994): 152–176.
 32. Ibid., 154.
 33. Herbert Gans, "Symbolic Ethnicity: The Future of Ethnic Groups and Cultures in America," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2, no. 1 (1979): 1–20.
 34. Yun Yong Kim, "Toward an Interactive Theory of Communication-Acculturation," in *Communication Yearbook* 3, ed. Dan Nimmo (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Book, 1979), 673.
 35. Milton Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).
 36. Glazer and Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot*.
 37. Robert Park, "Human Migration and the Marginal Man," *American Journal of Sociology* 33 no. 6 (1928): 881–893; Louis Wirth, *The Ghetto*. Chicago (University of Chicago Press, 1928); Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole, *The Social System of America Ethnic Groups* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1945); Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life*.
 38. Robert Park and Ernest Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1921), 735.
 39. Ibid.; Robert Ezra Park, *Race and Culture* (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1950).
 40. Gordon. *Assimilation in American Life*.
 41. Ibid., 20.
 42. Kim, "Toward an Interactive Theory of Communication-Acculturation."
 43. Ruben Rumbaut, "Social Assimilation of Immigrants," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, ed. Neil J. Smelser and Paul B. Baltes (Oxford: Pergamon, 2001), 845–849.
 44. Marshall Sklare, and Joseph Greenblum, *Jewish Identity on the Suburban Frontier: A Study of Group Survival in the Open Society, 2nd edition* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1979).
 45. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life*, 11.
 46. Tomatsu Shibutani, and Kian Kwan, *Ethnic Stratification* (New York: Macmillan, 1965); William Yancey, Eugene Ericksen, and Richard N. Juliani, "Emergent Ethnicity: Review and Reformulation," *American Sociological Review* 41 no. 3 (1976): 391–402.
 47. Richard Alba and Victor Nee, "Rethinking Assimilation Theory for a New Era of Immigration," *International Migration Review* 3, no. 4 (1997): 826–874.

48. Maria Flex-Ortiz, Michael D. Newcomb and Hector Myers, "A Multidimensional Measure of Cultural Identity for Latino and Latina Adolescents," *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Science* 16, no. 2 (1994): 99–115.
49. Lloyd Warner, and Leo Srole, *The Social System of America Ethnic Groups* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1945).
50. Alba and Nee, "Rethinking Assimilation Theory."
51. Milton Yinger, "Toward a Theory of Assimilation and Dissimilation," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 4 (1981): 249–264.
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54. Jurgen Ruesch, "Social Technique, Social Status, and Social Change in Illness," in *Personality in Nature, Society and Culture*, ed. Clyde Kluckhohn, and Henry A. Murray (Oxford, England: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948), 117–130.
55. Kitano, *Japanese Americans: The Evolution of a Subculture*.
56. Leonard Broom and John Kitsuse, "The Validation of Acculturation: A Condition to Ethnic Assimilation," *American Anthropologist* 57 (1955): 44–48; William Caudill, "Japanese American personality and acculturation," *Genetic Psychology Monograph* 45 (1952): 3–102; DeVos, George. "Acculturation and personality structure: A Rorschach study of Japanese Americans" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1951); Kitano, *Japanese Americans: The Evolution of a Subculture*. Caudill and DeVos, "Achievement, Culture, and Personality."
57. Caudill and DeVos, "Achievement, Culture, and Personality."
58. Kitano, Harry. *Generations and Identity: The Japanese American*. Needham Heights, MA: Ginn Press, 1993.
59. Caudill and DeVos, "Achievement, Culture, and Personality."
60. Ibid. Caudill and DeVos wrote: "The Japanese Americans were accepted in these areas. Neighbors and landlords liked them because they improved the property, paid their rent promptly, and were quiet and courteous. For instance, in their clothing and general appearance the *Nisei* were almost stereotypes of the American middle class. This was especially true for women, who invariably appeared well groomed, in conservative but chic dresses, snow white blouses, nylons, and high heels. In their attitudes and aspirations, the *Nisei* were oriented toward careers, white collar work, or small businesses. They wanted little to do with factory jobs" (18).

61. Broom and Kitsuse, "The Validation of Acculturation."
62. Caudill and DeVos, "Achievement, Culture, and Personality."
63. Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity*.
64. *Kenjinkai* associations were extended groups of men from the same region in Japan. Early *kenjinkai* consisted mainly of Japanese immigrants from the southern and rural parts of Japan.
65. Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity*.
66. Ibid.
67. Jurgen Ruesch, "Social Technique, Social Status, and Social Change in Illness."
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69. Akio Kikuchi and Leonard V. Gordon, "Evaluation and Cross-Cultural Application of a Japanese Form of the Survey of Interpersonal Values," *Journal of Social Psychology* 69 (1966): 185–195.
70. Joyce Hieshima and Barbara Schneider, "Intergenerational Effects on the Cultural and Cognitive Socialization of Third and Fourth Generation Japanese Americans," *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* 15 (1994): 319–327.
71. Several factors were responsible. Firstly, as was discussed earlier, numerous families settled in the Midwest and on the East Coast, instead of returning to the West Coast. Secondly, structural assimilation began to produce upward mobility in socioeconomic terms, achieved through higher education and better occupations, so that Japanese immigrants increasingly moved away from the concentrated communities in which they had previously lived. Thirdly, a gradual decrease in racism and discrimination, an improved language proficiency among the *Issei*, and the rapid assimilation of *Nisei* into American mainstream society enabled the *Nisei* to achieve Anglo-conformity, meaning that they no longer felt it necessary to live within those concentrated communities.
72. Gene Levine and Darrel Montero, "Socioeconomic Mobility among Three Generations of Japanese Americans," *Journal of Social Issues* 29, no. 2 (1973): 33–48.
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81. Daisuke Kitagawa, *Issei and Nisei: The Internment Years* (New York: Seabury Press, 1967).
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83. Bridget Fowler, *Pierre Bourdieu and Cultural Theory: Critical Investigations* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1997); Bridge Fowler, *Reading Bourdieu on Society and Culture* (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2000); David Swartz, *Culture & Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Derek Robbins, *Bourdieu and Culture* (London: Sage, 2000); Jeffrey C. Alexander, *The Meanings of Social Life: A Cultural Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).
84. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).
85. Magdalena Nowicka, "Bourdieu's Theory of Practice in the Study of Cultural Encounters and Transnational Transfers in Migration," *MMG Working Paper 15-01* (2015), http://www.mmg.mpg.de/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/wp/WP_15-01_Nowicka_Bourdieu's-theory.pdf
86. This terminology used by Bourdieu is intentionally not used in the body of the book. The reason for this is that this book focuses on the narratives of the Japanese community, who are unfamiliar with such ideas. In contrast, informants generally expressed their experiences using terms such as "ethnic identity" and "assimilation," although they are not necessarily familiar with the literature reviewed in this introduction. Bourdieu's practice theory, however, provides the foundation for the overarching story of the Japanese community in Kona.
87. Matthais Walther, *Repatriation to France and Germany: A Comparative Study Based on Bourdieu's Theory of Practice* (Gabler Verlag, 2014).

88. Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in *Handbook of Theory and Research for Sociology of Education*, ed. J. Richardson (1986), 241–258. (emphasis in original).
89. Ibid.
90. Pierre Bourdieu and Loic J. D. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
91. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 53.
92. Matthais Walther, *Repatriation to France and Germany: A Comparative Study Based on Bourdieu's Theory of Practice* (Gabler Verlag, 2014).
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The *Issei*: In Search of Autonomy

INTRODUCTION

The main focus of this book is the lives of the *Nisei* in Kona. However, to fully understand their experience, it is necessary to examine the *Issei* and the community they built, in which the *Nisei* were raised. In this chapter, I present a contextualization of the research site, in terms of space and time. This contextualization involves a discussion of a number of elements: the formation of the Japanese community and identity in Kona; the place of that community within the broader social community in the district, including the interracial dynamics; the labor and economic conditions the community experienced; and the challenges that were faced by the community, together with their adaptation in the face of those challenges. A brief introduction of the geography of Kona District is also provided. The focus of the discussion is on the key structural context of the *Issei* (first-generation migrants) in the emerging agricultural (coffee farming) economy in Kona, as well as on the factors that contributed to the creation of the Japanese Kona coffee farming community. An understanding of these factors (which include the work environment, interracial entanglements, the creation of extended families, and the *Issei* culture) is essential if we are to understand the context of the Japanese migration to Kona, and the daily life experiences of the migrants themselves. Furthermore, this chapter will reveal how assimilation into mainstream white American culture was delayed within this community.

In discussing these factors, this chapter addresses the following questions: How were the roles of the first- and second-generation Japanese immigrants in the Kona coffee agricultural economy established, and what were the contributing factors in the creation of the Japanese community in Kona? Who were these Japanese labor migrants? Why were the *Issei* laborers attracted to Kona District in the first place? What conditions did the *Issei* experience in Kona District—that is, what challenges did they face in their daily lives as coffee farmers?

The spatial and temporal contextualization provided in this chapter is presented from an etic and an emic perspective: I make reference to archival research and the ethnography observation methods I employ, and I quote the voices of the *Nisei* (second-generation Japanese migrants) who I interviewed.

FORMATION OF THE JAPANESE COMMUNITY IN KONA: EARLY IMMIGRATION OF THE *ISSEI*: THE JOURNEY TO HAWAII

The first Japanese immigrants to Hawaii arrived in large numbers after 1882. There were approximately 1000 Japanese *kanyaku-imin* (contract laborers) in the Kingdom of Hawaii in 1885, and by the end of 1894, more than 30,000 Japanese immigrants were working in Hawaii.¹ Various factors contributed to this rise on immigration from Japan. First, the transfer of power from a feudal government to the *Meiji* government, one that adopted a Western ideology, in Japan, which led to rapid modernization and the expansion of the military. Second, a new tax system in Japan that supported modernization, which led to extreme economic hardship among all classes, especially the lower classes, as the size of the population increased.² Third, Hawaii was seen as a land of opportunity where Japanese migrants could get rich quick, then return to Japan. The majority of Japanese migrant workers in Hawaii were single men searching for work: many planned to return to Japan after they had created some wealth in the United States.

Once they had made Hawaii their permanent residence, a large number of the *Issei* sent for wives to be brought over from Japan. Selected by way of catalogs or family connections wives obtained in this way were known as picture brides. Even with the arrival of more Japanese women, men constituted the vast majority of the Japanese immigrants. The immigrants were made up of the following types: men from poor families who hoped

to make a fortune by coming to Hawaii; men recently discharged from the army after the Russo–Japanese War, who, with discharge bonuses in hand, came to Hawaii to seek a living; and young men, often in their teens, who left Japan to seek adventure and to be independent of their families.³

The first ship of immigrants to Hawaii set sail in June of 1868 with 158 passengers—mostly men, with only a few couples. The journey to Hawaii took approximately 34 days. Yonakichi Sakuma’s account makes clear that the journey to Hawaii was difficult: rough seas lasted several days, with sea sickness making the experience a very uncomfortable one.⁴ On his journey to Hawaii, Sakuma witnessed a number of violent episodes, involving fighting, sickness, and shackling as a punishment for prohibited activities. In some cases, these episodes led to death. In his diary, he mentions that he brought with him for the journey the following items: *genmai*, *bakumai*, *miso*, and *shoyu*.⁵ One child was born on the ship: a boy named Yotaro. Toward the end of the journey, facing food shortages, the majority of the passengers were compelled to share their food.

UNEXPECTED HARD LABOR: THE HORROR OF PLANTATION LIFE

In Hawaii, the growth of the sugarcane industry in the mid-1860s created a need for laborers to work on the sugar plantations. The native Hawaiian population was in decline. Due to cultural differences between the new American governmental system and the previous Hawaiian system, many of the Hawaiians did not enter the workforce on the plantations, which created a need for an alternative labor source.⁶ To fill this labor shortage, a large number of Japanese labor migrants traveled halfway across the Pacific Ocean with high expectations of opportunity and wealth. They arrived in Honolulu and were later dispatched to Maui, Kauai, and the Big Island of Hawaii. The laborers that were relocated to the Big Island settled on the Hamakua and Hilo plantations. They soon realized that plantation life was harsh, with slave-like working conditions.⁷ Ronald Takaki stated⁸: “life on a plantation is much like life in a prison.” Hawaii was annexed by the United States in 1898, which led to the application of American labor laws. This made it possible for the Japanese contract workers to break their contracts without facing repercussions. However, this does not mean

that the conditions experienced by laborers on the plantations improved greatly or that they remained at the abysmal levels they had been. The first episode my grandfather describes in his diary involved women being treated like animals⁹ on the sugarcane plantations. As was discussed in the introduction, my own great-grandfather¹⁰ experienced the humiliation and cruelty in the sugarcane fields in 1899.¹¹ The women had less strenuous work than the men did, but nonetheless work was demanding. In this particular case, the women's job was to separate the cane into different sizes:

My father told me he saw women too were being treated badly: many times, no matter how fast we work, the *lunas*¹² used to yell at us all day. And in the cane field you cannot stop because if you stop, you know they used to carry whips, and he would always say that they knew just how much we could take. The whipping was stinging and very painful.

The second episode my grandfather describes in his diary recounts Japanese workers being beaten for not working fast enough:

My father told me he saw his friend getting beaten up so bad. At first, a *luna* punched him in the face, and when he went down, several other *lunas* came and kicked him with heavy boots. He said the worst thing about the whole episode was that he could not do anything about it. (When he was telling the story, his eyes were watery.) His friend died, and the *lunas* took his body somewhere. It was all because, maybe, the *lunas* had a bad day and he was working too slowly.

From the perspective of someone who has lived in Japan for over 20 years, I would argue that various scholars in the past have captured the working conditions on the plantations in Hawaii, but none have understood the lifestyle or working conditions back home in Japan.¹³ To start with, the Japanese migrant workers were not accustomed to such hard working conditions: farming rice and cultivating a vegetable garden were very different activities to commercial sugar cane farming.

The seasons were also different in Hawaii: it was summer every day, with high temperatures and high humidity, in comparison to the cool spring planting season of *taue* and the mild or cool fall harvesting season of *inekari* in Japan.¹⁴ Moreover, rice is a short and light plant that grows to about chest high and requires little energy to harvest, while sugarcane, by contrast, is a plant that can grow up to 12 feet high and 2 inches in



Picture 2.1 John Embree; his wife, Ella; and farmers in Japan (John F. Embree collection, Cornell)



Picture 2.2 Kona Japanese Hospital

diameter, and that has to be harvested using a large machete. The Japanese migrant workers were not physically or mentally equipped to carry out such laborious work in Hawaii. My grandfather wrote in his diary this story about his father:

My father eventually escaped to Kona. He went through the Judd Trail¹⁵ and when he arrived in Kona some coffee farmers took him in and helped him get back on his feet. But, in those days there were bounty hunters looking for escapees, and so until the day he died he was always looking over his shoulder. He was always thinking that someone or a *luna* would come and drag him back to the plantation camp. Although many years had passed, he never ever went back to the other side of the Island (Hilo). A few years later, the situation got better but my father never regretted leaving the plantation. He said many times that that was the best thing he ever did in his life. (Chitose Abe, private collection, 1994)

My great-grandfather's traumatic experiences were, however, far from over. In a later chapter, this study will discuss the racial stigmatization that he and others like him faced, and which represented an ongoing struggle for the *Issei* community. In addition to the beatings, brutality, and other inhumane acts, the work was miserable. The usual working hours were 12 hours a day, with no breaks. The working environment was dusty and dry—or muddy when it rained. The laborers needed special working gear. The *Issei* men and women had begun working in the fields in the Japanese clothing they had brought with them from Japan, but some changes obviously had to be made in order to meet the needs of the sugarcane fields, especially as regards to protection against the tropical sun, the serrated edges of the sugarcane stalks, the centipede bites, and the scorpion and yellow jacket (wasp) stings. Numerous *Issei* laborers could not endure the extreme physical and mental abuse of plantation life and, thus, escaped to Kona,¹⁶ thereby leading to the creation of a large Japanese community in that area.

It is of great importance to the *Nisei* that these stories be adequately described and recorded, as they are an important part of Japanese American ethnic history, which they want to preserve for future generations. In the past, these narratives about plantation life were not discussed; however, at the time the present study was conducted, many of the *Nisei* were in their 90s, and they were eager to pass on the stories before they were lost altogether.

ENCOUNTERING KONA SOCIETY: A PLACE OF FREEDOM AND SANCTUARY

From the beginning, the members of the Japanese community in Kona displayed a strong spirit of independence, living as they were in a racially and ethnically marginalized area. Several sources revealed that many *Issei* laborers who fled to Kona on the other side of the Big Island instantly changed their family names to avoid capture.¹⁷ Sociologist Andrew Lind has argued that “There were plenty of cases of runaways, plenty of them. Kona was the land of refuge for those who left the plantations [in other districts of Hawaii].”¹⁸ Another account states that numerous Japanese in Kona also came from large plantation fields in other parts of the Hamakua Coast area of the Big Island, from Kohala, Kau, and Puna—having escaped secretly at night from the unbearable labor conditions. “They ran through (Judd trail) into the dense *keawe* forests at the foot hills of Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa, migrants that lived along the Hamakua Coastal section walked across the northern part of the Island through the vast lava desert” (Nakano 1990). After traversing a long and dangerous passage, these Japanese migrant escapees would arrive in Kona and hide in the coffee fields to elude bounty hunters. For all of them, the horrible nightmare was over. For many, they considered it freedom. When referring to his parents, Yoshi Tanaka¹⁹ (Tanaka, interview 2008) emphasized that “The *Issei*, or first generation Japanese, who farmed the rocky place of Mauna Loa and Hualalai didn’t feel sorry for themselves because of the hard work that was needed to make a living, because it was better than the plantation.”

Kona, on the west side of the Big Island of Hawaii, was an isolated area. As such, it was a popular place for many contracted laborers, especially those that worked on the Hamakua and Hilo plantations. Kona was largely unaffected by the increasingly Westernizing influence of urbanization. Following the long and treacherous road from Kona to Hilo entailed a whole day’s journey on the back of a donkey, and later by car. Ships took as long as 24 hours to cross the rough open seas to reach the Big Island. As a result, Kona remained isolated and difficult to access, and it thus offered privacy and anonymity for international migrant laborers who had broken their contracts or those who were evading gambling debts or unhappy marriages. Kona was well known as a haven for runaways and renegades because it offered the ability to hide away deep in the countryside, on the

small individual coffee farms.²⁰ The Japanese farmers were sympathetic toward laborers running away from abusive *lunas* on the plantations. In some cases, “these runaways would move from one house to the next with little difficulty, to avoid capture.”²¹

Andrew Lind has argued that for over a generation Kona was like a little Tokyo for Big Island residents. Certainly, the language, being the carrier and symbol of the Japanese culture, remained predominantly Japanese until 1941, and in some isolated parts, until as late as the 1950s. Lind has also asserted that it was in this decade (1950–1960) that the common language of play among the second generation became English, or an approximation of English.²² Many *Nisei* confirmed that their parents stayed in Kona because living in Kona was comfortable, due to the high concentration of ethnic Japanese. In this case, being comfortable implies having less dependence on English as a means of communication, with respect to work-related issues, friends, and the larger community. One *Nisei* explained, “My parents never left the Big Island because they were scared and because they lived in Kona so long that I think they became comfortable with the Kona community” (Tanaka,²³ interview 2006). In the case of my grandfather, he never left the Hawaiian Islands until his death. A comfortable lifestyle within a semi-homogeneous Japanese community was only one of many reasons why Japanese migrant workers chose Kona as their newly adopted home, however. The other reasons will be discussed in later chapters.

Japanese formed over 50 percent of the population of Kona District in the early twentieth century. Numerous *Nisei* described Kona as “little Japan,” being an ethnically homogeneous community. Kentaro Tanaka (Tanaka, interview 2006) explained: “Not too many *haoles* lived here [the Kona Coffee Belt]²⁴ before. You know, before there was only Japanese and a few *haoles*²⁵—the school teacher and the mailman.”

THE FORMATION OF THE *KENJINKAI*: PREFECTURE IDENTIFICATION AND *TOKORO-MON*

Figure 2.1 illustrates the demographical origins of Japanese living along the Kona Belt Road (*Mamalahoa*). In the early days of the Japanese migrant diaspora, the formation of a community identity was initiated by the establishment of different prefectural groups, known as *kenjinkai*. The *Issei* immigrants established four main *kenjinkai*: Kumamoto was

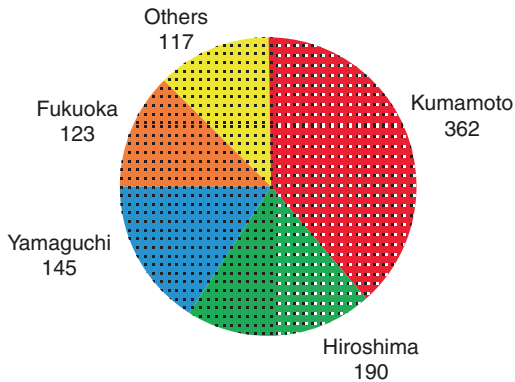


Fig. 2.1 Prefectural origins of Japanese in Kona (937 families in total). Source: Embree, John F. “Acculturation among the Japanese of Kona, Hawaii,” *American Anthropologist* 43, no. 4 (1941)

the largest, followed by Fukuoka, Yamaguchi, and Hiroshima. Japanese migrants identified themselves by their prefectural origins (*tokoro-mon*).²⁶ For instance, they would identify themselves as *kumamoto-kenjin*. The *kenjinkai* are discussed in further detail in Chap. 3.

THE FORMATION OF THE *KUMI*: GEOGRAPHIC IDENTIFICATION IN THE KONA COMMUNITY²⁷

The *Issei* farmers of Kona were organized into local cooperatives, known as *kumi*. In regards to establishing ethnic solidarity, the *kumi* were the most important Japanese social groups in the Kona District. The *kumi* had a much more prominent role in the daily lives of the community members than the *kenjinkai*. The size of a *kumi* ranged from 3 to 40 families, but most members of the Japanese community agreed that 15 families seemed to be the optimal size for a *kumi*. The *kumi* are discussed further in Chap. 3.

The demographics of the Japanese community in the Kona District changed after the Gentlemen’s Agreement of 1907, the effects of which lasted until the Immigration Act of 1924.²⁸ Under the threat of immigration legislation targeted at Japanese migrants, the Japanese government agreed to limit the immigration of Japanese laborers.²⁹ The agreement,

Table 2.1 Occupations held in the
late 1930s

Farmer	18
Storekeeper	3
Hotelier	1
Restaurant proprietor	1
Watchman for Capt. Cook Coffee Co.	1
Yardman	1
School teacher	1
Mechanic	1
Barber	1
Dressmaker	1
Fisherman	1
Salesman	1
Taxi driver and owner	1
Total	32

Note: Some households have more than one occupation
Source: Embree, John F. "Acculturation among the Japanese of Kona, Hawaii," *American Anthropologist* 43, no. 4 (1941)

however, had a significant loophole. Although Japan stopped issuing passports to male migrant laborers seeking to immigrate to the mainland United States, the wives and children of Japanese immigrants were permitted to enter the country.³⁰ Therefore, the Japanese community in Kona evolved from being a community of single men to a more family-oriented one.

Taken from John Embree’s research, Table 2.1 summarizes the occupations held by *Issei* households in Kona District in the late 1930s. Embree collected data from the Han-ei, a *kumi* partly composed of farmers and shopkeepers from the Belt Road in the Captain Cook section of Kona.

THE LOST DREAM OF RETURNING TO JAPAN

As has been mentioned, the hope of many of these men was to make their fortune and to return to their home country. However, due to the unstable coffee prices, their refusal to return to the sugarcane fields, and their limited economic opportunities, many *Issei* families were forced to eventually abandon their dream of returning to Japan wealthy, and instead made a commitment to permanently settle in their new home.

Fumio Okumura³¹ (Okumura, interview 2008), a *Nisei*, remembered, “My mother really wanted to go back to Japan. I think my father too but my mom said we didn’t have money (or money saved up). Going back to Japan would be shameful for us because it’s kind of like we failed.” The majority of the *Nisei* informants interviewed shared similar experiences. Several other *Nisei* mentioned similar feeling among their parents. For example, Matsuyo Hayakawa³² (Hayakawa, interview 2009) stated: “When we were young my mother used to say thing like ‘we can’t go back to Japan because we failed’ but later in life when thing got stabilized my parents I think had no regrets about staying and raising a family in Hawaii. In fact, sometimes they would say things like, Hawaii is easy living and *Nihon muzukashii iro iro aru* (Japan is difficult and complicated).” This is a perspective that I recognize: I would argue that although the *Issei* might have felt embarrassed about not returning to Japan bearing the boons of success, it is also well known that their home country had suffered from extensive poverty over the years, so that Japan may no longer have been seen by *Issei* as a desirable place to return to. A personal story illustrates this point nicely. In 1994, I had the opportunity to visit long-lost relatives in Fukuoka. When I arrived, I was welcomed with overwhelming hospitality. During this party, my relatives shared stories, old photographs, and a few letters that showed that my great-grandfather had often been the topic of conversations in his home country. My relatives remembered how he had prospered in Hawaii because of the money he made there, and they remembered the various kinds of food he sent back to Japan. As we were walking around the area, one relative pointed to a structure and said that it was built using the money my great-grandfather had sent from Hawaii. It is clear from this anecdote that there was a perception that those in Japan were in fact less wealthy than the *Issei* in Hawaii, like my great-grandfather. (In fact, my great-grandfather never returned to Japan: he died of appendicitis before he could do so.)

THE FORMATION OF THE KONA COFFEE FARMING COMMUNITY

Kona offered many Japanese migrant laborers freedom and independence, and was seen as being racially and culturally homogeneous. Kona was special because it offered an alternative to the plantations: it offered a person

the opportunity to independently farm Kona coffee or sugarcane on his own land.³³ Independent farming provided a complete contrast to the humiliating slave-like treatment the *Issei* endured on the sugarcane plantations.³⁴ It is important to note that the *Issei* were generally not from the poorest or most marginalized social classes in the early *Meiji*-era Japan: farming had long been a respectable occupation in Japan and many already had experience in small-scale farming.³⁵ The majority of *Issei* immigrants came from rural villages in Japan, so agricultural farming remained their only choice of occupation. The Japanese male migrants living in Kona had generally obtained only an eighth-grade level of education. Of the approximately 1000 families residing in Kona District in the 1940s, 800 were coffee farmers, and of these coffee farmers, 90 percent were Japanese immigrants.³⁶

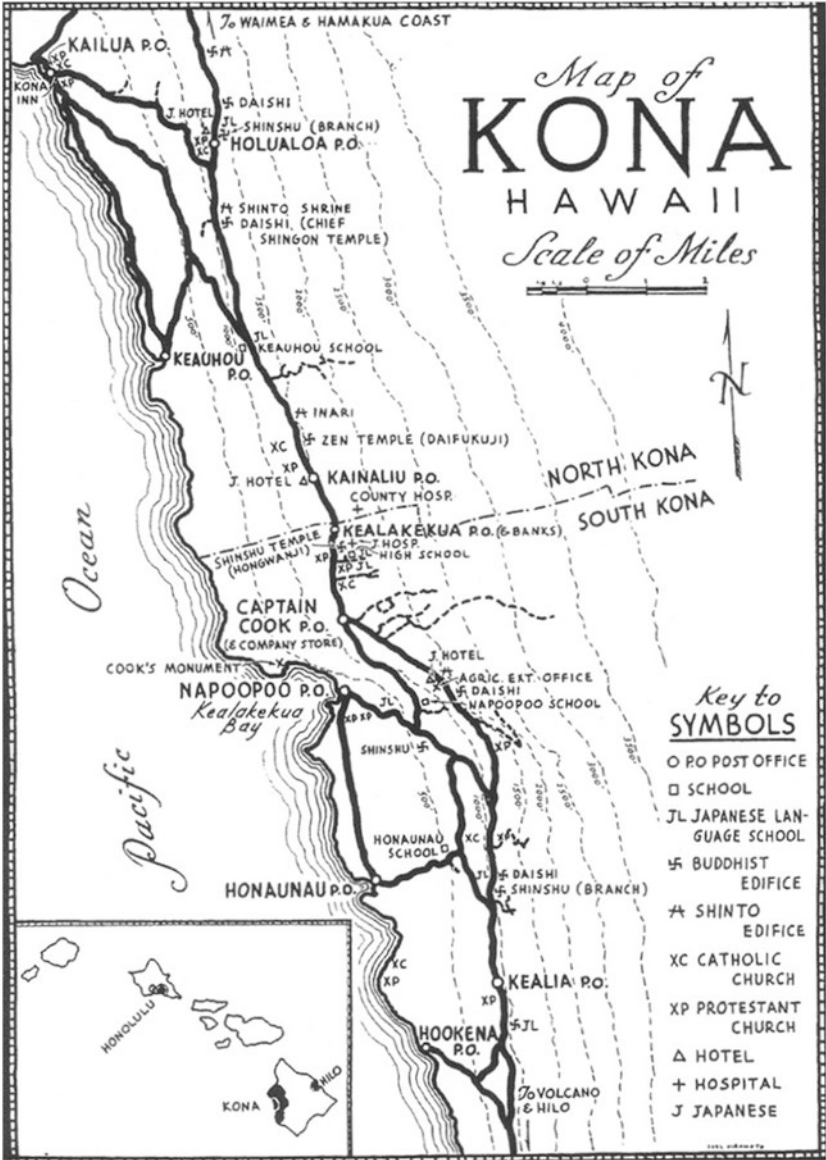
In the years leading up to the attack on Pearl Harbor, Kona District also consisted of several other groups besides the coffee farmers that are worth noting. The most important of these were the following:

1. Pockets of the Hawaiian community were scattered all along the sea coast (in Milolii, Hookena, Honaunau, Napoopoo, etc.). They earned their living by fishing and farming their traditional staple crop, known as *poi*.³⁷
2. Several Chinese shops, the American Trading Company, and the Kona Inn Hotel, catered to tourists in the small port of Kailua.
3. Eighty general stores sold groceries and dry goods along the Kona Coffee Belt's main road.
4. There were a few cattle ranches along the Belt Road in Kona. These were mostly owned by white landowners and manned by Hawaiian cowboys, known as *paniolas*. The Portuguese established medium-sized ranches. A handful of Japanese immigrants purchased small amounts of land and established cattle ranches to supplement their part-time coffee farming. (Others leased land in North Kona.)
5. Two Japanese-owned hotels were located in the northern area: the Kona Hotel, established in 1921, and the Abe Hotel, constructed in 1918 but closed in 1927.³⁸ In addition, there was a non-Japanese-owned hotel, the Mahealani Hotel, located in the central area of Kona District. Its exact establishment date is unknown but a historical photo dates this hotel to 1900.³⁹ In the southern area of Kona District, the Manago Hotel was established in 1915; it is still in business.

6. There were two hospitals in the Kona District community of Kealahou: the Kona Hospital and the Kona Japanese Hospital, built in 1929.
7. There were three main temples: the Kona Hongwanji Jodo Shin-shu (Kona Hongwanji) was established in 1897, with several satellite temples⁴⁰; the Kona Daifukuji Zen Soto-shu (Kona Daifukuji) was established in 1914⁴¹; and the Kona Daishi-do Shingon-shu (Kona Daishi-do) was established in 1910 and was moved several times until the main temple was erected in 1937. These three temples are discussed further in Chap. 3.
8. There were also two shrines: the Shinto shrine (*Izumo Taisha*) was constructed above the Yokoyama General Store but was destroyed by the FBI two weeks after the bombing of Pearl Harbor (the shrine was never rebuilt); the Inari Shrine was located next to the Kona Daifukuji temple. The shrine was destroyed days after the beginning of World War II (further discussion of the shrines is provided in Chaps. 3 and 6).⁴²

The Kona Coffee Belt stretches approximately 25 miles, starting in the north section of Honokahou and stretching to the south of Hookena. Every few miles along the Belt Road, small Japanese communities were created. These communities each had a barbershop, one or two tailors, a carpenter, a blacksmith, a drug store, a restaurant, several Buddhist temples, Shinto shrines, Christian churches, several post offices, a primary school, and a movie theater. Furthermore, there were two banks along the Belt Road. Up until the 1970s, Kealahou stood in the center of Kona District; it had two doctors, a dentist, the head of Kona Hongwanji, two Christian churches, and a high school. The Agricultural Extension Office was located in Captain Cook.

The Kona Japanese Hospital was built not far from the local Kona County Hospital in 1929, in response to the discriminatory treatment the Japanese community received at the County Hospital. The Matsumoto family donated the land for the two-story hospital, which was built in Kealahou under the supervision of Dr. Yoshi Sugamura and with the support of the Japanese community. The hospital stayed open until World War II.⁴³ After it was closed down, the hospital was donated to the Japanese Buddhist temples in Kona (including the Kona Hongwanji) and to the Central Union Kona Christian Church. According to Suetō Matsumoto⁴⁴ (Matsumoto, interview 2016), once the land was trans-



Map 2.1 Map of the Kona Coffee Belt (Embree, Acculturation among the Japanese of Kona)

ferred to the temples and the church there was some internal fighting and the Kona Hongwanji ended up purchasing the shares from the other two temples and the Christian church. The structure of the hospital is still standing today. Several *Nisei* participants interviewed mentioned that, as children, they remembered being treated at the Kona Japanese Hospital. Mary Katayama⁴⁵ (Katayama, interview August 2009), a *Nisei*, remembered: “When I was little I had a [fish] bone stuck in my throat, so my father took me to the Japanese hospital. I remember the doctor was Japanese, and he only spoke Japanese as I remember, so I think my parents felt safer knowing that the doctor was Japanese.” Two other informants mentioned that their parents preferred the Kona Japanese Hospital because of language issues (Morimoto, interview 2007). What we do know about the *Issei* is that their English-language proficiency was often inadequate as regards medical issues. However, I cannot come to any conclusion regarding whether this was the reason why they felt more at ease when communicating with doctors in their own language.



Picture 2.3 Coffee-land house

The majority of the Japanese laborers living along the Kona Coffee Belt's main road lived on the coffee land. They purchased most of their daily goods at the closest general store. The main shopping center, the Captain Cook Coffee Co. was difficult to reach for farmers who lived far away, because very few of them owned horses or cars. The children of school age attended school every day but many of the older people, especially the women, might remain isolated for days at a time among the coffee trees. Miki Sato⁴⁶ (Sato, interview 2008), stated: "My life was boring, my life was sheltered because we didn't have a car so I rarely went out. Going to Kealahou was like once every three months, we had to walk everywhere. I had to walk to school it would take us, gee, about one hour, every day."

MULTICULTURAL KONA DISTRICT

This section examines the demographics of the research site. Kona District experienced rapid ethnic changes after the influx of Japanese immigrants, which began in the late 1880s. Table 2.2 reveals the ethnic composition of the research site.

The cultural mix in Kona was made up of a majority of Japanese nationals (*Issei*), together with several other ethnic groups. The predominant group in terms of power dominance was white Americans. White Americans and Europeans were the first to arrive in Kona District: they came first as traders, then later as missionaries. The Mokuauia Church on the main strip in Kailua-Kona, and several other old Protestant and Catholic Churches along the Kona Belt Road, confirm a significant early missionary history. The white Americans controlled Kona District and the majority of the land. For example, nearly all of the Japanese local general stores relied on white Americans for supplies or credit, or both.⁴⁷ During this period, except for a few ingredients that could not be acquired in Kona, a large part of the Japanese provisions were imported from Japan, including the core staple foods of *kome* (rice) and *miso* (soybean paste).

The native Hawaiians had lived in Kona since before colonization. Their communities were located outside the Kona Coffee Belt and there were only a few families scattered along the Kona Coffee Belt Road. In the beginning, due to their historical position in the district, the native Hawaiians held a higher social status than the Japanese migrant workers, but later the Japanese farmers employed native Hawaiian as part-time workers during coffee harvesting. For example, my grandfather remem-

Table 2.2 Ethnic composition in Kona (number of individuals, and as a percentage of total population)

<i>Ethnic group</i>	1890	1900	1930	1940
Hawaiians	2880	2797	1395	937
Part-Hawaiian	268	466	983	1298
American/European	151	745	120	425 ^a
Portuguese	126	N/A	356	N/A
Chinese	125	460	141	124
Japanese	8	1718	4845	4182
Filipino	N/A	N/A	1128	745
Other	7	5	437	237 ^b
Total	3565	6191	9405	7948

Source: Lind n.d., Table IV

^aIncluding Portuguese and white Americans

^bIncluding Koreans and Puerto Ricans

bered that his father only spoke Japanese and Hawaiian and he had many Hawaiians working on his coffee farm.⁴⁸ Like the *Issei*, the native Hawaiians were skilled fishermen. Prior to the Japanese migration, fishing was limited by the use of ancient fishing equipment. With the introduction of steel hooks and fishing nets, and the utilization of Hawaiian outrigger canoes, fishing in Kona became more diverse and more productive.⁴⁹ Several *Nisei* referred to fishing as a source of interracial cohesion, providing a means by which to share knowledge, which in turn brought families and communities closer. Hichiro Nakata⁵⁰ (Nakata, interview 2008) mentioned: "Some of my best friends were these Hawaiian guys that can dive (spear fish) ... they were my diving partners" (Nakata, interview 2008). The native Hawaiians prepared their fish in a similar way to the Japanese farmers: *sashimi* (raw) or *himono* (dried). In terms of their food source, the native Hawaiians cultivated a staple crop called *taro*, which is pounded into a paste-like texture known as *poi*. *Poi* slowly became a supplementary food source for the *Issei* community. Another significant staple crop was *ulu*, a citrus-type fruit that was usually baked. This fruit was cultivated at higher elevations but, unlike *poi*, was not popular among the Japanese community. Other types of Hawaiian food that the Japanese community quickly accustomed itself to were meat dishes, such as *kalua pig* (a whole pig baked in an underground pit covered with native leaves for flavor) and *laulau* (pork, fish, and leaves wrapped in tea leaves and steamed).

Another smaller ethnic group that formed in Kona at approximately the same time as the Japanese was the Portuguese.⁵¹ In many cases, these Portuguese individuals purchased their own land for cattle ranching and dairy farming. They attempted to cultivate grapes on vineyards in the Holualoa area but were unsuccessful due to the unstable weather conditions (mostly the lack of water). The Portuguese were well known for their sweet baked breads and for their milk products, which were frequently consumed by the *Issei*. The Portuguese had a rather complicated position in the social structure of Kona District: an elderly Portuguese resident interviewed in Kona agreed the Portuguese were not quite *haole* (Anonymous 23, interview 2007)—they held a social status below the white Americans⁵² but above the *Issei*.⁵³

As previously mentioned, in the early years many *Issei* strongly resented the Portuguese because of the harsh treatment they received during their employment on the sugarcane plantations when they first arrived. These bitter feelings have been passed down several generations, as will be discussed later.

Filipinos were another significant ethnic group in Kona District. They immigrated to the area approximately 20 years after the Japanese migration. They relocated to the Kona Coffee Belt as hired laborers.⁵⁴ The majority of the Filipinos were seasonal laborers that migrated to Kona during the coffee-picking season and left when the harvest was finished.

In terms of power dominance and social mobility, over time the Japanese rose in the social structure and began employing recent migrant laborers, like the Filipinos, as well as local native Hawaiians. Matsuo Matsumoto⁵⁵ (Matsumoto, interview 2009), an N2 *Nisei* in the Kealahakua area who owned six acres of coffee plantation, stated: "I would hire the same Filipino family every year for more than 10 years now." During this interview, Matsumoto made it very clear that he respected the Filipinos' hard working and fast picking. He stated several times that he had a close relationship with this family and that "every year I was happy to meet them and you know trade stories about family and things that were going on ... for a long time we keep in touch" The *Nisei* also described the interrelationship between the farm owners and seasonal laborers as being respectful and appreciative. In some cases, farm owners paid a bonus to migrant workers in the hope that they would return for the next season.

Scattered along the Kona Belt Road were also a few Koreans who had been in the region approximately the same length of time as the Filipinos. They too were employed as coffee pickers during the harvest season. Finally, the Kona District was also home to a few Chinese families that owned businesses, including one Chinese restaurant, the Ocean View Inn, in downtown Kailua-Kona, which has since become a tourist spot for vacationers.

During the pre-World War II period of interracial developmental, the Japanese migrant laborers were well organized. Although in the beginning the *Isei* had dreams of one day returning to Japan, they ultimately established strong bonds with community members, friends, and other families in Kona. In comparison to other ethnic groups, the Kona District Japanese community was less likely to get into trouble with the law.⁵⁶ With so many ethnic groups living in Kona District, one might surmise that Kona was a place in which extreme racial prejudice might be found—making it hard to live there. In fact, in comparison to Honolulu and the situation experienced by the Japanese communities on the mainland of the United States, racial prejudices were weak and were rarely

expressed.⁵⁷ Kona was a rural region where people had frequent face-to-face relationships with one another—hence, in Kona District, a person was much more likely to be judged by his or her ability to work than by his or her ethnic background.

THE BEGINNING OF THE TENANT-FARMING SYSTEM

In the beginning, the coffee farms operated by Japanese farmers were approximately 5 to 15 acres in size and were rented from native Hawaiians, who at the time owned most of the land in Kona District. Since the Japanese *Issei* were new immigrants, who for the most part were at the bottom of the economic ladder, the land that they took over was “steep and rocky waste land”⁵⁸—the white American, Portuguese, and Chinese plantation owners and farmers had already taken the prime land for their farms. In 1905, the worldwide sugar market crashed, which led to the Chinese and Portuguese abandoning their farms. These were soon acquired by a few Anglo-American landowners, and by two banks.⁵⁹ This newly acquired prime farming land was now obtainable on lease for *Issei* who hoped to live as semi-independent individual tenant farmers. In most cases, the land was leased for a period of 10 to 20 years.⁶⁰ The newly arrived immigrants had little or no capital, and therefore the contractual agreement between the Japanese tenant farmers and the banks entitled the tenants to receive housing, food, and farm necessities on credit, in return for one-third to half of the crop. In the beginning, this arrangement benefited both the landowners and the coffee farmers.

One effect of this tenant system was that individual farmers did not care to make additional permanent improvements to the land,⁶¹ because such upgrades would all go to the succeeding tenant. As a result, effective utilization of the land was reduced. Another factor that contributed to the lack of land improvement was the fact that the older *Issei* were aliens who had no prospects of becoming citizens. Many also still cherished the dream of returning to their home country. In other cases, the unstable coffee prices created uncertainty as regards to their future well-being, which stopped the farmers from investing time and energy in their short land leases. Thus, while some younger men looked on Kona as a place of permanent residence, most of the older men maintained the attitude of temporary residents in the district.

There were several reasons why the *Issei* remained in Kona District and did not move away: first, demographically, the Kona Coffee Belt had the highest concentration of Japanese migrant workers; second, as has been said, it offered freedom; and finally, it offered the *Issei* the possibility of becoming landowners and purchasing land under their own names (unlike their counterparts living on the West Coast of the mainland United States who could not possess land). Nevertheless, the many *Issei* landowners that purchased land just prior to the Great Depression of 1929 had an enormously difficult time making mortgage payments. Arthur Murata⁶² (Murata, interview 2010), a *Nisei* and a retired high school teacher, stated: “My father bought this little four acre piece of land for 600 dollars and it took more than 20 years to pay off just the land, and so, because coffee prices were down for so many years, it was difficult for all the farmers to get ahead.” For many Japanese migrant workers who were not planning to return to Japan, obtaining their own farmland was exceptionally important for their survival in Kona District.

LIVING ON THE FARMS

The income the *Issei* coffee farmers in Kona made was half of what migrant workers earned on the sugar plantations. Because of their lack of English-language proficiency and the limited employment opportunities in the vast rural area, farming and other jobs involving intense physical labor were their only means of making a living. Nevertheless, several *Nisei* emphasized that their parents did not feel disadvantaged, since they had sufficient amounts of food. For instance, the majority of the farmers cultivated their own gardens, which supplied them with adequate amounts of fruits and vegetables. In many cases, fish was also likewise plentiful. Fumio Okumura (Okumura, interview 2008), a *Nisei*, stated: “Everyone was in the same boat, we all had the same hard work and bills to pay, I guess everyone was just making it. Well I take that back, we were never hungry. No matter what, we always ate pretty good.” For the most part, the *Nisei* today refer to their past as a time of survival and resilience, and often regarded living on the farms as not such a terrible life. One referred to living on the farms as, “Character building ... this made me who I am now; that coffee farming was hard work but we all had a responsibility to our family to stop complaining and just do it” (Kitahara, interview 2007).⁶³

As my research progressed, through countless personal interviews and follow-up telephone conversations, the narratives revealed differing pictures of how the Japanese migrant community in Hawaii negotiated their coffee farming experiences. Previous scholars have stated that traditions and values from Japan were widely practiced in Hawaii with few modifications, despite the transfer of knowledge from different prefectures of Japan and from contact with foreign cultural experiences in Hawaii.⁶⁴ I agree, and I argue that customs regulated the social life of these Japanese immigrant farmers in rather strict ways. From the clothes they wore and the kind of food they consumed, to the manner in which they undertook and valued religious rituals, and buried their dead, the Japanese farmers in Hawaii persistently followed in the footsteps of their forefathers.

COFFEE-LAND HOUSES

During the early 1970s, as a child growing up in the area, I was aware that old coffee-land houses were still to be found along the *Kona* Belt Road, or standing deep in the coffee lands by themselves. These houses, which served as homes for the majority of the coffee farmers, were typically small, makeshift, unpainted wooden structures, with a *totan* (a corrugated metal roof). Coffee trees were scattered everywhere across the land, in many cases right up to the house itself.⁶⁵ Each home also had a garden, where fresh vegetables were grown, and a hen-house, which provided fresh eggs. Most of the houses were on a slope, the back of the house being at the ground level, while the front porch was erected on pillars and faced the ocean. Although the houses were constructed crudely, the views of the shoreline and the horizon were breathtaking. At the rear of each house stood a large catchment tank made of redwood, to store rainwater trapped by the metal roof and the top cover of the tank.⁶⁶ This water was used for drinking, cooking, bathing, and pulping coffee berries. During droughts, it was too expensive for most of the farmers to transport water; therefore, individuals had to sacrifice their *ofuro* (baths) so as to conserve water.⁶⁷

As you entered a coffee-land house, the living room or *zashiki* was usually covered with Japanese-style *tatami* mats placed directly over the compact soil.⁶⁸ In order to adhere to the traditional requirements regarding religious rituals, most *Issei* farmers placed both the *butsudan* (Buddhist altar) and the *kamidana*⁶⁹ in the *zashiki*. Next to the *kamidana* hung portraits of the *Tennō Heika*, the Japanese Emperor and

Empress, as well as large photos of deceased parents, and in some cases pictures of family funerals. In the center of the room, the family would sit around a square table that was capable of seating six people. There were no chairs, dining tables, or sofas. The kitchen and the walkways were of hardened compacted soil. The bedrooms were one step above the ground, with wood flooring and Hawaiian-made *tatami* mats. The majority of the *Nisei* interviewed recalled sleeping on a traditional futon placed directly on the *tatami* mats. Inside the house, the family conducted their everyday life in a way very similar to how they would have lived in Japan.

The restroom or the outhouse was another structure, located approximately 20 to 30 feet away from the main house because of the smell. For the *Issei*, the outhouse toilet system was similar to that used in their home country. Therefore, when the residents of the Territory of Hawaii were required to upgrade their toilet systems to a modern system in the early 1930s, it was difficult for the Japanese immigrants to change what was for them a long-standing practice. Several *Nisei* participants (Abe, focus group 2010) recalled the time when toilet paper became available for the first time. Nevertheless, even when such paper became available, due to the difficult economic conditions many reduced their daily expenses by utilizing Sears and J.C. Penny catalogs and newspapers as toilet paper.

In addition to the main house and the outhouse, the coffee-land houses had one other structure: that which housed the bath. This also stood 20 to 30 feet away from the main house. The *ofuro* (bath) was exactly the same size as the bathtubs used in Japan. The tubs were made from redwood, with a stainless steel box, where the fire was started, that would be inserted into the tub to heat the water. The water was heated by burning coffee branches that were collected during the pruning in the off-season. Preparing a bath was a tedious chore that required starting a fire to heat the water. The bath water was drained and saved for the laundry and for scrubbing the house. As a rule, the wife or the children usually prepared the *ofuro*, while the head of the household, the father, would always enter the bath first.

Several *Nisei* informants explained how their families lived and how their parents (the *Issei*) struggled. Kentaro Tanaka (Tanaka, interview 2006) stated: "Our house was deep inside, and sometimes when a guest would come, for example the [Buddhist] priest, we would bring the donkey to the main road to carry the priest up the steep and muddy road—it was far and some houses are half to a mile inside." The majority



Picture 2.4 Rice field in Japan (John F. Embree collection, Cornell)

of the *Nisei* participants interviewed remembered something similar: the coffee-land houses they lived in were more like shacks. They felt the younger generations could not possibly imagine how they had lived back then. The *Issei* and the *Nisei* lived in this situation for quite some time. One of the problems for the majority of these Japanese migrant workers was the fact that the land and the houses belonged to the coffee company and the big landowners—therefore there was little incentive



Picture 2.5 Water catchment tank (Imai, Akinori, *Our Nostalgic History*)

to make any significant improvements to the land or the house. For example, one *Nisei* stated:

I don't know what my father was thinking, go back to Japan or keep growing coffee. We didn't know what the future was, the price of coffee would go up and down. I think it was difficult for my father to make any future plans so we just rented the land and didn't do anything to improve our house or lifestyle. I remembered my mother saying many times that in the beginning she thought that she would be living in the house only temporarily, but in the end she died in that old coffee-land house. (Anonymous 1, interview 2007)

For the majority of *Issei*, the unexpectedly long stay in their temporary and crude homes was not difficult or uncomfortable, due to the exceptionally mild weather and the fact that every family in the community lived in a very similar situation.



Picture 2.6 *Ofuro* (Imai, Akinori, *Our Nostalgic History*)

FOOD

In relation to the food consumed by the *Issei* and *Nisei*, Kentaro Tanaka commented: “We ate simple.” In the beginning, most of the groceries were imported directly from Japan, including the rice. Specialty foods, such as dishes served during Japanese traditional holidays, were exactly the same as in the mother country. For example, during *Oshogatsu* (the New Year), dishes such as *kuro mame* (black beans), *kazunoko* (smelt eggs), *takuan* (pickled radish), and others were all obtainable, but for many of Kona’s Japanese farmers, it was too costly to partake of such meals. Kentaro Tanaka (Tanaka, interview 2006) remembered: “When we were little during the New Year’s, I saw those kind of foods on the table but I never had the chance to even taste it because my father used to complain about how expensive it was, so only my father ate that kind food. My mother went to the store and bought small pieces of that—only enough for them.” Several other participants shared similar stories of how traditional Japanese food was tremendously expensive and was rarely eaten.

A large part of the food eaten by the *Issei* was harvested straight from the garden, with the surplus immediately canned and consumed outside the productive season. Farmers raised chicken on the farms, and in some cases, a few domesticated pigs as well. Certain types of fish were expensive, so families would spend the weekends at the beach fishing for their supper. Kihei Ogawa⁷⁰ (Ogawa, interview 2005) stated:

Those days fish was plentiful, not like now. My brother and I would jump in the water and in one hour we would fill up the cooler (a 48-quart cooler could hold approximately 50 lbs. of fish). We ate what we could and the rest of the fish we dried (*bimono*) so we could eat it later. The only problem we had was carrying the fish back home. In those days we had no car, so we would walk down and it would take us about an hour but going back is up hill you know.

In terms of the fish in Hawaii, the *Issei* seemed to have quickly become accustomed to the various types of reef fish that have a particularly unique taste and smell in comparison to cold-water Japanese fish. Still, many of the species of fish caught in the Kona waters were similar to those found in Japan: for instance, *aji* (Spanish mackerel), *maguro* (yellow fin tuna), and *katsuo* (skipjack tuna), as well as lobsters and crabs.

Nisei participants recalled that beef was especially favored, but was too expensive and was served only during special occasions. Kiku Kubo⁷¹ (Kubo, interview 2009) remembered the first time she had a true beefsteak, at the age of 20: “We were so less fortunate that we could only afford the bones and liver and, you know, the scraps.” The participants also mentioned that their parents would crave tofu, which they had rarely.⁷²

One particular issue as regards the food consumed by the Japanese immigrants was that of rice. Although rice was plentiful in Hawaii, it did not quite taste the same as the rice from back home. John Embree has stated that the primary complaint made by *Issei* farmers was that the rice in Hawaii was terrible. At first, the rice was imported from Japan, but this became too costly.⁷³ The *Issei* later attempted to cultivate rice in the Waipio Valley, but they were unable to produce enough for the growing numbers of Japanese migrant workers. Soon thereafter, rice started to come to Hawaii from California; rice from California has been sold throughout Hawaii ever since. I have heard from numerous Japanese sushi chefs living in Hawaii that even the most expensive California rice

(*koshihikari*) lacks the distinctive flavor, aroma, and texture of the same species of rice grown in Japan.

The dishes eaten by the *Issei* were generally prepared in the same way as in Japan. The traditional basic ingredients used for seasoning were *iriko* (fish stock), *shoyu* (soy sauce), *mirin* (Japanese sweet cooking wine), *kombu* (seaweed or edible kelp), sake, and sugar. *Miso* (soybean paste) was likewise imported from Japan. Various types of *miso* came from Japan, primarily from the Kyushu and Chugoku *chiho* (area).⁷⁴ The majority of *Nisei* participants stated that *miso* soup and rice were part of the daily diet, while bread and non-Japanese dishes were prepared on occasion. As in Japan, various natural edible plants were harvested in the mountains: for example, *yamaimo* (Japanese mountain yam), *shoga* (ginger root), *gobo* (burdock root), *takenoko* (bamboo shoot), *myoga* (ginger), and many other tropical fruits and vegetables which became part of the Japanese migrants' diet and were accessible to almost all. The Japanese immigrants also brought with them *kaki* (persimmons), *mikan* (tangerine), *daikon* (Japanese radish), and other simple food plants that were successfully cultivated in Hawaii. In my experience, because of the higher tropical temperatures, the *mikans* in Hawaii are actually much sweeter than those grown in Japan, but due to the cold weather the Japanese-grown *daikons* are much milder.

Turning to sweeter foods, *wagashi* (traditional Japanese confectionery) was often served with green tea. In particular, the type of *wagashi* made from *mochi* (rice cake), *anko* (a sweet red bean paste), and fruits were very popular among the *Issei*.⁷⁵ Several *Nisei* informants remembered *mochi*, *dango* (Japanese dumplings and sweets made from rice powder), *daifuku* (rice cakes stuffed with a bean paste filling), and *manju* (similar to *mochi* but with buckwheat added to the rice flour) were sold everywhere in Kona during the *Issei* period. Shizuko Yamagata⁷⁶ (Yamagata, interview 2007) stated that on occasion, "some people that visited Japan would bring back *yokan* (a thick, jellied dessert made of red bean paste, agar, and sugar) but to us we are not used to that expensive kind of stuff." The *Issei* also enjoyed *anpan*, which is a sweet bun most commonly filled with *anko*. During the *Issei* period, the *Nisei* children were also very fond of *bontan ame* (rice candy). Several *Nisei* participants said the *bontan ame* was originally imported from Japan and was the only Japanese candy available.

As regards to drinks, coffee, Japanese green tea (the essential drink known as *ocha*) were the only drinks the *Issei* farmers found acceptable. Many *Nisei* said that for the *Issei*, good quality tea was difficult to acquire. Shizuko Yamagata (Yamagata, interview 2007) mentioned:

“Both my parents used to complain about the tea almost every day ... The quality of the tea was so bad that when someone would visit Japan, we would always ask them to bring back good tea as an *omiyage* [souvenir].” *Sencha* (green tea) and *genmaicha* (brown rice tea) were the two types of tea that were most easily accessible. As in Japan, *genmaicha* was served with every meal and was drunk as a substitute for water when one was thirsty. *Sencha*, the more expensive green tea, was served to newly arrived guests. *Ochazuke* (pouring tea over rice with several different toppings), which used the less expensive *genmaicha*, was a popular dish among the *Issei*.

In addition to these Japanese foods and drinks, Kona District provided various native Hawaiian vegetables and fruits. However, in the beginning the *Issei* farmers had a difficult time acquiring a taste for such produce. Research by Andrew Lind has described how many *Issei* took a liking to pineapple and papayas, but not to bananas or guava. Several *Nisei* informants mentioned that in the beginning their parents had no knowledge of how to utilize these new ingredients in cooking. One *Nisei* in particular, Judy Kitahara (Kitahara, interview 2007), said:

My father used to like drinking guava and *lilikoi* juice in the mornings with papayas. We had so much bananas we couldn't eat it all so my mother made banana bread and after a while we got tired of eating that too so she then made banana pies. Of course there were other fruits that we really loved. When mango season came, my father used to take us everywhere to pick mangos, *lechees*, and *longon*.

The transformation from a Japanese diet to a Kona diet was, therefore, not a particularly difficult one. As the *Issei* became accustomed to their new environment, so the process of acculturation as regards the various local foods progressed. And as the new foods became a part of their daily meals, the *Issei* formed closer ties with members outside the Japanese community, through the sharing of food and recipes. This led to wider horizontal ties. The native Hawaiians' cultural similarities to the *Issei*, in regard to the types of spices they used, aided this process of acculturation. It was also a two-way process: the native Hawaiians learned, experienced, and, in some cases, adopted different cultural aspects demonstrated by the Japanese community. For example, they quickly took a liking to Japanese rice, *shoyu*, to Japanese spices, and to other foods. For numerous Hawaiian families, Japanese rice became a staple food.

HAWAIIAN TROPICAL CLOTHING

In the early *Issei* period, traditional Japanese clothing was mixed with various Western forms of attire, and with local Hawaiian tropical styles. Several *Nisei* informants remembered that women quickly assimilated to the local dress codes. Women's clothing in the early 1900s included long Hawaiian-style dresses (plain A-frame dresses) made of cotton material that was sewn at home. On special occasions, such as weddings, funerals, and festivals, women wore kimonos or *montsukis* (*kimono decorated with the family crest*). As for the men, old family photographs reveal that on formal occasions, such as funerals and weddings, they wore Western-style suits, with large bucket-sized hats.⁷⁷ Old pictures of the *Issei* working in the Kona coffee fields also reveal that they adopted Western-style work clothing, long pants, and various styles of shirts.

THE KONA COFFEE BUSINESS: THE COMPLEX RELATIONS OF LANDOWNERS AND JAPANESE IMMIGRANT LABORERS

The Kona coffee business started approximately in the early 1890s, when a few *Issei* started to lease land (from 5 to 15 acres) from native Hawaiians to develop the first coffee farms in Kona. As has been stated, the Japanese at the time could acquire only second-grade barren land because the white Americans, Portuguese, and Chinese plantation owners and farmers had already taken the prime land. However, as the old plantation system in Kona began to be replaced by a sharecropping system, the Japanese immigrants were able to take over the majority of the coffee farms in the district. In 1891, due to an over-supply of coffee on the world market, coffee prices crashed, while sugar prices shot up. This led the white Americans, Portuguese, and Chinese growers to switch their business back to sugar production.⁷⁸

When W.W. Brunner entered the sharecropping business in southern Kona District, he developed the first credit banking system for Japanese immigrant farmers. The contract for the farmers provided housing, food, and farming supplies, and, in return, Brunner charged the farmers one-third of their yearly crop. This contractual agreement was beneficial to the landowners and to the Japanese immigrant farmers: it gave the Japanese farmers the opportunity to become independent farmers with only a little start-up capital; at the same time, it motivated the

farmers to maximize production, which increased profits for Brunner. Thereafter, the Japanese tenant-farming model spread widely across Kona District. In 1905, the Captain Cook Coffee Co., owned by the Hind family, purchased all the shares in Brunner's company. The Hind family retained the same system that Brunner had developed on his 350 acres in North Kona District. Hackfeld & Co., later renamed American Factors Co., also implemented a tenant-farming system that involved the Japanese. Within five years, the Captain Cook Coffee Co. and American Factor Co. held 70 percent of the leases with Japanese farmers.

These two companies maintained control over these Japanese farmers by allowing them to accumulate large debts over an extended period of time.⁷⁹ Because of the language and cultural differences, the two companies utilized more than 60 local Japanese-owned grocery stores along the Kona Belt Road to conduct their business. To ensure a stable production of coffee beans, they advanced loans for the purchase of provisions at inflated prices, with loan interest rates of 25 percent. Since they were the only coffee distributors, the two companies developed a monopoly and were able to control the price of coffee. Many farmers believed that they were not receiving a fair price for their coffee beans. As a result of this monopoly, for many Japanese farmers, the annual coffee crop was inadequate to turn a profit, and they remained in debt for many years.

Elderly Japanese farmers have long told stories of this tough business environment. As a fourth-generation Japanese American, I heard the same stories over and over, from my grandfather, my father, and from many other farmers, and the *Nisei* farmers recently interviewed told the same story: how their parents were cheated for many years by Captain Cook Coffee Co., and by American Factor Co. Most of the farmers started by recounting the hardship they experienced. The discussion would then quickly switch to the resentment they felt toward the two companies. One part-time *Nisei* coffee farmer stated:

Coffee [farming] was hard work but you know the biggest problem was Amfac [American Factor Co.]. They had us on our knees. You bought all the food and things to live from Amfac, all on credit, and so when they set the price [of coffee beans] so cheap you were dead because you couldn't sell to anywhere else because of the agreement we had with

Amfac. There were other producers that you could sell to, that bought coffee at a much higher price, but because you were on credit you had to sell the coffee to them [American Factor Co.]. (Anonymous 2, interview 2007)

Another factor that affected the coffee farmers in Kona was the instability of worldwide coffee prices. The price of coffee was a constant problem for the majority of the farmers. As Kona coffee accounted for a mere 0.5 percent of the total worldwide coffee market, coffee farmers in Kona District had little control over the price of coffee. When there was an over-supply on the worldwide open market, the price of Kona coffee was dramatically decreased. The farms in Kona were family-operated, small-scale, and low-volume coffee fields, and they found it difficult to compete with the large-scale, high-volume coffee fields in South America. The price of coffee peaked at \$4.50 per 100 pounds in 1925 and 1926. (Figure 2.2 illustrates how volatile the price of coffee was—a fact that led to great financial uncertainty and insecurity for many Japanese farmers.)

As might be inferred from Fig. 2.2, the only time the Kona coffee farmers made large profits was in 1925. The profits from the proceeds of the coffee harvest that year were used to purchase land. During this one year, many new houses were constructed that are still standing today. After a

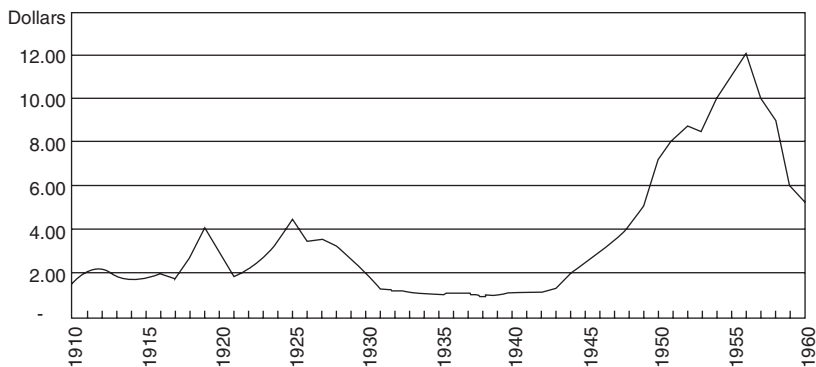


Fig. 2.2 Coffee prices in Kona, 1910–1960. Note: price quoted is for 100 lb. bag of coffee cherry

slight decrease in prices at the end of 1926, coffee remained profitable until the advent of the Great Depression in 1929.⁸⁰

The *Nisei*'s recollections of the Kona coffee business center on two overlapping themes: their descriptions of the unfair business practices of the two big companies point to the issue of greed, while in stressing this business behavior, they underline the theme of the survival of the Japanese community in Kona. The *Nisei* see themselves as victims of greed, but they come to terms with this history by framing themselves as survivors of such exploitative business practices.

COFFEE FARMING: HARD WORK

In the beginning, the majority of the *Issei* families were given approximately ten acres of leased land. As indicated by John Iwane⁸¹ (Iwane, interview 2007), a 95-year-old *Nisei*, this was enough: "Part of the problem was

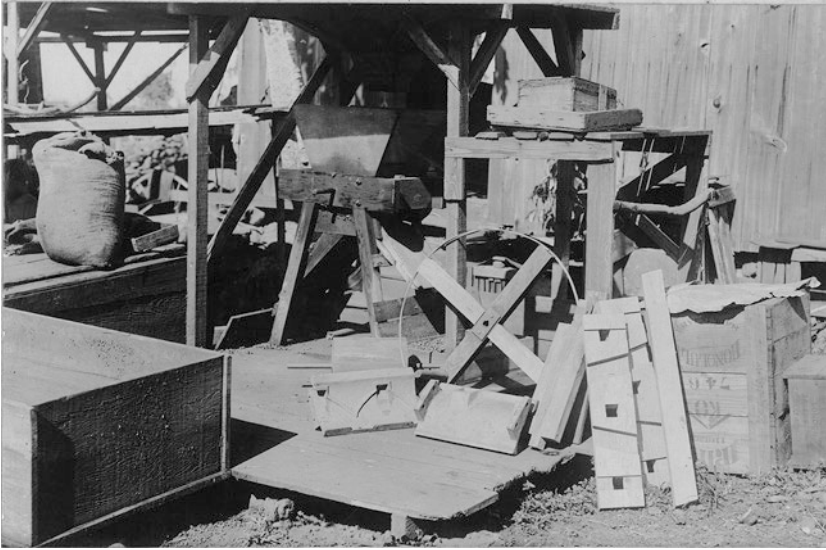


Picture 2.7 Group photo on coffee farm (Murata Family Collection)

that the farms were too big to handle for husband, wife and their kids ... ya when the coffee price was good [high] they could hire some extra help, but when the prices were down they had a hard time to take care [of] 10 acres.” With this large acreage to farm, the farmers had to work throughout the entire year. And the work they did was back-breaking. Coffee is a seasonal crop, harvested from August to November (the hottest and most humid months of the year).

During the harvesting period, the coffee picking carried out by the *Issei* was extremely labor-intensive: each red cherry berry had to be handpicked individually from a cluster of young green berries. The farmers would start at sunrise, when the temperature was cool. By ten in the morning, the temperature would start to rise; by midday, it was scorching. In addition to the tropical heat, at about two o’clock in the afternoon it would usually rain. Farmers, who had to wear a raincoat due to the afternoon rains, found it humid and sticky. Coffee picking was, then, difficult work, as one *Nisei* part-time coffee farmer explained: “Back in the old days we had bigger farms, not like today, and so when the coffee starts to ripen you need to pick the cherries as fast as you can because they all start to ripen at once and if you don’t pick ’em then they start to fall on the ground. So when it’s coffee season we gotta go like hell” (Anonymous 2, interview 2007). Because these farmers needed to maximize production, the farmers grew the coffee trees to well over ten feet, which required the usage of a long heavy ladder and long polls with hooks tied to one end so they could pull the branches closer, so as to pick the cherry red coffee beans. While harvesting, the picker dropped the berries into a *laubala* basket. When the basket was full, he or she transferred the berries into 80-pound sacks. At the end of the day, the sacks were loaded onto a donkey, which carried the coffee sacks out of the farm.

Many *Nisei* farmers stated that their farms were too big, with too few workers. As a result, all members of the family had to participate in the picking of coffee, although most of the heavy work was left for the men, which included loading the 80-pound sacks onto the donkeys. As for the women, their assistance in picking the coffee beans was in addition to their household duties. Billy Paris⁸² (Paris, interview 2010) expressed his feelings about the role of women in the work: “Japanese women are hardworking people. Back in the old days I remembered the women would be holding on to one babe and the other babe is holding on to



Picture 2.8 Coffee pulping machine (Abe Family Collection)

her leg and she has a coffee basket around her neck, with one hand picking coffee.”

In addition to the tough work involved in the coffee farming, the landscape of the farm itself was dangerous. The land was rocky and uneven, with *a'a* (volcanic lava formations with rough, jagged sharp edges) which made it extremely dangerous to work in the fields. Wagons and machinery were also next to impossible to bring into the fields due to the steepness of the mountain and the nature of the rocky terrain. Therefore, harvesting coffee had to be done entirely by hand and was time consuming.

After the coffee berries were harvested, the next step was to remove the pulp, by means of a coffee pulping machine.⁸³ In the early days, the coffee pulping machines were all turned manually. Next came the fermentation process, which took approximately 12 hours—usually over night was sufficient. In the morning, the beans were washed and laid out to dry in the sun. *Hoshidana*⁸⁴ (special drying platforms) were constructed and, because of the frequent afternoon rains, they incorporated a movable roof, on wheels, which was used to cover the beans.



Picture 2.9 Hoshidana (Murata Family Collection)

To accelerate the drying process, the beans had to be constantly turned with a rake. The drying process, which involved constantly monitoring the weather, was the easiest job during the coffee-picking season, but it involved great responsibility. The dried beans were called parchment. In this form, the farmers sold their coffee crop at the end of the season.

The majority of the *Nisei* interviewed confirmed that during the coffee season the work was intense, and, at times, back-breaking. However, although times were difficult, on several occasions these farmers reminded me that they were blessed to have had the opportunity to work for themselves, and that the harder they applied themselves the greater were the rewards. Many participants in my research stated that their parents preferred to live this much simpler life than go back to the plantation camps. The situation was one of do or die—there was no turning back to the camps or to Japan: the *Issei* simply had to succeed in coffee farming.



Picture 2.10 *Nisei* children riding a donkey (Murata Family Collection)



Picture 2.11 Man preparing coffee beans to be pulped (Murata Family Collection)

THE COFFEE OFF-SEASON: LEARNING, INNOVATION, AND RESILIENCE

During the off-season, the farmers had greater flexibility; nonetheless, there were still many jobs that needed doing. For instance, weeding—perhaps the most demanding work for both men and women—was a continuous and ongoing struggle. In the early years weeds had to be removed with a hoe, which involved intense back-breaking labor. As previously mentioned, the coffee fields were composed partly of soil and partly of volcanic rock. John Iwane (Iwane, interview 2007) explained: “The coarse lava rock did not yield willingly to the sharp edge of the metal hoe, which vibrated through the arms of the hoer with every blow.” The next most important job was to fertilize the coffee trees. In the early years, raw animal manure was used as fertilizer. Pruning coffee trees was another back-breaking job. Although trimming and cutting branches required much energy, hauling the branches out of the field proved an even greater hardship for the men. The branches were first removed from the trees, then cut into short lengths and bundled together to be loaded onto a donkey. These branches were then cut into shorter lengths and utilized as firewood for the cooking stove and for the deep Japanese-style bath. Other small jobs included repairing rock walls along the boundaries, replacing trees that had died, and maintaining the farm equipment. All of this work was carried out during the off-season.

Finally, a word should be said about the product of all of this labor: the coffee itself. For the most part, during the *Issei* period coffee had no significant meaning, nor any cultural value, in Japan. To the *Issei*, coffee was just a cash crop, and nothing more. No festivals, religious ceremonies, or holidays involved coffee, except for what was called *hanami*. This particular practice is best explained by Goro Inaba⁸⁵:

You know, because coffee was the basic industry in those days, much of the land was planted in coffee, of course. As of now, much of the land has been abandoned. But in those days, coffee was the basic industry in Kona. When the coffee blossoms bloomed, you know how it is. They look like snow on the trees. They used to have a celebration. What they used to call *hanami*: that is, observing the blossoms. The families used to get together and they used to celebrate. This year, this family would have the observation; next year, the next family; and so on. They used to rotate it. And it was quite an occasion.

According to Goro Inaba, *hanami* was a big event. He describes how it was celebrated:

Well, the food was the main thing. And the sake, of course, for the elderly people—the adults. They used to sing. You know, parties in those days used to last the whole night. Like nowadays, you go to a wedding party from 6 [p.m.] to about 9 o'clock, you're through. But in the olden days, they used to do their own cooking. Families used to get together. Ladies used to get together, help cook. And the parties went on for the whole night.

Despite the sense of festivity around *hanami*, however, the *Issei* farmers rarely even drank the coffee that they grew, due to its bitter taste.

With all of the hardships it involved, the question can be asked: did coffee farming represent a better choice for the *Issei* than working on the sugar plantations? As mentioned above, coffee farmers faced monopolism and unstable coffee prices, and they relied on the gods for the weather they needed to plant and harvest. Coffee farmers could afford only a small margin of error, and thus any one of these factors could place them in great debt and cause severe hardship. Coffee farming was clearly not for the weak of heart: it was an extremely difficult way of life. And, yet, with it came freedom.

FISHING IS OUR CULTURE

After tending to the farm, the farmers supplemented their income with various side jobs, chief among which were *laubala* (pandanus leaf) weaving and fishing.

For some *Nisei*, fishing, which predominantly took place during the off-season, offered a supplementary income that could make a huge difference to one's overall annual income. Fishing was also a Japanese cultural activity that had been shared with their Japanese immigrant parents. Kona provided various types of fishing, for different species of fish. The most popular style of fishing, for both commercial and home consumption, was throw net and spear fishing, which required only a net or a spear. A net was cast over a school of reef fish or the fisherman jumped into the water with only a spear in hand. Another type of fishing, *opelu* (Spanish mackerel) fishing, required a 22-foot outrigger canoe and a 20-foot-diameter fishing net. However, half of the *opelu* fishing season coincided with the coffee-picking season, when people had to work from dawn till dusk in the coffee

fields. Besides *opelu* fishing, *ahi* (*maguro* or tuna) fishing was popular, but its practice was limited to a few fishermen who owned large boats. During the days of the *Issei*, it was estimated that approximately half of the *opelu* fishermen were Japanese; the others were native Hawaiians. The catch was usually sold locally at the general stores or peddled along the Kona Belt Road. The *opelu* and other reef fish were prepared as *sashimi*, fried, or *himono* (sun dried), as they would have been in Japan. *Issei* farmers, acculturating to their new environmental surroundings, which included various types of edible fish, were in many cases successful—the *Issei* community enjoyed most of the seafood caught in Kona.

When I interviewed 97-year-old *Nisei* Toshio Shirai⁸⁶ (Shirai, interview 2007), a farmer/fisherman, about farming and fishing, he responded:

There were some farmers that went fishing on the side to earn extra money and it really helped, especially when the coffee price was cheap ... that extra money really helped too because back in the old days, we [farmers] used to buy everything on credit and with the part-time fishing money we had some cash and so in my case I had less worries.

Other *Nisei* interviewed made it clear that fishing was a part of their cultural background from Japan: they believed that during the early days, fishing and farming were a way of life that was similar to the life led in Japan. Toshio Shirai stated: “Before [in the early days] we were so poor we ate only the fish that we caught, and rice ... My father used to say the same thing about the way he grew up in Japan: they were so poor that they ate vegetables, fish, and rice every day. And so we are Japanese, Japanese eat fish and *haoles* eat meat and that’s it, this is our culture.” In many cases, these Japanese migrant workers identified themselves as Japanese fishermen. This was due to the fact that they were excellent fishermen and fish was a big part of their main culture and diet.

LAUHALA WEAVING

Lauhala weaving was another means of improving the farmers’ revenue and, again, this part-time supplementary work was usually accomplished during the coffee off-season. This side-job consumed many hours of work, took place in several stages, and offered only a small return on the investment made in it. The women did most of the weaving, while the men, on occasion, helped collect the fallen *lauhala* leaves or harvested

the leaves from the trees. *Lauhala* trees are medium-sized trees that grow to approximately 12–15 feet in height. Thus, a short ladder was usually required to harvest the leaves. The trees were never cultivated: they grew wild alongside the road at lower elevations. The *lauhala* leaves were covered with bird feces, spider webs, and other unwanted substances; therefore, the cleaning process was extensive, taking up the largest amount of time in the overall process. Alfreida Fujita⁸⁷ (Fujita, interview 2008) told a very interesting story about how people used to process *lauhala* leaves:

The best way in the old days was to bundle the leaves into a small manageable size, tie them together, and throw the bundle in the water at the beach, I mean in a calm place, and let the waves somehow clean the leaves and within a few hours the leaves were very, very clean, and this was the best way because the leaves became shiny and stronger. The secret to making a good *lauhala* product is the preparation of the leaves: if you have good *lauhala* you have nice hats.

After the washing was over, the next task was stripping and weaving.

Hats, floor mats, table mats, and coasters were the most popular items and were usually sold to the sugarcane plantation workers on the other side of the island along the Hamakua Coast, and to customers on the other neighboring islands. The baskets that were used for coffee picking were all made from *lauhala* and were sold to those local farmers who did not weave their own baskets. The supplementary income from *lauhala* weaving was “very little but because of the coffee price crash during the 1929 depression, every little bit of money from the *lauhala* went a long way to buy the necessary everyday food and supplies” (Fujita, interview 2008). Other *Nisei* participants recalled that their parents essentially survived by their *lauhala* weaving. For example, Chie Honda⁸⁸ (Honda, interview 2008) stated: “Many families would weave the products at home, then bring it to the store and actually trade it for food.”

ADAPTING TO, AND SURVIVING IN, A NEW ENVIRONMENT

As the Japanese migrants to Hawaii interacted with their social and bio-physical environment, they drew upon their past experiences, used their existing knowledge, and communicated with other members of their community. By this process, they attempted to make sense of their

surroundings: attributing meaning to what they experienced and constructing a new reality.

A key part of this process involved interactions with the local native Hawaiian community. The *Issei* individuals found themselves interacting with those who supplied *lauhala* leaves and equipment, such as leaves and cutters, and those who marketed *lauhala* products and fish. The majority of the suppliers were native Hawaiians, who had access to the *lauhala* trees along the beaches. The negotiations with the native Hawaiians regarding fishing rights and parking stalls for their canoes also provided both communities with increased social ties. The *Issei* thus relied on interracial cooperation. With regard to linguistic assimilation, we can assume that through this interracial interaction, the *Issei*'s language proficiency in the English and Hawaiian languages increased, which would have further improved relations.

Role specialization, in terms of fishing, farming, and other activities, began in earnest as a result of the fall in the price of coffee, which brought with it the realization that supplementary income from work such as fishing and *lauhala* weaving was necessary in order to ensure survival. An important side effect of this pursuit of supplementary income was, simultaneously, the development of a more egalitarian structure within the community in Kona as a whole. Individual women within the Kona community had not previously interacted with others. During this period, however, women and men interacted more freely with one another, and, as a large result of this interaction, increased contact with the other ethnic groups in Kona. The level of social ties within the overall community thus improved as interactions between insiders and outsiders—in the pursuit of knowledge from diverse experiences or investment capital—increased.

The changing social and family structure, and the ability of women to earn a substantial amount of supplementary income, were not always well received by the head of the household (the husband) within the more patriarchal families. On the other hand, in poorer families the gender balance within the family was slightly altered, as women earned more income. For example, several *Nisei* mentioned that due to the fact that women were working and actually making money, the situation of wives slightly improved within the *Issei* generation. Judy Kitahara (Kitahara, interview 2007) said:

Ya, my father and everybody was happy because we were making money but everyone knew he was still the boss. I guess the extra money really brought

up our spirits because we were really having a hard time, so I think my father was kinda relieved and I also think that as a family we could get together and do these things (business) together and I think it got us closer as a family. You know like we went to the beach and pick up the *laubala* leaves together and all that kind of stuff (processing) together that was one of the happiest days we had as a family together.

Economic opportunities, and the supplementary income from the *laubala* and other businesses, meant that in many families the traditional center of power within the family structure (i.e., the male head of the household) was diminished.

THE *ISSEI* AND THEIR TIES TO THE MOTHER COUNTRY: THE TRANSNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Nearly all the *Nisei* that I interviewed enjoyed sharing stories of the connections that they had had with Japan in the past. Often these connections reflected the difficult situation in Japan: times were bad in Kona, but many *Nisei* believed that the situation in Japan was even worse. On several occasions my grandfather mentioned that every month his mother would send packages of sugar, coffee, candies, and money back to both of her parents. These stories of sending money back to Japan resonated throughout the Japanese farming community and are often told even today.⁸⁹ For instance, my grandfather, who unfortunately never had the chance to experience his father's homeland or to meet his relatives, stated a few years before he passed away that he often wondered if all the things they had sent to Japan had been appreciated or not. His family had sacrificed a lot over the years to send back food and money, despite their own hardships—and this was something he could not fully understand.

One particular connection the *Issei* had with Japan was noted by John Embree⁹⁰: several organizations collected funds and clothing to be sent to the front lines during Japan's military campaigns in China and Korea. This clearly reveals the degree of nationalism that existed among the Japanese immigrant farmers. This nationalism is perhaps not surprising, however, if we consider that numerous *Issei* farmers strongly hoped to return to their homeland. As we have seen, only a few farmers invested their assets in long-term projects in Kona District, while many—including my great-grandfather—sent a large portion of their savings back to Japan to invest in land for their future return.

One reflection of the *Issei*'s connection with the mother country was the popularity of Japanese-language schools during this period. There were eight such schools in Kona District. Most of these schools were built in the early 1920s, when the price of coffee was moderately high. John Embree stated in his research that the *Issei* parents bore most of the costs of the schools, and in several cases, the parents were involved in their construction. For the *Issei*, Japanese schools were important because the *Issei* had plans of returning to Japan with their children some day in the future. Some *Issei* had such strong ties to the homeland that they preferred to send their children to Japan to receive a Japanese education. Children sent to Japan for education in this way were known as *Kibei*.⁹¹ However, only the well-to-do Japanese immigrants could afford such an education for their children: most learned Japanese in Kona's Japanese-language schools instead. It was important for many *Issei* Japanese migrant farmers that their children acquire good Japanese, and the ability to write Japanese. Thus, after the regular public school was finished in the afternoon, *Nisei* students attended Japanese-language schools for one to two hours. Although many disliked the language school, they studied hard out of respect for their hardworking parents. This sort of obedient behavior was known as *oyakoko*. Yoshie Fukushima⁹² (Fukushima, interview 2008) remembered: "I used to hate going to Japanese school every day. The sensei was so strict, but it was better than working in the coffee field." Another source, Goro Inaba,⁹³ stated: "They didn't know I was playing hooky. [Laughs] As I said, I didn't care for Japanese school. As I think about it now, I regret that I didn't study and get the most out of the school, because it's certainly helpful in your adult life." Like many other elements in the *Nisei*'s life, the Japanese-language schools were affected by the coffee-picking season: during that season, classes were moved to after six o'clock, when the working day was over.

It was not surprising that *Issei* parents would want their children to be fluent in Japanese. As mentioned previously, the population in the Kona Coffee Belt during the *Issei* period was predominately made up of Japanese migrant workers, and 80 percent of these workers spoke only Japanese. Japanese was spoken on the farm, at home, and among family and friends. English and Hawaiian, on the other hand, were spoken mostly in the public schools. Because of the wide use of the Japanese language, Kona was a unique place, in terms of linguistic analysis, in comparison to other Japanese communities. Japanese was the first language

in the Japanese schools in Kona, and English was the second language. This was in contrast to the situation in the Japanese community's schools in Los Angeles, which were based on teaching Japanese as a foreign language. Each day, for an hour or two, the Japanese-language schools in Kona provided the four linguistic skills (speaking, writing, listening, and reading), plus vocabulary-building. Some *Issei* thought that one hour was enough but others did not agree: they sent their children to Japan to study Japanese and to immerse themselves in a purely Japanese environment.

Another important connection with the motherland was the registration of births at the Japanese consulate. Until 1924 any child of Japanese parents, wherever they were born, was a subject of the Japanese Empire. Since 1924, Japanese born in America or American territories had been able to obtain Japanese citizenship if the birth is registered with a Japanese consulate within 14 days. The percentage of parents who registered their children at the Japanese consulate is unknown but it was probably higher in Kona than anywhere else in America. In the case of my own family, *josekitohon* (records for a death) from the local government office in Fukuoka prefecture confirm that my great-grandfather, an *Issei* (first-generation immigrant), registered all five of his children, and my grandfather, a *Nisei* (second-generation immigrant), registered his two children as *Sansei* (third-generation immigrants).

The transnational *Issei* migrants had various ways in which they expressed their nationalistic association with Japan, and with their Japanese comrades within their community. For example, right up to the eve of the Second World War most of the *Issei* farmers flew the Japanese flag on important Japanese holidays. As in Japan, holidays such as *oshogatsu* (the New Year) and the Emperor's birthday were days on which Japanese flags were often seen. The flying of the Japanese flag caused the *Issei* to feel more connected to their homeland. On Boys' Day, a giant carp flag was flown for each boy in the family. Celebrating Boys' Day was a demonstration of being Japanese, and of a desire to be connected with Japan. For the *Nisei* interviewees I spoke to, Boys' Day represented a father-and-son relationship within the context of their Japanese cultural heritage.

Pictures displayed in Japanese (*Issei*) homes also illustrated ties to the homeland. Pictures of family back in Japan and other pictures of beautiful scenery in Japan always brought back memories. The Japanese Emperor and Empress, in particular, had a remarkable effect on the *Issei* community. The majority of the *Nisei* interviewed said that they remembered that a

framed picture of the Showa Emperor hung next to the *kamidana* (Shinto shrine altar). Interestingly, some claimed that their parents believed that the Emperor was a God. While others were not so sure, most of them respected the Emperor as the supreme leader of Japan. Most of the *Nisei* were unable to fully comprehend the place the Emperor had in the minds of their parents, but they respected the Emperor for the sake of their parents' connection to Japan.

RESHAPING THE PAST

This final section in the chapter investigates perspectives of the *Nisei* community, and of a few *Sansei*, regarding the time and space of the earliest *Issei* immigration. I have already described the intergenerational stories that recount the appalling conditions of the early plantation life, and how the *Nisei* and *Sansei* reacted to the experiences of the *Issei*. As discussed earlier in this chapter, during the data extraction process many *Issei* avoided disclosing information regarding the horrible suffering they experienced on the plantations. Nevertheless, the process of interviewing the Japanese laborers that experienced this suffering produced some shocking revelations about that early period, which deserve to be recorded here.

Of the *Nisei* interviewees that had any knowledge of the *Issei*'s plantation experiences, virtually all used words such as "slaves," "whipping," and "Japs" when recalling those experiences. However, although several *Nisei* informants revealed that their parents would on some occasions talk about the humiliating experiences they encountered when they first arrived on the sugarcane plantations, they said their parents would always limit their conversation to insignificant details. In general, the *Issei* refused to communicate to their children their stories of the terrible life on the plantations and the inhuman treatment they received, especially at first. In their early lives, therefore, the majority of the *Nisei* had little knowledge of their parents' past: they only learned about it later, from books, films, or relatives. As their children became adults, however, some of the *Issei* became less reluctant about providing true accounts of what really happened in the plantation camps. One of my uncles remembered:

When I [*Nisei*] was little, my father [*Issei*] said it was hard work but would never talk about whipping or slaves but one day my son [*Sansei*] had to do some kind of grandparents report [school assignment], and so my son went and interviewed him, and of course I was there. When my father started

talking, I could not believe my ears because he was saying all kinds of terrible, terrible things that happened to him but the funny thing was that he never ever told me stories like that.

As a result of this knowledge, some *Nisei* became interested in discovering the identity of the *lunas* (plantation managers). Several *Nisei* participants asked their parents about the nature of the *lunas*. For example, one participant (Anonymous 3, interview 2007) said: "My parents would say something like, 'we were treated like slaves but that's the way it was *shoganai* [nothing we can do]. I guess I am one of the lucky ones because I moved here to Kona and I am free from all that [traumatic experience]. It's not important who did it, maybe it is better you not know.'" Some *Nisei* believed their fathers refused to address the horrific plantation experiences because they suffered from some form of post-traumatic stress disorder. One *Nisei* participant stated: "I think the situation was so terrible that they are scared to talk about it, that it only brings back unwanted memories" (Anonymous 1, interview 2007). Other *Nisei* recalled their fathers' frequent references to not completing their three-year contract at the plantation—which seemed out of the ordinary as breaching a contract was not seen as acceptable in their culture. One *Nisei* participant stated: "I think that if my father told his story about the plantation it would bring attention to him and you have to remember that my father ran away from the plantation so like he is somewhat a fugitive, I think he must have been afraid for many years that somebody might come and drag him back to the plantation" (Anonymous 12, interview 2007).

One *Nisei* noticed scars on the backs of her parents.

For the longest time I thought that the scars on his back were from the time in Japan. I thought that it was some old war wounds (from the Japanese and Russian war), until one day I heard him talking to one of my relatives about being whipped in the plantation fields on the Hilo side. If I'd never heard my father talking that night until today I would have never known [about plantation slavery]." (Anonymous 4, interview 2008)

This interviewee explained that when she discovered her father's terrible past she was in her mid-30s. Like many others, she was deeply disturbed when she found out what the *Issei* experienced. In this particular case, I was not able to verify the scars but we do know for sure that the informant's

father ran away from the plantation because he could no longer bear the discomfort in his work environment.

Scholars⁹⁴ have either only touched on the issue of the runaways in Kona or have not mentioned them at all. None of them have really penetrated to the heart of the issue. After further investigation, it became clear to me that in the past the *Nisei*, and in some cases the *Sansei*, felt a sense of guilt, and a sense of shame: breaching contracts and being treated inhumanely were not seen as acceptable in Japanese culture. I believe the *Issei* suppressed their memories of their horrible past experiences and rarely shared them with anyone because of the stigma within the Japanese community associated with past physical torture, and with having reneged on a promissory contract: such things were culturally unacceptable for the *Issei*. Steve Tanaka⁹⁵ (Tanaka, interview 2007) stated:

My father was embarrassed to tell anyone, including his grandkids, that he broke his contract and ran away, and also running away from being beaten from a *bakujin* (white person). Even I cannot tell my kids that my father was beaten ... something about my father that it was difficult for him to say to people who wanted to know about the past that he was a slave that was being whipped and beaten.

In contrast to their parents' reticence, the many *Nisei* participants I interviewed felt it was important to make known that their parents were subjected to a back-breaking working environment and constant racial prejudice on the plantations. At the same time, however, they wanted to make it clear to me that their parents were morally respectable members of the community. For instance, one *Nisei* informant stated: "My parents fulfilled their three-year contract then moved to Kona even though there are so many people who are runaways" (Anonymous 4, interview 2008).

However, if the *Nisei* participants I spoke to were keen to bring to light this important part of their history, early scholars,⁹⁶ historical references, film documentaries, and historical museums have, by contrast, usually downplayed the horrific truth about the plantations. In describing the conditions of the first immigrants, early scholars systematically utilized discreet or euphemistic expressions to recount the unimaginable and heartless treatment of Japanese migrant laborers. Many still continue to do so—to the extent that it might appear to outsiders that, at worst, there were only insignificant human rights abuses.

Despite the real scale of the suffering on the plantations, and many Nisei willing to share stories of this, there were some interviewees I spoke to who were somewhat reluctant to contribute detailed stories concerning the hardships their *Issei* parents encountered. For example, during the middle of a 2005 interview with Elsie Colon (née Nonaka),⁹⁷ she received a phone call from her sister. The sister asked about her present situation and she replied that she was “talking stories to some local researcher about old time Kona.” The sister replied, “Well you better not tell about all the embarrassing things about us (our family).” After the phone call, she added that her sister was quite angry about the information she was providing to me. Elsie Colon explained that her sister was mostly concerned about how the Kona Japanese community was extremely marginalized in comparison to other Japanese communities. Elsie Colon explained that her extended family was quite large—some cousins that left Kona District during the recession in the early 1950s have done very well for themselves and their children. It was for this reason that Elsie Colon and other *Nisei* felt uncomfortable about sharing stories about their personal lives growing up on farms in Kona. However, I believe the reason I was able to obtain data from members of the Kona community is because I am an insider within that community, and the grandson of a respected and hard-working member of the community.

Even though Elsie Colon was hesitant about discussing past hardships her family had experienced she was excited about meeting a researcher who was interested in writing articles concerning the Kona coffee farmers. Her eagerness was clear when, responding to questions to which she did not know the answer, she would reply: “Let me call up my sisters, they would know.” Colon often called up her *Nisei* friends and arranged interviews with them. In contrast to some interviewees, she believed that there was

Nothing shameful about how poor we were in the past and what we had to experience to survive, because we are not poor now and we are resilient. I think the young people need to know about how my parents were ... I think it is important to me because it is part of our Japanese culture and the biggest reason why I am talking to you is that I hope someday my grandkids can read your paper and can understand what my parents and us had to endure.

She was afraid that the history of the Japanese in Kona would someday be forgotten because the stories were never told or written down.

Elsie Colon's persistence in uncovering answers to my various questions slowly persuaded the *Nisei* community to share their stories. Thanks to her assistance, what started with just a few *Nisei* participants expanded to approximately 40. Elsie Colon used her wide network of friends and family spread throughout Kona District to preserve the experiences of the Japanese community in Kona.

There were, however, also some *Nisei* who refused to grant me any interviews, after numerous attempts. One extended family member, a *Nisei*, told her daughter that she did not want to participate in the study because she did not want to dig up the past about her family, which was embarrassing to her. There were other *Nisei* farmers who had similar reactions regarding the sensitive information about the past: for example, drinking, gambling, and troubles within the community. Even after assuring them that I was not interested in those types of questions, they still refused to talk to me. All of the informants repeated a similar phrase: that Kona is a small place and it is not good to talk about other people. There was also the possibility that some of the *Nisei* were still extremely traumatized as a result of their terrible experiences in the past.

Various Japanese American scholars have referred to the *Issei* (and in many cases the *Nisei*) as hardworking, honest, honorable, respectful, and strict, and as possessing traditional *Meiji*-era values.⁹⁸ These *Meiji*-era values were indeed present in most *Issei* farmers, yet the many accounts I have collected reveal that the farmers were also changed by their experiences in Hawaii. The *Issei* experienced an ongoing struggle in a multicultural environment, as seen in their acquisition of the Hawaiian and English languages. During the adaptation period, these Japanese migrant farmers had to learn and acquire a new and different culture. At times, this was very difficult, but in the end, the *Issei* prevailed and, to some extent at least, they adapted.

As we have seen, the majority of the old *Issei* farmers in Kona originally expected to return to Japan rich and successful, after only a few years of hard labor in Hawaii. As time passed, however, the majority of Japanese migrant farmers wished only to make a visit to their homeland before they died. There were several reasons for this change. One was that the *Issei* had become acclimatized to the lifestyle in a tropical paradise, which compared favorably to the hot muggy summers and the severely cold winters of Japan. Another reason was that the children of the *Issei* were all born and bred in Hawaii. It would have been difficult to move back to Japan

permanently and to leave their children behind in Kona. Of all the reasons for not returning home, however, the most important was that back in Japan a man was born a farmer and died a farmer, without ever thinking about doing otherwise. In Kona, on the other hand, even if he had given up the idea of making enough money to return to Japan as a comparatively wealthy man, a farmer could still hope that his offspring (the *Nisei*) would do better in America than in Japan. They began to believe in, and to be a part of, the American Dream.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has sought to build a picture of the Japanese immigrants (the *Issei*) who came to Kona, and the community they built around coffee farming along the Kona Belt Road. Due to the large number of *Issei*, and the geographic isolation of the area, a very dense Japanese coffee farming community was formed. Due to the nature of the hardships many *Issei* experienced on the sugarcane plantations, those who made their way to Kona found refuge, assistance, and kindness among the Japanese already living there. Although the *Issei* came from various parts of Japan, trust was established among them, as established *Issei* farmers helped new arrivals to get back on their feet and begin coffee farming. This was essential to the formation of a very close-knit Japanese ethnic community in Kona. As time went on, the coffee situation did not improve, due to the instability of coffee prices and price-fixing by the two major coffee companies in Kona. The continued hardship experienced by the Japanese community helped to create solidarity, as everyone worked hard and helped each other when they could. With the formation of such a strong Japanese community, assimilation into mainstream American culture was slowed greatly. It can be argued that for the *Issei* assimilation did not occur—because they had created a version of Japanese society in Kona.

NOTES

1. Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore* (Boston: Little Brown, 1989).
2. "The Financial and Economic Annual of Japan," 1905, 1907.
3. John F. Embree, "Acculturation among the Japanese of Kona, Hawaii," *American Anthropologist* 43, no. 4 (1941); Andrew W. Lind, *Kona: Haven of Peoples* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1949).

4. Sakae Morita, *Hawaii Gojyunen Shi* [Fifty Years of Hawaiian History] (Waipahu, Hawaii: Shineikan, 1919).
5. *Genmai* (unpolished rice), *hakumai* (polished rice), *miso* (soybean paste), and *shoyu* (soy sauce).
6. Edward D. Beechert, *Working in Hawaii: A Labor History* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985); Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*.
7. Ethnic Studies Oral History Project, *A Social History of Kona* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii at Manoa, 1981); Bill Hosokawa, *Nisei: The Quiet Americans* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1969); Yuji Ichioka, *The Issei: The World of the First Generation of Japanese Americans, 1885–1924* (New York: Free Press, 1988); Jere Takahashi, *Nisei/Sansei: Shifting Japanese American Identities and Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997); Roger Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese Movement in California and the Struggles for Japanese Exclusion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962); “Coffee’s Place in Isle History,” *Hawaii Tribune Herald*, July 7, 2008; Masaaki Kodama, “Meijiiki Amerika Gasshukoku heno Nihonjin Imin [The Japanese Emigration to the United States of America in the Meiji Era],” *Shakai-Keizai Shigaku* [Social Economic History] 47 (1978): 4–32; Soga Keiho, *Gojyunenkan no Hawaii Kaiko* [My Fifty Years Memoirs in Hawaii] (Honolulu: Gojyunenkan no Hawaii Kaiko Kanko Kai, 1953). One Nisei (Anonymous 1, interview 007) explained how his family endured hardship on a plantation in Pahala. His description of “indentured servitude for the sugar mills” is consistent with other participants’ experiences, such as those described by Jitsuichi Masuoka in “The Structure of the Japanese Family in Hawaii,” *American Sociological Review* 46 (1940), which provides accounts of mistreatment on the sugar plantations of Oahu.
8. Ronald Takaki, *Pau Hana: Plantation Life and Labor in Hawaii 1835–1920* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983).
9. The article “The Meaning of Being Japanese: Powerful Story told by Los Angeles Museum Exhibition” in the *Los Angeles Times* describes an exhibit from the Los Angeles Museum which looked at the plantation conditions. The article reads: “The exhibit itself tells a far grimmer story. Working conditions on the plantations of 19th-Century Hawaii were as bad as those on the slave plantations of the Old South. An overseer’s bullwhip lies coiled under Plexiglas as a brutal reminder that white plantation owners regarded their Japanese-born workers as barely human.”
10. Otokichi Abe arrived at the Hamakua plantation fields in 1899, from Tatarahara, Fukuoka (near Hakata). He left behind his parents, an older brother, and two younger sisters.

11. Chitose was my grandfather. For some reason, he was given a female name. He wrote in his diary about the events his father experienced on the sugarcane plantation.
12. Plantation managers, who were usually Portuguese
13. Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*; Edward D. Beechert, *Working in Hawaii: A Labor History* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985); Dennis Ogawa, *Kodomo no tame ni* (For the Sake of the Children): *The Japanese American Experience in Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1978); Gary Y. Okihiro, *Cane Fires: The Anti-Japanese Movement in Hawaii, 1865–1945* (Temple University Press, 1992).
14. *Taue* refers to the planting of rice, and *inekari* to the harvesting of rice.
15. The Judd Trail started from Hilo, progressed from Mauna Kea to Mauna Loa, and led down into Kona near the Holualoa area.
16. Hiromi Monobe, “Shaping an Ethnic Leadership: Takie Okumura and the ‘Americanization’ of the Nisei in Hawaii.” (PhD diss., University of Hawaii, 2004); John F. Embree, “Acculturation among the Japanese of Kona, Hawaii,” *American Anthropologist* 43, no. 4 (1941).
17. Embree, “Acculturation among the Japanese”; Lind, “Assimilation in Rural Hawaii”; Akemi Kikumura described in “The Kona Coffee Story” an *Issei* being “whipped”—in frustration he forcefully rebelled and “ran away and changed his name,” Akemi Kikumura, Eiichiro Azuma, and Darcie C. Iki, *The Kona Coffee Story: Along the Hawai’i Belt Road* (Los Angeles: Japanese American National Museum, 1995). “Annual Narrative reports for the period between November 1, 1928 and November 30, 1929.” Agricultural Extension Service, West Hawaii County, Territory of Hawaii, 5. During the fieldwork data collection, several *Nisei* participants confirmed that they believed their surname was once changed but they had insufficient knowledge as to the specifics of why or how this change occurred.
18. Lind, “Assimilation in rural Hawaii,” 203.
19. Yoshi Tanaka, an 87-year-old N2 *Nisei*, grew up in the Kona Coffee Belt in Kealakekua; later, his parents moved to Honaunau, approximately another five miles south. He was in the automotive business as a car salesman, and therefore, he decided to change his name. He is also a part-time coffee farmer with about three and a half acres.
20. Lind, *Kona: Haven of Peoples*.
21. Embree, “Acculturation among the Japanese of Kona, Hawaii,” 32.
22. Lind, “Assimilation in rural Hawaii,” 34.
23. Kentaro Tanaka, a 94-year-old N2 *Nisei*, grew up in the Kona Coffee Belt, in the Holualoa area. He was a retired carpenter and a part-time coffee farmer. He was also a member of the Kona Hongwanji, but later switched to the Kona Daifukuj. He was a member of the Kumamoto *kenjinkai*.

24. The Kona Coffee Belt is a strip of land at between 1000-foot and 2000-foot elevation, where the conditions are ideal for cultivating coffee.
25. *Haoles* has been used as a pejorative term in Hawaii by which to refer to individuals of white ancestry. During the course of time, however, the meanings of words change and today *haole* does not necessarily carry a negative meaning. The word has now come to refer to anyone of North Europeans descent (Charles Kenn, "What is a Haole?" *Paradise of the Pacific* (1944), 16). In this manuscript, the Hawaiian linguistic term *haole* is not used in a pejorative manner.
26. *Tokoro-mon* (*Tokoro no mon*), in Hiroshima dialect, refers to the place of origin. John Embree, *Suye Mura, A Japanese Village* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939a Embree, *Suye Mura*).
27. The *kumi* system can be traced back to the period in which Toyotomi Hideyoshi was in power. This system was then adopted by the Bakufu government during the Edo period. *Kumi* or *gonin-gumi* were formed with the purpose of ensuring public safety. Responsibilities of *kumi* members included watching other members to ensure no one was committing any crimes, to fight against fires and, in the case of *kumis* among farmers, to ensure that rice was delivered to their landlord. During the Edo period, the Bakufu government used this system as a way to implement various regulations, which were used to keep the populace under control.
 Nobushige Hozumi, *Gonin-Hoki-Shu* [Statute for the Unit of Five People] (Tokyo: Yuhikaku, 1921); Kanetaro Nomura, ed., *Gonin-gumi-kyo no Kenkyu* [Research on Five People Groups] (Tokyo, Japan: Yuhikaku, 1943).
28. Ichioka, *The Issei*; Glenn, Nakano Evelyn. *Issei, Nisei, War Bride: Three Generations of Japanese American Women in Domestic Service* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1986); Gary Y. Okihiro, "An American Story," in *Impounded: Dorothea Lange and the Censored Images of Japanese American Internment*, ed. Dorothea Lange, Linda Gordon and Gary Y. Okihiro (New York: W.W. Norton, 2008).
29. Roger Daniels, Sandra Taylor, and Harry Kitano, eds., *Japanese Americans: From Relocation to Redress* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1986).
30. *Ibid.* In Hawaii, the government of Japan continued to issue passports for immigration to the Territory of Hawaii, from where immigrants could move on to the continental United States without being subject to significant controls.
31. Fumio Okumura, an 89-year-old N2 *Nisei*, grew up on the Kona Coffee Belt in the Keauhou area. He retired from the Hawaiian Electric Co. and

- also was a part-time coffee farmer. He is a member of the Kona Daifukuji, and a member of the Kumamoto and Fukuoka *kenjinkai*. Several members in the Japanese community stated that he was very active in the temple and the *kenjinkai*.
32. Matsuyo Hayakawa, an 87-year-old N2 *Nisei*, grew up in the Kealahkekua area on the Kona Coffee Belt. She is an active member of the Kona Daifukuji Temple and an active member of her *kumi* social group. She stated she was a housewife and worked on her family's coffee farm.
 33. "Nothing is so disagreeable as being driven by a luna who keeps crying 'Go ahead, Go ahead,' at our back. Even if we are given a good house (on the plantation), we cannot do anything with it." Romanzo C. Adams and Dan Kana-zo Kai, *The Education of the Boys of Hawaii and Their Economic Outlook: A Study in the field of Race Relationship* (Honolulu: University Press, 1928).
 34. Annual Narrative reports for the period between November 1, 1928, and November 30, 1929. Agricultural Extension Service, West Hawaii County, Territory of Hawaii.
 35. Embree, "Acculturation among the Japanese of Kona, Hawaii" *American Anthropologist* 43, no. 4 (1941); Ichioka, *The Issei*; Takahashi, *Nisei/Sansei: Shifting Japanese American Identities and Politics*; Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice*.
 36. Embree, "Acculturation among the Japanese of Kona, Hawaii."
 37. Billy Paris is a large-scale landowner and a descendant of the Hind family. He explained (Paris, interview 2010) that within a generation all of the Hawaiian farmers in the Kona area stopped cultivating taro because of the decline in the Hawaiian population and the acculturation to multicultural food, especially Japanese short grain rice.
 38. The Abe Hotel was established by my great-grandfather. It closed in 1927, due to his untimely death.
 39. Kikumura, Azuma, and Iki, *The Kona Coffee Story*.
 40. Kona Hongwanji Mission, Centennial Celebration 1897–1997.
 41. The 80th Daifukuji Fujinkai, Anniversary 1915–1985.
 42. Lind, "Assimilation in Rural Hawaii"; Embree, "Acculturation among the Japanese of Kona, Hawaii."
 43. Lind, "Assimilation in Rural Hawaii."
 44. Sueto Matsumoto, an N3 *Nisei*, grew up in Kealahkekua. His father was a full-time coffee farmer, but he was a full-time fisherman and part-time coffee farmer. His father had to opportunity to buy approximately 30 acres of farm land from Sherwood Greenwell. He is an active member of the Kona Hongwanji and the *kenjinkai*.
 45. Mary Katayama, an N3 *Nisei*, grew up on a coffee farm in the Kealahkekua area. She graduated from the University of Hawaii School of Nursing. She

is member of the Kona Hongwanji Temple. She is also an active member in her *kumi*.

46. Miki Sato (Sato, interview 2008), an N2 *Nisei* in her early 90s, grew up in the outer area of the Kona Coffee Belt Road in Holualoa. She now resides in the center of the Kona District, in Kealahou. She was a housewife and held several different part-time jobs over the years. One of her main part-time jobs was picking coffee beans during the coffee season. Mrs. Sato is a semi-active member of the Kona Daifukuji. She was an active member of the *fujinkai* at the temple where she worshiped.
47. Embree, "Acculturation among the Japanese of Kona, Hawaii."
48. My great-grandfather, Otokichi Abe owned and leased approximately 20 acres of farmland cultivating Kona coffee in the Holualoa area. He also referred to native Hawaiians as very strong and hardworking. He was responsible for the modern invention of the coffee pulping machine.
49. *Opelu* (Spanish mackerel) is caught using a large cone net, with a 25-foot round at the top, which was introduced to the Hawaiians by early *Issei*.
50. Hichiro Nakata (Nakata, interview 2008), an N2 *Nisei* and an 84-year-old coffee farmer, stated that Filipino laborers were motivated, hardworking, and "fast at picking coffee." Mr. Nakata grew up in Kealahou, was a full-time coffee farmer and a part-time fisherman who belonged to the Kona Hongwanji.
51. Portuguese Americans are descendants of the largest European group to enter Hawaii as plantation laborers. The Reciprocity Treaty between the United States and the Hawaiian Kingdom stimulated expansion of sugar production and a massive search for plantation labor. Ralphs S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom 1874–1893: The Kalakaua Dynasty (Book 3)* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1967).
 Between 1878 and 1887, almost 12,000 Portuguese were brought to Hawaii from Madeira and the Azores. Then, between 1906 and 1913, almost 13,000 people, mostly Portuguese but also some Spaniards, came to Hawaii in response to an offer of a house, an acre of land, and improved working conditions. Most of the Spaniards eventually left Hawaii for California, but large numbers of Portuguese remained permanently. Felix John Henry, Peter F. Senecal, and Elmer F. Cravalho, *The Portuguese in Hawaii* (Honolulu: published by the authors, 1978).
52. Hiromi Monobe, "Shaping an Ethnic Leadership: Takie Okumura and the 'Americanization' of the Nisei in Hawaii" (PhD diss., University of Hawaii, 2004).
53. John Embree came to a similar conclusion as a result of his research, finding that the Portuguese were positioned one level below the white Americans within the social structure status. Embree, "Acculturation among the Japanese of Kona, Hawaii."

54. Ethnic Studies Oral History Project, *A Social History of Kona* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii at Manoa, 1981).
55. Matsuo Matsumoto, an N2 *Nisei*, grew up in Holualoa, North Kona. He was a state worker and a part-time coffee farmer. He is very active in the Japanese community, promoting Japanese cultural heritage to the younger generation. Several participants in the community said that Mr. Matsumoto was especially respected in the community and was one of the leading coordinators of funerals at the Kona Hongwanji. I interviewed him at his home three times, for a total of nine hours.
56. Embree, "Acculturation among the Japanese of Kona, Hawaii."
57. Ibid.
58. Saburo Hayashi, *Hawaii Jitsu Annai* (An Introduction to Business Activities in Hawaii) (Kona, Hawaii: Kona Hankyo-Sha, 1909); Baron Goto, "Ethnic Groups and the coffee Industry in Hawaii," *Social Science Association* (1979).
59. Sakae Morita, *Hawaii Nihonjin Hatten-Shi* [A History of the Development of the Japanese People in Hawaii] (Waipahu, Hawaii: Shinei-kan, 1915).
60. Ibid.
61. Improvements to the property might involve making an upgrade to the existing house, which would increase the standard of living. Another improvement would involve clearing the farmland, that is, removing rocks and cutting down trees in the fields, as a result of which harvesting would be safer and more efficient.
62. Arthur Murata, an N3 *Nisei*, is a retired high school teacher who grew up on a coffee farm in the Holualoa area. He graduated from the University of Hawaii. He currently farms coffee part time. He is a member of a local Christian church and is an active member in his *kumi*.
63. Judy Kitahara, an N3 *Nisei*, grew up on a coffee farm in the Kealahakua area—along the Kona Coffee Belt Road, but further inland toward the mountains. Her father was a collector of various tropical fruits and vegetables, and therefore she ate exotic fruits all year long. In the past, Judy had various part-time jobs, including coffee-picking during the coffee season. She is not affiliated with any particular religious organization.
64. Lind, "Assimilation in Rural Hawaii"; Embree, "Acculturation among the Japanese of Kona, Hawaii."
65. Scattered, in the sense that the trees were not planted in straight rows but were, rather, haphazard, because of the formation of the land, which is sloped and covered with patches of soil and rocks.
66. Doctor Nakamaru, a local dentist, explained to me several times that my great-grandfather used to build water tanks for the Japanese farmers houses using a method that came from Japan, which used metal strips to bind the water tanks together.

67. Embree, "Acculturation among the Japanese of Kona, Hawaii"; Darcie Chiyoko Iki, "Kona Coffee Land: A Japanese American Farming Community in Hawai'i, 1890–1941" (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1996). Darcie Iki's interviews with local coffee farmers recorded that the water was drinkable and people rarely contracted any illnesses. I recall from my experience at my grandfather's house in the early 1970s, at the age of five, that the water tank was crystal clear, with leaves and branches on the bottom and along the side a thick layer of moss. I remember clearly when I put my lips to the faucet to take a sip of water I was scolded and told not to drink the water because it was not safe. (Note that, in the 1970s, most houses obtained running water from the county authorities.)
68. Embree, "Acculturation among the Japanese of Kona, Hawaii."
69. A *Kamidana* is a Japanese Shinto altar.
70. Kihei Ogawa, an N2 *Nisei*, grew up in the Kealakekua area. He is a long-time member of the Kona Hongwanji and the *kumi* group. He was an *opelu* fisherman and a part-time coffee farmer. He also grew mango, which he sold to supplement his income. Kihei Ogawa is currently living with his son in Kealakekua. He invited me to his home several times and was excited to provide me with as much information as possible.
71. Kiku Kubo, an N2 *Nisei*, grew up in the Kona Coffee Belt in Kealakekua. She is a member of the Kona Hongwanji and an active member of her local *kumi* group. Her family farms coffee part-time on four acres of land. She had an eighth-grade education but later in life obtained a high school diploma.
72. The 80th Daifukuji Fujinkai, Anniversary 1915–1985.
73. "Nihon to America—Tsusho Shizen Kankei no Zenbo [Japan to America—An Aspect of the Trade Amity Relationship]," *Osaka Mainichi Shinbunsha*, *Tokyo Nichinichi Newspapers*, 1938.
74. Geographically speaking, Tottori, Yamaguchi, Hiroshima, Okayama, and Shimane prefectures are considered to constitute the Chugoku chiho (area).
75. Morita, *Hawaii Nihonjin Hatten-Shi*.
76. Shizuko Yamagata, a 93-year-old N2 *Nisei*, grew up in the Keauhou area. She was an active member of the Kona Daifukuji Temple, and a member of the *fujinkai*. She was also an active member of the local *kumi* group and the Kumamoto *kenjinkai* social group. She worked part time at a general store and also worked on her family's three-acre coffee farm.
77. These types of attire are often seen in old Japanese family photographs of weddings and funerals.
78. Morita, *Hawaii Nihonjin Hatten-Shi*.

79. In North Kona, where American Factor Co. was influential, Japanese residents borrowed money and obtained their necessities in advance, mostly from Japanese stores. White-owned stores in South Kona, where Captain Cook Coffee Co. operated, mostly supplied their counterparts. Morita, *Hawaii Gojyunen Shi*.
80. *Hawaii Nengan*, 1940.
81. John Iwane, a 95-year-old N2 *Nisei*, previously worked for the State of Hawaii agriculture exchange center. He was an active member of the Kona Hongwanji, and the local *kumi* group.
82. Billy Paris was the grandson of the Hind family, the owners of the Captain Cook Coffee Co. It is interesting to note that he probably had many more interesting stories to tell, but he spoke the Hawaiian language, mixed with English, making it difficult for me to extract more information.
83. The pulping machine was invented by my great-grandfather, Otokichi Abe. Peter Kawahara's research, dated January 1988, states: "There is a claim that he was the deviser of the coffee pulping machine. Arthur Deguair said Mr. Kubo who lived above Fuji Yokoyama store, the experiment station people came to lease the machine that he made. Most Japanese people who came to Kona had two names, particularly if they ran away from their contracts. This man Abe was called Kubo." My grandfather on several occasions told me that his father used the name Kubo because he ran away from a plantation. Peter Kawahara, "Peter Kawahara's Research" (Private Collection, Kona Historical Society, 1988).
84. According to Megan Mitchell (Mitchell, interview 2009), Otokichi Abe was also involved in the creation of the *boshidana* (drying platform). For more information about Megan Mitchell, refer to Chap. 4 note 71.
85. Ethnic Studies Oral History Project, *A Social History of Kona* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii at Manoa, 1981), 338.
86. Toshio Shirai, a 90-year-old N2 *Nisei*, grew in the Kealahakua area on the Kona Coffee Belt Road. He was a coffee farmer and during the coffee off season was an *opelu* and tuna fisherman. He was an active member of the Kona Hongwanji, and the local *kumi* group.
87. Alfreida Fujita (née Kimura), a *Sansei*, grew up on the Kona Coffee Belt. She is the owner of Kimura's, which is a third-generation *lauhala* shop. She is an active member of the Kona Daifukuji and the local *kumi*. She is a member of the Kona Historical Society, which promotes Japanese cultural heritage to the young Japanese community.
88. Chie Honda, a 96-year-old N2 *Nisei*, grew up in the Holualoa area, along the Northern Kona Belt Road. She worked for a general store and farmed Kona coffee part time on a four-acre family farm. She is a member of the Kona Daifukuji Temple and is a member of the local *kumi*.

89. In 1998, I met with my extended family in Hakata, Fukuoka. During that visit, letters and old pictures of my great-grandfather in Hawaii, dated 1922, were presented to me. These letters showed the level of ties to the family back in Japan. Even after 70 years had passed, these relatives in Japan were very much appreciative of the monetary support and other gifts that they received.
90. Embree, "Acculturation among the Japanese of Kona, Hawaii."
91. *Kibei* is a term created in America by Japanese Americans to refer to children who were sent back to Japan. There were various reasons for sending a child to Japan, but for the majority of families in Kona one of the major reasons was for education purposes. Hiroshi Kadoike, *Americans who became Japanese Soldiers—Japanese Second Generation Fought against Mother Country* (Tokyo: Gensyu, 2010).
92. Yoshie Fukushima refer to note 7 in Chap. 1.
93. Ethnic Studies Oral History Project, *A Social History of Kona*, 341.
94. Lind, *Kona: Haven of Peoples*; Iki, "Kona Coffee Land"; Embree, "Acculturation among the Japanese of Kona, Hawaii"; Monobe, "Shaping an Ethnic Leadership."
95. Yoshio "Steve" Tanaka, an N2 *Nisei*, lived on the Island of Maui until the age of six, and then his family moved to the Keauhou area along the Kona Belt Road, about half a mile (*mauka*) toward the mountain. During his career, he worked at several different jobs before settling down as a health care worker at the Kona hospital. During coffee season, he worked part time picking coffee for his family and other farmers. Until recently, he was an active member of the Kona Hongwanji. Within the community, Mr. Tanaka is known for his devotion to teaching students the art of judo.
96. Yukiko Kimura, *Issei: Japanese Immigrants in Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988); Takaki, *Pau Hana: Plantation Lift and Labor in Hawaii 1835–1920*; Okiihiro, *Cane Fires*; John E. Reinecke, "Labor Disturbances in Hawaii, 1890–1925: A Summary" (Unpublished draft, 1966).
97. Elsie Colon (née Nonaka), an N3 *Nisei*, lived on a coffee farm in Captain Cook her whole life and worked in the kitchen at the Kona County Hospital for 27 years. She was an active member the Kona Hongwanji.
98. Hosokawa, *Nisei: The Quiet Americans*; Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity*; John F. Embree, "New and Local Kin Groups among the Japanese Farmers of Kona, Hawaii," *American Anthropologist, New Series* 41, no. 3 (1939b): 400–407; Ogawa, *Kodomo no tame ni*.

Religious and Social Communities: The Importance of Ethnic Solidarity

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the religious and social organizations that existed within the *Issei* Japanese Kona coffee farming community. The chapter examines how the *Issei* were able to maintain their Japanese cultural heritage through religious and social community practices. The community along the Kona Coffee Belt Road is unique in its demographics, which is 80 percent Japanese and 20 percent non-Japanese. Compared to the Japanese communities on the West Coast, who were surrounded by mainstream American culture, the density of the Japanese population and the limited number of white Americans made it easier for the *Issei* to create social communities similar to those in Japan, as well as to practice and maintain their religions—not only within their homes but openly as communities. Pressure to convert to Christianity or assimilate into American culture was limited and delayed due to these demographics, as well as due to the remoteness of Kona. These factors also led to the development of dualism—the ability to live in both a white American and a traditional Japanese society—within the Kona Japanese community.

In its discussion of the social and religious structures of the *Issei*, this book builds upon the work of John Embree, who examined the Japanese community in Kona in the early 1940s. Due to the lack of scholarly work carried out on this particular community, this chapter draws heavily on Embree's work *Acculturation Among the Japanese of Kona, Hawaii* (1941). Since the publication of Embree's book, there have been no

updates on this topic. Therefore, the present work is the first to revisit the Kona Japanese coffee community. This chapter is divided into two sections: one on social communities and one on religious communities. The second section is longer, because of the importance religious practices had in the daily lives of the community. The first section of the chapter introduces two key social groups that worked to establish and maintain ethnic solidarity among the Japanese coffee farmers in Kona District: the *kumi*¹ and the *kenjinkai*.² Of these two, the *kumi* were most effective in providing support within the community. The second section discusses the *Issei*'s religious organizations and rituals. The Japanese immigrants to Hawaii constructed two Japanese Buddhist temples: the Kona Hongwanji Jodo Shin-shu (Kona Hongwanji) and the Kona Daifukuji Zen Soto-shu (Kona Daifukuji). They also practiced Japanese Shintoism and constructed Shinto and Inari shrines. This chapter provides a review of the formation and function of these temples and shrines, which became the central symbol of the Japanese community in Kona. In doing so, it shows that the majority of the *Issei* were deeply involved in spiritual rituals, and that these rituals were retained by the *Nisei*. Moreover, this chapter examines the pivotal role women played in all aspects of the formation and maintenance of both religious and social communities among the Japanese community in Hawaii.

SOCIAL COMMUNITIES: THE IMPORTANCE OF ETHNIC SOLIDARITY

The Kenjinkai: Japanese Prefectural Identity

Kenjinkai is a phenomenon that is present only within Japanese immigrant communities: these groups do not exist in Japan. *Kenjinkai* functioned to provide an extended family to the *Issei*, who had no relatives to rely upon in the areas in which they immigrated. These organizations were one important way the immigrants to Kona maintained a connection to their Japanese cultural heritage.

In Japanese immigrant social life, *kenjinkai* associations are made up of men who came from the same prefecture³ in Japan, and are formalized associations, with a board of directors, a list of members, and membership fees. In Hawaii, early *kenjinkai* were formed by *Issei* immigrants from the southern and rural parts of Japan. The four main *kenjinkai* established in Kona District were associations for those who came from Kumamoto,

Fukuoka, Hiroshima, and Yamaguchi prefectures, respectively.⁴ Despite their importance to the community, many records of past *kenjinkai* are no longer available or had never been maintained. *Kenjinkai* relied heavily on the trust and loyalty of their members, and, perhaps as a result, written documentation was deemed unnecessary.

The members of a *kenjinkai* maintained meaningful and long-lasting friendships with their fellow members.⁵ According to Bill Hosokawa: “A *kenjin*, someone from one’s own native prefecture, was almost like a blood brother even if he were a stranger—to be fostered, assisted when in trouble, to be trusted, tolerated, and to be treated gently and affectionately.”⁶

In the period covered by this study, Japanese from different prefectures could be identified by their clothing, customs, and dialect, all of which were physical attributes which pointed to where someone was from, and which were used to label people. As Hosokawa has pointed out: “Various characteristics were attributed to the people of each prefecture. For example, Hiroshima people were said to be industrious and tight-fisted; Wakayama people aggressive and hot-tempered; *Tokyoites* generous, people from Kumamoto stubborn, Okayama shrewd and clever, the northern provinces patient as a result of their long cold winters.”⁷

The different *kenjinkai* all had the common purpose of assisting their members by providing them with a social group, with whom they could share their ideas and problems, and by providing them with various means of economic assistance. This assistance was vital for *Isei* men in Kona District, who experienced economic hardship and found it difficult to establish sufficient credit. The *kenjinkai* groups formed a rotating credit system (called a *tanomoshiko* system⁸): each month the members pooled their money, thereby establishing a large fund that could be lent out to members in need. That person would repay the money over a designated period of time, and then another member would be able to borrow from the fund. In Kona, because coffee prices were low (except during the mid-1920s), most of the loans obtained by members from the *tanomoshiko* funds went toward paying down their debts.

The *tanomoshiko* system was founded on traditional *Meiji*-era values: the honor system, loyalty, and trust. For example, if a member defaulted or ran off with the money and had no intention of repaying the loan, he would lose face and would disgrace his prefecture. Even in times of economic hardship, *kenjinkai* members felt obliged to help one another because of the belief that those who came from the same place were supposed to help each other.⁹

Another type of financial support that the *kenjinkai* offered was employment assistance. Many Japanese immigrants faced difficulties in finding work in Kona District. This was especially the case for runaways from the sugarcane plantations on the other side of the island. Many *Issei* were too proud to ask for governmental welfare or any other type of assistance from outsiders. Kihei Ogawa¹⁰ (Ogawa, interview 2005), a *Nisei* and Fukuoka *kenjinkai* member, recalled: "When a Japanese couldn't find a job, the *kenjinkai* members would call all around and would stand up for him to find a job. *Kenjin* help *kenjin* people—that is how it was back then." A *kenjin* would always accept help from a fellow *kenjin*, because of the closeness created by their prefectural ties.

Other community organizations helped with funerals and other events, but many *Issei* men who were single did not belong to such groups. For them it was the *kenjinkai* that assisted at such times. If a single man, who was a member of a *kenjinkai*, and who had no family members in Kona, died, the *kenjinkai* acted as a surrogate family for the deceased, arranging the funeral service and taking care of any financial matters. In the early *Issei* years, when there were many single men in Kona (before the arrival of the "picture brides" and the establishment of families), such men relied on their friends from the *kenjinkai* to help in case of any tragic event. The local *kenjinkai* also sent an annual census report to Japan, and whenever an *Issei* died the *kenjinkai* would notify the Consulate General of Japan.

As the number of *Issei* men increased, and as they began to have families, the practice of *kenjinkai* handling funeral arrangements became rarer: they no longer handled the actual funeral arrangements when a member died because in Kona the *kumi*¹¹ was a much stronger group and it was therefore the *kumi* that took on this role. Nevertheless, the *kenjinkai* still played an important role in aiding bereaved family members when a loved one passed away. *Kenjinkai* collected *koden*¹² from friends of the *kenjinkai*, to help pay for part of the funeral expenses (or any other debts left by the deceased), they arranged public notices relating to the death, served tea and food at the widow's house after the funeral, and sent out "thank you" letters.

Kenjinkai also had a role to play in less grievous times. They sponsored picnics and New Year's parties for their *Issei* members. These parties were usually held at either the Kona Hongwanji or the Kona Daifukuji temple, because these were the only venues that could accommodate large events.

In the interest of variety the location alternated each year. The parties offered *kenjinkai* members and their families a chance to discuss local issues. For many *Issei* these parties were an enjoyable events, when they could converse with others who spoke the same dialect and followed the same customs. At such gatherings the homesick *Issei* were able to share their common feelings and experiences, as emigrants to Hawaii from the same prefecture.

These get-togethers provided enjoyment and relaxation, which were sorely lacking in the daily lives of many *Issei*, who spent most of their time in the coffee fields. Kihei Ogawa (Ogawa, interview 2005) remembered: "My father was always happy to see his [*kenjinkai*] friends. My mother would always talk to her friends about who was coming and going and what they were going to give to their husband to bring for the party [annual picnic]. It was a big event for my father." Many informants told me that the New Year's party was not held on the first of January, but a week later.

As has been described, the *kenjinkai* members helped each other in any way they could. As a support group the various services and contributions they provided helped many Japanese migrant farmers survive. In this way they played a vital role in ensuring the future of the Japanese community in Kona District. The *Issei kenjin* were also directly and indirectly responsible for passing down traditional Japanese values and customs to the next generation in Hawaii. The importance of the *kenjinkai* in Japanese American history should therefore not be passed over lightly. However, the minimal amount of literature that is available about these organizations, and the lack of recognition they have received from previous scholars, mean that it is not unlikely that their history could be buried or forgotten. It should not be.

The Kumi

The *Issei* farmers of Kona District were organized into local cooperatives known as *kumi* or *kumiai*, which were perhaps the most significant social groups that existed among the community for the purpose of creating ethnic solidarity. A *kumi* consisted of a socially constructed ethnic community with horizontal ties to various other *kumi* in Kona District. Because of the demographic situation along the Kona Coffee Belt Road, where the concentration of ethnic Japanese constituted more than 80 percent

of the population, the *kumi* played a much more prominent role in the community than did the *kenjinkai*.¹³ The *kumi* were critical to the Japanese community because they provided moral and financial support, and they promoted social events. They also imposed checks and balances on the behavior of community members. For example, Kihei Ogawa (Ogawa, interview 2005), a *Nisei* participant, recalled: "When you do something good it is great, but when you do something bad it's oh my god, everybody is watching you."

In Kona District, the size of *kumi* varied greatly. The membership of some was as small as three households while others were made up of more than 40. Several *Nisei* informants stated that 15 to 20 was the optimal size for a *kumi*. If a funeral occurred, or if an emergency took place, and one particular *kumi* was too small, two or three *kumi* would offer their assistance. On the other hand, if for some reason a group had too many members, its activities could become too costly, as each *kumi* had numerous duties to fulfill, such as assisting with funerals, weddings, and other events. During the 1930s there were approximately 50 *kumi* in Kona District.¹⁴

The head of the *kumi* was known as the *kumicho*¹⁵ and was usually elected annually on a rotating basis, although some *kumi* elected their leaders for a two-year period. The chief duties of the *kumicho* were two-fold. The first was to inform *kumi* members in the event of a death among them, and then to supervise the funeral arrangements along the lines just discussed. Before the advent of telephones, due to the geographical situation in Kona District, where, as has been said, the farms were spread out and were at some distance from the main road, and where access was difficult due to constant tropical rains, this process of notifying *kumi* members was not an easy one: the death was reported to each home, so it might take several members the whole day to notify everyone. The second duty of the *kumicho* was to distribute notices concerning benefit shows, school events, temple subscriptions, and other matters to *kumi* members.

By and large, the position of *kumicho*, while it carried some prestige, was considered somewhat onerous, and it created a good deal of hassle for the office holder. In fact, according to Yoshi Tanaka¹⁶ (Tanaka, interview 2008), an 87-year-old *Nisei* informant: "It [was] the old *Issei* or the old timers who lived in Kona the longest that [were] running everything. You could have a young *kumicho* but regardless of who happens to be the *kumicho* the old guy is the boss."

To belong to a *kumi*, an *Issei* family in the mid-1920s had to pay an annual fee of approximately one dollar, and had to participate in the cooperative activities of the group. As a rule there were no restrictions on *kumi* membership. The key requirement was geographical proximity,¹⁷ and being willing to fulfill one's obligations. However, during the *Issei* period social bigotry did exist among Japanese migrants and, as a result, Eta and migrants from Okinawa prefecture could not become members of a *kumi*.¹⁸

Although there was a one-dollar membership fee, *kumi* were mostly funded by donations. Yoshi Tanaka (Tanaka, interview 2008) explained:

If anyone came to Kona to raise money by collection, he must first consult with the *kumicho* [the head of the *kumi*] to obtain permission. If permission was not acquired, probably not much money would be raised. Frequently, instead of a man going from door to door, a tedious process in Kona to say the least, the *kumi* people would give money to the *kumicho*, who in turn gave it to the person raising the money.¹⁹

Money was often raised in this way for different purposes: for example, to fund a baseball team or to maintain a Buddhist temple. The *kumicho* was also involved in raising money to support the Japanese military campaign in China, alongside teachers at Japanese-language schools and newspapers.

Once a year, in early January, each *kumi* held an annual New Year's meeting (*nenshi-kai*). The meeting was attended only by men (although a few widows also participated in the place of their deceased husbands), while women gathered in another room and discussed social affairs. At the meetings, various administrative activities were carried out: the new *kumicho* was elected, *kumi* records of expenditure for the past year were read by the *kunicho*, membership dues were collected, and other *kumi* affairs were also discussed. Decisions were also made on how to distribute the money collected. Typically, a large percentage of the funds went to the two main temples: the Kona Hongwanji and the Kona Daifukuji. In some cases where the *kumi* had Christian members, money was also given to Christian churches. Funds were also given to the *jinjas* (shrines). During the *nenshi-kai*, the women served tea, lunch, and dessert, and Kona coffee. Japanese sake was available but not much was consumed. Most of the women wore a *kimono*, while the men wore their farming clothes.

Arthur Murata²⁰ (Murata, interview 2010), a *Nisei* living in the northern part of Kona District, described the yearly *kumi* party in Waiaha,²¹ which he experienced as a child: "First of all, the food was something I remembered the most. We rarely had the chance to eat tasty food ... You know, we got to drink soda pop and that was the only time we got to drink soda pop. The meal was customarily Japanese food, something like *nishime/nimono*, *hijiki*, and *sekihan*."²² Arthur Murata described the day of the *kumi* meeting as being "a day [when] we could play with the other kids in our area." For these children of the *Issei* farmers, who were usually kept busy assisting their parents and doing various routine farming chores, *kumi* parties were a time when they could interact with each other outside of school, and thus for many they were a positive occasion.

Other functions of the *kumi* included house building, road repairing, organizing weddings, assisting in cases of sickness, organizing funerals, and organizing other social events. The shopkeepers and storeowners along the Kona Coffee Belt Road, the location of approximately 50 shops, were organized into regional *kumi* as well. These operated in a similar manner to farmers' *kumi*. Along with the farmers and the shopkeepers, bankers also formulated their own *kumi*.

As was indicated earlier, one of the main purposes of the *kumi* was to assist with the death of a member which included the wake, funeral, burial, cremation, and the post-funeral reception. For most *Issei* families the time after a death was particularly difficult because of the lack of extended family within this first-generation community. The *kumi* had a key role to play in this respect, making various decisions and taking care of matters that would have been performed by extended family members back home in Japan. The *kumicho* and relatives made arrangements for which priest to call, what coffin to choose, and for the selection of flowers. Funerals themselves were usually held in the late afternoon, to avoid missing a workday and so that the majority of the community could attend. On the day of the funeral *kumi* members were involved with various tasks. The first job was transporting the deceased's body from home to the temple. After the recital of the sutra, or at the end of the funeral service, pallbearers, who were usually members of the *kumi*, lifted the coffin onto a truck and drove to the gravesite. Again, because of the lack of extended family, this was a task for which the deceased's family had to rely on the *kumi*. At the gravesite, *kumi* members assisted in digging the grave.²³

An example of the ways in which the *kumi* interacted with the community when someone passed away is conveyed by Yoshi Tanaka (Tanaka, interview 2008), who remembered:

When someone died, the *kumi* was right there to help out with the funeral. Of course some people help out more than others but basically the regular *kumi* members help with arranging the service after the funeral. I would like to say that the ones that really helped when there was a funeral were the women of the *kumi*: they came early in the morning to prepare the food and stuff like that. The *kumi* also helped out, for example, when someone's house caught on fire and burned down the *kumi* members would help out on the weekend or if we had time we would help rebuild his house and also the wedding was a big deal too.

The *kumi* provided similar services at weddings, helping with preparations for the post-wedding banquet and assisting in the clean-up the next day. Often it was only close neighbors among the *kumi* that assisted at weddings, and not the whole *kumi*, due to the budget constraints, which meant accommodating a large *kumi* was not feasible. In return, the helpers were invited to a more casual second party the day after the wedding.²⁴ Kentaro Tanaka²⁵ (Tanaka, interview 2006) agreed that what was most helpful during any big event was the *kumi*'s ability to borrow equipment and utensils from members across Kona District, which made it possible to reduce expenses.

One area in which *kumi* had a particularly important role for the Kona Japanese coffee farming community was the establishment of Japanese coffee growers' associations. Due to their lack of English-language communication skills and knowledge of the local culture, Japanese farmers often struggled to safeguard their rights and interests against dishonest people within the greater community. For example, when their contracts expired merchants and other wealthier people would on occasion attempt to take over the *Issei* farmers' land, the fields having then been cleared and planted. Due to the existence of *kumi* it was easier for the *Issei* to organize themselves into Japanese coffee growers' associations, to protect themselves and to further their interests. Prominent among these were the *Naka Kona Kyowa-Kai* (the Central Kona Cooperative Association), the *Kita Kona Jigyo-dan* (the North Kona Coffee Growers' Association), and the *Minami Kona Jigyo-dan* (the South Kona Coffee Growers' Association).²⁶ These organizations actively aided *Issei* farmers in negotiating land deals and they provided legal services when farmers

had to negotiate contracts related to leasing land. In this way they helped ensure farmers were not cheated, and they helped prevent them from losing their leases when their contracts expired. The coffee growers' associations helped the Kona coffee farmers obtain a secure footing in relation to their opponents higher up the socioeconomic ladder of the times.

During the process of data collection, the *Nisei* children of *kumi* members in Kona District who I interviewed often used the words "we," "us," and "they." This suggests the existence of a collective identity and testifies to identifications of the self with a group among the *Issei*. Within the *Issei* farming community it appears that individual migrant farmers, who had limited (or no) extended family, defined themselves less as individuals and more as unconditional representatives of the *kumi*. I say unconditional because most of the *Nisei* informants suggested that their parents reacted to the community as a normative fit. This upholds my argument that the fact that a dense population of Japanese were living in close proximity in Kona allowed for the recreation of a Japanese social structure in America.

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

General Introduction

There are two main religions practiced by the Japanese—Shinto and Buddhist—which coexist alongside each other. Shinto focuses mainly on life and farming, and therefore major life events (weddings, births, and exorcisms) are typically marked at the shrine, while Buddhism addresses the afterlife and handles details concerning funerals and ancestor worship. When the *Issei* came to Hawaii they brought their religions with them. In Kona, they first established shrines and *kamidana*, and then as members of the community began to pass away the *Issei* began to turn to Buddhism. This section will address these two religious communities as they exist in Kona.

Japanese Jinjas (Shrines) in the Early Issei Period: Kamisama

Overview

In Kona District the *Issei* established Shinto and Inari *jinja* (shrines). As little remains of these shrines, including documentation relating to them, the discussion of this subject relies heavily on narratives from the *Nisei* community.

Shinto and Inari shrines appeared in Hawaii with the arrival of Japanese migrant workers. The Japanese community in Kona built two types of shrines: Shinto and Inari. Both can be considered to be part of the Shinto religion. The Inari shrine was specifically for the worship of the god Inari, who is the god of agriculture. Since the majority of the *Issei* in Kona were farmers, it was important to them to maintain their worship of the god Inari, to ensure a good crop. Although there was an expansion in state Shintoism in the early twentieth century, which coincided with Japanese military expansion, state Shintoism and Japanese Imperial ideology were not particularly emphasized in the daily lives of the *Issei*, because the *Issei* in Kona were removed from the direct influence of that expansion.

According to an old map²⁷ there were at least five known shrines, both Shinto and Inari, in Kona: four were located in the northern district and one in the southern area, along the Kona Coffee Belt Road. Kihei Ogawa (Ogawa, interview 2005), mirroring comments made by several *Nisei* informants from the Holualoa area, recalled: “My father told me that the shrines were made by everyone round here [in the community]. The [Japanese] community donated money and slowly the shrine was built. Some people gave money while others gave their time and others donated supplies.”

In the beginning, it is likely that the majority of the “priests” who served these shrines were amateurs, because only a few official Shinto priests came from Japan to the Hawaiian Islands. With inadequate financial support from sect headquarters in Japan, these priests worked exceedingly hard to preside over Shinto rituals and marriages.

For many members of the Japanese community in Kona, the religious rituals and events that were linked to the shrines were considered an exceptionally important part of their religious and cultural heritage. Thus, the destruction of the shrines during World War II was a shocking event.²⁸ One respondent stated that they regretted not doing anything to save the shrines when they were destroyed:

The *Issei* were afraid to really say anything because they feared that they might be taken to the concentration camps. Even after the war the *Issei*, or my father at least, didn’t want to have anything to do with the shrine because of fear of discrimination from everyone, basically that was not the right thing to do at that time. (Anonymous 5, interview 2009)

This perspective was shared by other respondents.

Before embarking on a more detailed discussion of the two different types of shrines, Shinto and Inari, it is worth noting that attendance at the shrines was not confined solely to Shinto and Inari followers among the Japanese community in Hawaii, as this testimony from one Christian *Nisei* confirms:

When I was little my parents changed [converted] to Christian so I had to attend church every Sunday. So my parents became Christian. I became Christian but my friends were all belonging to the [Kona] Hongwanji. I remember the pastor said to us we shouldn't go to any Buddhist temples or shrines, especially shrines, but my father didn't care about this rule, so on New Year's we went to the shrines and for *obon* we went to the Bon dance [*Bon Odori* which was held at the temple]. Not everyone did what we did, there were many church people that were stronger than my father and refused to go to the Buddhist events. (Anonymous 6, interview 2010)

The Inari Shrine

In Central Kona District there was an Inari shrine, in honor of the Shinto god of fertility, rice, and agriculture, *Inari Okami*. The shrine was erected much earlier than the Buddhist temples.²⁹ The Inari shrine survived financially by having the amateur priests perform New Year's purifications, house blessings, and healing ceremonies, as well as by selling talismans and charms (*omamori*). The Inari shrine was popular in Kona for its mystical powers, for the Inari god was purported to have the power to bring a good crop to the Kona coffee farmers. Many farmers attended the Inari shrine in order to obtain healing. In Dr. Harvey Saburo Hayashi's biography, *Kona Echo*, Jiro Nakano stated that many farmers called upon Japanese healers or sorcerers to cure their sicknesses.³⁰ During difficult times, when coffee prices were low, farmers had little money to spend on medical expenses and therefore they relied on healers at the Inari shrine to drive away illnesses. Many people trusted the sorcerers at the Inari shrine to exorcise hexes placed upon them by their enemies in the community. One informant spoke of two farmers who had disputed the purchase of some land. When one farmer suddenly became ill, he was sure that the other farmer had put some sort of curse or spell on him. Soon after, he went to the Inari shrine and someone performed a Japanese exorcism that removed all unwanted spells.

Old photographs reveal that, similar to shrines in Japan, the Inari shrines were plain and simple, with a *torii* (Shinto shrine gate) at the entrance. Yoshie Fukushima³¹ (Fukushima, interview 2009), a *Nisei*, stated: “The shrine was always empty, so when we were little we used to go up there and play in the rooms. At that time there was an old man that used to let us play there any time.”

Other Shinto Shrines

Several other Shinto shrines were also built in the Kona District. One shrine was built on land that is still owned by the Yokoyama family, who operated a large general store at the time. Gladys Fukumitsu³² (née Yokoyama) said during an interview in 2009 that the Shinto shrines had several responsibilities. The main duties were weddings, New Year’s festivals, *oharai* (purification services), blessings, and *yakudoshi* (Japanese exorcism). From the



Picture 3.1 Inari shrine in Kona on a festival day (Embree, *Acculturation Among the Japanese of Kona*)



Picture 3.2 A shrine in Japan on a festival day (John F. Embree collection, Cornell)

beginning of the *Issei* period to the start of World War II, the majority of wedding ceremonies were performed at the shrines, in conjunction with a post-wedding party at the groom's residence.

The Shinto shrines also performed the traditional *yakudoshi* ceremonies, which are carried out when *yakudoshi* (the years of calamity) are reached. This is a Japanese Shinto religious belief that people at the ages

of *yakudoshi* are likely to experience misfortunes or illness. It is generally believed that a man's *yakudoshi* ages are 25, 42, and 61, and for a woman 19, 33, and 37. The ages of 42 for men and 33 for women are considered to be particularly bad years: *honyaku* (great calamity). This is probably because the numbers 42 and 33 are phonetically unlucky numbers. The number 42 can be pronounced *shi-ni*, which is homophonous with the word "to die," and 33, when pronounced as *sanzan*, is translated as "hard," "terrible," or "disastrous." The majority of the Japanese community performed a *yakubarai* (exorcism) at the Shinto shrines when they reached a *yakudoshi* age. Numerous *Nisei* interviewed agreed that their *Issei* parents believed that *yakudoshi* spiritually affected their lives. The *yakudoshi* exorcism was mainly performed at the Shinto shrines. It was a private ceremony that included close immediate family members. The Shinto *kannushi* (priest) conducted the short ritual ceremony, which lasted approximately ten minutes. The priest would perform *norito* (a short prayer) to the gods and wave his *gohei* (wooden wand with a fluffy paper end), while at the same time casting out any bad spirits. Soon after, the priest drank a tiny cup of sake, as did the immediate family, and then the service was finished.

Some informants recalled the Shinto shrines also organizing sumo wrestling matches during the first month of the year. One participant, Alfreida Fujita³³ (Fujita, interview 2008), remembered:

My father signed up my brother Morris to fight in the sumo tournament, it was really funny because at the time my brother was only about 10 years old and he looked so tiny and small at the sumo tournament. I was kinda worried that he might get hurt. I still remembered how they threw the salt and prayed to the shrine. So yes, we were I guess Shinto too. Of course we had that *kamidana* and every morning my father used to pray to the Shinto god.

Wedding Ceremonies at Shinto Shrines

As has been said, one of the key functions of the shrines was as the site of wedding ceremonies. In Japan the holding of a wedding ceremony was not commonly practiced; however, when the *Issei* came to Hawaii, the Christians viewed this as ungodly because the Japanese marriages were not being officiated in a religious ceremony. Therefore it became common to hold wedding ceremonies at a shrine in Hawaii. In the earlier *Issei* period there were numerous weddings at shrines between newly arrived migrant farmers and their "picture brides."³⁴ To recall, in the late 1880s



Picture 3.3 Sumo wrestling at a shrine event (Imai, Akinori, *Our Nostalgic Heritage*)

the Japanese migrant workers who migrated to America were predominantly men, along with only a few married couples. With the passing of two decades, and after the passing of the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907, the composition of the Japanese community in Kona District changed. Although Japan stopped issuing passports to new migrant laborers, wives and children, and arranged wives for Japanese immigrants were permitted to enter the United States. This was the beginning of the era of picture brides.³⁵ The brides in Japan were selected by these *Issei* on the basis of their pictures, hence the term "picture bride." These women then traveled to Hawaii, arriving in Honolulu, where they were met by their husbands-to-be.

These picture brides were forced to wed their husbands a few hours after they completed the immigration process. Many therefore chose to conduct their marriage ceremony at a nearby Shinto shrine. This process was mandatory for the first few waves of Japanese immigrant picture brides. At the Izumo Taisha shrine in downtown Honolulu, there were

as many as 100 weddings a day at this time. My own great-grandparents were married in this way. My grandfather told me that his parents were married in a Shinto shrine just after his mother arrived in Honolulu. He recalled that his mother told him about the time she got married: she said that his father had traveled all the way to Honolulu to pick her up and in those days he had to go to the immigration office on the docks. After they got out of immigration, they were forced to go to the *kamisama* temple (Izumo Taishakyo shrine) in downtown Honolulu and they had a Shinto-style wedding.

Numerous marriage ceremonies were also performed at the Shinto shrines in Kona District. Various old wedding photos from *Nisei* informants show *Issei* weddings in Kona. The countless pictures presented to me indicate that the majority of the couples in these weddings chose to wear Japanese Shinto-style attire: the women wore *shiromuku* (traditional Japanese white wedding wear) and the men wore *haorihakama* (traditional Japanese wedding style).

After this initial period, conditions were relaxed and new couples were allowed to marry at their future husbands' local residence. Nevertheless, *Issei* men that decided to marry in Kona often chose to have the ceremony performed in the Shinto style and the majority of the weddings were carried out at the Izumo Taisha shrine instead of at the Inari shrine.

Finding a *Nisei* who had real knowledge of an *Issei* wedding was almost impossible. During interviews numerous *Nisei* informants stated that they had almost no knowledge of their parents' pasts. Several informants had asked their parents several times about Japan and family matters, but they received no answer. As Sam Morimoto³⁶ (Morimoto, interview 2006) remembered: "I think that's the way our parents were, they didn't say much: they were really Japanese, you know straight face and really serious. Sometimes I was so scared, you just don't ask stupid questions." Numerous scholars³⁷ have referred to this kind of behavior as reflecting *Meiji*-era values. At any rate, the small amount of information about weddings that was obtainable came from *Nisei* that had a close relationship with their parents, but it was fragmented and incomplete.

The picture this information paints is as follows: weddings in Kona were similar to weddings in Japan, except where authentic Japanese food could not be found—in which case the Kona community replaced these

dishes with what could be found locally. This reflects the resourcefulness that was required in the new environment. The brides wore traditional Japanese *kimonos* that they had brought with them from Japan and that were prepared by their parents. The groom presented the bride's family with a *yuinokin* (monetary gift) and additional funds for the wedding *kimono*. In return, the bride's family furnished the home with a *tansu* (dresser) and other Japanese furniture, which was taken to the house on the day of the wedding. I had little success in obtaining verbal data from the *Nisei* concerning the actual ceremony but I was shown pictures of weddings by several *Nisei* informants. Those pictures provided valuable information that was difficult to uncover from the *Nisei* interviewees. The pictures confirmed that the bride wore a white wedding-style *kimono shiromuku*, with long sleeves and a traditional white *tsunokakushi* (Japanese wedding headwear) and a white *obi* (belt) with the *kimono*. They wore special Japanese *tabi* (white toe socks), with white *zouri* (Japanese sandals). The groom wore a traditional Japanese *montsuki* (Japanese-style mid-length coat). This formal attire had once only been used by the elite social classes back in Japan, but it had been adopted by the common classes in Hawaii to add a more official appearance to their wedding ceremonies. In the background of the photographs, one can see the Shinto shrine. One informant was able to identify friends who had attended the wedding.

Some aspects of a traditional Japanese wedding were absent from the weddings that took place in Kona District, however. For instance, John Embree's study explains that in traditional Japanese weddings, prior to the wedding party at the groom's house, a farewell party at the bride's house took place. The groom was present during this party but he returned separately to the party at his own house. Because the *Issei* had no extended families in Hawaii, it was not possible to observe this custom in their weddings.

Several photographs show that the post-wedding parties of the *Issei* involved as many as 100 or more guests, at a cost of approximately 600 dollars a wedding.³⁸ Records recovered from my great-grandfather's post-wedding party³⁹ show that most of the wedding expenses were recovered from gifts of five dollars, or a five-dollar bag of rice, given by each guest, depending on the relationship with the couple. These records were carefully retained, so that an equal monetary gift could be returned at the guests' own weddings. The post-wedding party was usually celebrated at the groom's home. Photographs reveal that the weddings were held outside, at midday. Long tables and long benches were laid out, similar to

the practice during a funeral wake, although at a wedding there was more decoration. The style was not so Japanese, particularly in terms of the style of dishware used, and the atmosphere seems to have been more one of a picnic in the outdoors. The food was mostly Japanese, however, with additional American and Hawaiian dishes. One particular centerpiece of the wedding meal, which two *Nisei* informants remarked on and which seems to have surprised them, consisted of a 10-pound *onaga* (red tail snapper) wrapped in a daikon net that was presented in replacement of the Japanese *tai* (red seabream) that would normally be eaten at a traditional Japanese wedding. Placed around the fish were carrots cut in such a way as to imitate a flower.

Additional Japanese food that probably would have been served at weddings in Kona District was *nishime* (a Japanese stir fry from Kyushu, similar to *chikuzenni*), *hijiki* (seaweed dish), rice, and *sashimi* (raw fish). These dishes are still commonly prepared for parties today. Other non-Japanese dishes that were served at the time were roast chicken with stuffing, *Kalua* pig (whole pig cooked in a pit underground, which is a Hawaiian dish), *lau-lau* (a Hawaiian dish made of pork and fish wrapped with tropical tea leaves and steamed), and in some cases *poi* (a Hawaiian staple dish). Each guest drank from a paper cup filled with plenty of sake or a soft drink. All of these dishes were arranged on a long picnic-style buffet table, with paper plates and *waribashi* (disposable chopsticks).

As this brief survey has shown, despite the fact that there were no extended or even immediate family members present at these weddings, the *Issei* kept their traditional Japanese wedding customs alive in Kona.

Ofuda (Talismans) and Omamori (Charms)

Ofuda (talismans) were issued by the shrines (the Buddhist temples also provided *ofuda* as well), and were believed by the Japanese community to protect their houses from any difficulties. These *ofuda* were strips of paper on which the name of a *Kami* (God), or representative of a *Kami*, as well as the name of the shrine where it was issued were written. They were usually taped to the wall close to (or sometimes inside) the *kamidana* (the Shinto household altar), or to a door, pillar, or the ceiling. They were believed to protect the family residence from general harm, such as diseases. More specific *ofuda* were placed near particular objects, such as one in the kitchen to protect from fire. In many cases, a coffee

farmer might have multiple *ofuda* from different Buddhist sects (e.g., from the Kona Daishi-do Shingon-shu [Kona Daishi-do]) and from the Shinto shrines.

The Japanese community purchased new *ofuda* each year, typically before the end of the year. All of the *Nisei* I interviewed on the subject stated that they purchased the *ofuda* every year because they truly believed that these objects would protect their homes from any trouble or disaster. Miki Sato⁴⁰ (Sato, interview 2008), an N2 *Nisei*, stated: “Our parents taught us that we had to have the *ofuda* in our house to make our house safe. My parents really believed that those things work. I mean, I remember when someone we knew would visit Japan my parents would always ask them to bring back those *ofuda*—you know, the ones from the famous temples.”

Omamori (charms) were also commonly relied on for protection against evil spirits. It was claimed that the *omamori* had mystical powers that would ensure safety. *Omamori* were also purported to bring good luck—something that was sorely needed during the period of the *Issei*. *Omamori* were popular among the Kona community: they were probably worn by the majority of farmers. In fact, these *omamori* were so popular that when a person visited a famous shrine on a trip to Japan, the *omamori* were given to friends and family as an *omiyage* (souvenir).

Kamidana and New Year's

John Embree and other scholars have confirmed that a *kamidana* altar, a miniaturized Shinto shrine constructed from little pieces of wood and less expensive than a *butsudan*, was found in the homes of the Japanese migrant farmers. It was located next to the *butsudan*, and in accordance with the Shinto religion, in the morning an offering of water, and on occasion food, was made to the *kamidana*. The purpose of this spiritual ritual was to give appreciation to the gods in the hope of achieving a respectable crop and avoiding bad luck. Miki Yamanaka⁴¹ (Yamanaka, interview 2008), an 87-year-old N2 *Nisei*, said: “My father used to wake up early in the morning and go to the *kamidana* and clap his hands three times bow and then start his work. Also *Hatsumode* [New Year's prayer], we would make and put on the *kamidana*—you know the big *mochi* [rice cakes] *mikan* [tangerine] *surume* [dry squid] and this pretty Japanese paper on the bottom.” During *oshogatsu* (New Year's day), *kagami mochi* (double-stack rice cake), with a large *surume* (dried squid), *kombu* (dried seaweed),

traditional green branches of leaves, *mikan*, and water were all placed on the *kamidana* as offerings to the gods.

Outside of daily practice, the most important time of the year for Shintoism occurred at *oshogatsu* (the New Year's celebration). To prepare for the coming of the New Year families would participate in *osoji* (deep cleaning of the house). The act of cleaning was supposed to remove bad luck and feelings left over from the old year. On New Year's Eve it was customary to eat *toshikoshi soba* (a hot soba noodle soup), which was thought to contribute to a long life. On the first day of the year it was customary to wake early to visit the shrine and pay respects to the *kami*. During the following days no one worked, not even to cook. Meals consisted of pre-prepared dishes called *osechi*. For the *Issei* this was a time to visit family, and worship the *kami*. Within the home all spiritual attention was placed on the *kamidana* and the doors of the *butsudan* (family Buddhist altar) were closed throughout the holiday. Miki Sato (Sato, interview 2008), a *Nisei*, remembered that as a child she visited the *jinja* (shrine) every year:

It started in the very early morning on the first of the year, we would get up early in the morning and visit the *jinja*. We would go up to the front and put our hands together and pray for the New Year. It was something we had to do and it was part of our culture and it was fun for us. After that, the people who lived around this area would make *mochi* (rice cakes) or *mochi tsuki* (making rice cakes), and that was the one thing I really missed the most. Because for me I always related the time in my childhood to *mochi tsuki* and *kamisama* [Shinto shrine]. Now that I think about it is really sad, I haven't thought about it for years and now that you mentioned it, it is really sad.

Yoshie Fukushima (Fukushima, interview 2009), a *Nisei*, remembered this about the shrine during the New Year: "The old man used to spend a couple weeks preparing for *oshogatsu*. He used to paint the gate red and make all those kind of white long fancy papers, and when the New Year's came the place filled with so many people. I remember the ladies wore their beautiful kimonos."

Before their destruction during WWII, the shrines played a central role in the life of the Japanese community in Kona, particularly during the New Year's period, when they became the centers of large community gatherings. The fact that shrines were built by the *Issei* strengthens my argument that the density of the Japanese population and the relative lack of pressure to assimilate aided in the formulation and continuation of Japanese social and religious traditions within the community in Hawaii.

THE RELIGIOUS *Issei*'S APPROACH TO JAPANESE BUDDHISM*Spirituality Among the Issei*

For *Issei* farmers in Kona who were religious, Japanese Buddhism was an essential element of their everyday individual lives, both spiritually and socially. This spiritualism developed as news about the deaths of immediate family members in Japan reached the *Issei*. Upon hearing of a close family member's death, the *Issei* became concerned about connecting spiritually with the afterlife and paying respects to their ancestors. In the beginning, Buddhist practice occurred individually within the home and it was the responsibility of the women to make sure that these spiritual practices were being properly carried out. Individuals recited the sutra several times a day, made offerings at the *butsudan* (religious altar in the home) and during *ohakamairi* rituals (visiting the family grave), and were involved, when they were constructed, with Buddhist temples. Chie Honda⁴² (Honda, interview 2008), an N2 *Nisei*, remembered: "Oh my parents used to really really believe in the Buddha, they would pray every night and bring food and flowers and light up *senko* (incense) at the *butsudan*." Another *Nisei*, Shizuko Teshima⁴³ (Teshima, interview 2006), recalled: "My parents used to get very angry if we talked or made any kind of noise when we were praying. They were very serious when it came to the church [temple]."

*Otera (Buddhist Temples⁴⁴)**Overview*

At the beginning of the Japanese transnational migration in the mid-1890s, the first Japanese immigrants to Kona District had no established temples in which they could practice their religious rituals. During this time, religious services were held at practitioners' residences. For instance, funerals and memorial services were performed at the gravesites or in family homes. Throughout this time the Japanese migrant farmers were without spiritual guidance. As a result, community leaders were asked to function as temporary religious figures to preside over important Japanese Buddhist religious rituals.

In 1897 members of the Kona Hongwanji Buddhist sect, who were mainly Japanese coffee farmers, constructed the first Kona Hongwanji temple in Kona.⁴⁵ The practitioners of the other major Buddhist sect present in Kona, the Kona Daifukuji, completed their temple 18 years later,

in 1915. Various worship halls and miniature statues of the Daishi-do Shingon-shu were constructed along the Kona Coffee Belt Road, and after an increase in membership a main temple was constructed in 1937. In order to better understand the importance of the temples in the lives and communities of the *Issei*, a brief overview of the history of each sect, their priests, and how the sect was formulated is discussed below. It is worth noting that sectarian conflict between these two sects was limited. Documented materials and personal interviews with various *Nisei* families for the most part confirm that the two sects coexisted, and in numerous cases they cooperated in various activities that benefited the Kona Japanese farming community.

The Kona Hongwanji Jodo Shin-shu Temple

Overview

The Kona Hongwanji was the most important Buddhist sect in the greater Hawaii territory, which includes Kona District. John Embree stated in his study that the majority of the farmers that immigrated to Kona District were originally from the Kumamoto area in Japan. In this area, Hongwanji Jodo Shin-Shu Buddhism was the dominant sect. As can be seen in maps of Kona District from the early 1930s, the Kona Hongwanji temple established several smaller satellite temples in the Kona Belt, located along Mauka Road.⁴⁶ These satellite temples were easier for members to access through walking. With over 400 families participating during the time of the *Issei*, the sect's temples survived as ongoing entities by the inputting of social capital and substantial amounts of monetary donations from the Japanese community.

In Hawaii during the *Issei* period religious services did not take place according to a specific routine: they were carried out on an ad hoc basis, or on special holidays or for special events. Official services were usually held once a month, and involved prayers and the offering of incense. The members of the temples refused to change to the Christian Sunday services system, which the West Coast Buddhist temples adopted early on (before the war, in some cases). In the beginning, the attendees at a temple sat in the formal *seiza* style.⁴⁷ This lasted up until the early 1930s, when pews were added to the temples.

In Kona District the Kona Hongwanji sect is now known primarily as Hongwanji, and secondarily as Jodo Shin-shu. When the first Kona

Hongwanji temple was constructed in 1897, it was first named Hawaii Honpa Hongwanji. Two years later, on the West Coast, the name of the formal Hongwanji Jodo Shin-shu organization, to which the temple belongs, was changed to the Buddhist Mission of North America.⁴⁸ In the Honolulu area the name Hawaii Honpa Hongwanji is still commonly used today, although the organization's name changed to Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) in 1942.⁴⁹ All of the people from the Kona Japanese community interviewed referred to this organization as the Hongwanji. The majority of the participants had heard of the other names for the organization (e.g., the BCA) but they rarely ever used them.

Apart from its relationship to the BCA (the mainland organization to which the Hongwanji temple in Kona District belongs), the Hongwanji temple in Hawaii has remained quite independent from other Japanese Buddhist communities in the United States. This may be due to the fact that the Hongwanji Jodo Shin-shu organization in Hawaii was founded before Hawaii became a state of the United States, and also due to the fact that Hawaii did not fall under Executive Order 9066, under which many Japanese were relocated to internment camps during the war.

History

The Kona Hongwanji temple in Hawaii has a rich history. Its story begins in 1897, the year in which the first priest of the sect, Reverend Gyoshin Sato, took up office. Sato had moved to Hawaii on his own, without the support of the Hongwanji Jodo Shin-shu organization in Japan. He later became Kona's first official priest, with the help of his *sangha*.⁵⁰ In 1897 Sato assisted in the construction of the first Kona Hongwanji temple, which was constructed in a little village in Hookena in the southern part of Kona. Soon after the building of this first temple, Sato supervised the construction of several other small Hongwanji satellite temples in the Kona Coffee Belt. In all, seven satellite temples were built to serve the growing number of Japanese immigrants.

In 1907 the main Kona Hongwanji temple was completed. It is situated in Kealakekua in central Kona.⁵¹ The physical structure of this temple is similar to that of the original head Hongwanji temple in Japan. In contrast to the temples that were built on the West Coast of the United States, which adopted an architectural design, as well as practices, that outwardly resembled those of Christian churches, the temples that were constructed in Kona District retained the traditional Japanese style.

The second Hongwanji priest in Kona District, Jyoei Abe, who followed Sato's tenure, began his two-year stay in the area in 1907. Although his term was short, Abe undertook the construction of much-needed facilities, including a dormitory on the temple grounds where the children of the *Kyodan* members⁵² who lived in outlying areas could stay. He involved himself in the construction of a satellite temple in Honaunau (South Kona). During Abe's tenure the already established *fujinkai* (women's group) expanded its responsibilities in the Hongwanji community, carrying out various projects, such as community culture classes, that increased the relevance of the temple to the lives of its members.

Over the next few years, as the *Issei* coffee farmers experienced increasing economic stability, the Hongwanji temple grew and expanded. However, in this geographically challenging environment, changes in the availability of transportation caused changes in the distribution of temples: a few years after the introduction of the automobile, the satellite temples, which had been fairly numerous in the years before motor cars, began to close down. By the early 1930s the smaller branch temples no longer existed: all that remained were the graves that had been laid behind them (family graves were located at the back of these temples).

The Role of the Priest

The Hongwanji priest and his family lived on the grounds of the main temple, in their own living quarters. In the beginning, the priest received very little financial support from the head Hongwanji temple in Japan, or from the main Hawaiian Hongwanji temple in Honolulu.⁵³ This was due to the economic downturn, Japan's campaign in China, and the abuse of the financial assets of the Hongwanji.⁵⁴ Therefore, the priest at the main Kona Hongwanji temple in Kealahou was paid a monthly salary, with the support of the local Japanese Buddhist community and *kumi*. The priest also received financial remuneration from carrying out funerals and memorial services, which helped him survive. As the *Issei* grew older, funerals became more frequent and thus funeral income increased. Toshio Nakamoto⁵⁵ (Nakamoto, interview 2007) commented: "The priest's salary or his income depended on the price of coffee: when prices were good he also did well but when prices were bad he did really bad, to the point that special fund-raising events were held to help pay for his living expenses."

Only one Buddhist priest was employed for all of Kona District. On a daily basis the priest would therefore walk, or in some cases hitch a ride,

the many miles between the various satellite temples. The priest would also perform various religious rituals at the homes of temple members, which also required extensive travel: when the priest arrived at a farm entrance on the Kona Coffee Belt Road, it would take a donkey ride of 10–15 minutes to reach the farmer's actual residence.

Women and the Temples

The role of women in the Hongwanji temples in Kona District was significant. The in-house published anniversary literature about the temple strongly emphasized the contributions of the Kona Hongwanji *fujinkai* to the temple. One interviewee, Yumiko Kondo⁵⁶ (Kondo, interview 2008), told me: "The women had so many things to do, but weren't given so much credit. For many years we endured this and we still are. The church [temple] has changed very slowly but in a good direction." Indeed, it was the women who wrote and maintained the historical documents relating to the temples: they appear to have been the only ones with an interest in recording, or perhaps the available time to record, the historical events that took place in the Japanese Buddhist community in Kona.

The wives of priests played a particularly important role. Natsuno Sato, the wife of the Reverend Gyoshin Sato, the first Hongwanji priest in Kona District, was active in the temple community: in 1902 she became the first president of the Kona Hongwanji *fujinkai* (women's group), the first *fujinkai* in the territory of Hawaii.⁵⁷ Natsuno Sato's activities included providing instruction to younger members of the community and teaching practical skills, such as sewing. Tsuyuko Ishiura, the wife of the fifth Hongwanji priest (Shuen Ishiura), was also active in educating young *Nisei* the Japanese language and culture. For example, she taught arts and crafts and held workshops on Japanese etiquette and self-improvement. Her husband, Shuen Ishiura, also organized a Young Women's Buddhist Association in 1922, which involved young women in the temple community and which promoted spiritual Buddhist rituals.

The Kona Daifukuji Zen Soto-shu Temple

Overview

The Kona Daifukuji Zen Soto-shu temple was founded in 1914. Within the Japanese community in Kona it was second in the hierarchy of temples in the region after the Kona Hongwanji temples. Although the Daifukuji

temple did not have as many members as the Kona Hongwanji, the Kona Daifukuji temple, which is now located in the central district of Kona, had approximately 160 participating families when it was first established.

In the early period, prior to the construction of the temple, religious services of the Daifukuji sect were held at the former Hanato General Store in Honalo. In 1918 a six-acre property that was located across the road from the Hanato General Store was purchased from a Hawaiian family in order to construct a temple.⁵⁸ Three of the six acres were sold to Mr. Mori Okamura. Ten years later, the temple acquired the remaining three acres from Mr. Okamura. In 1920 Ikenouchi, a contractor from Japan, constructed the present temple in place of the first, which was designed by Mr. Yoshisuke Sasaki of Keauhou General Store.

The Role of the Priest

The successive Japanese priests of the Kona Daifukuji temple, together with their wives, were the backbone of the temple. The majority of the *Nisei* interviewed about the temple stated that most of the ideas for the temple's activities were basically carried out by the priest. According to them, the priest created many new programs and events in order to attract people to the temple.

Temple documents reveal that the second priest, Reverend Kodama, organized the Kona Young Buddhist Association (YBA), and the Kona Daifukuji *fujinkai* association, in 1915. The YBA was established in order to attract the young Japanese Buddhist community to the temple.

Reverend Giko Kanbara, the third priest, and his wife Mrs. Shigeko Kanbara, arrived in 1921 and instantly organized the *shojokai* (girls' group). Kanbara later started a night school for the members of his temple, to provide them with a religious education, while his wife started a Sunday-school program that promoted religious education for ladies and young children.

In 1926 the fourth priest, Reverend Kozan Hosokawa, "put his efforts in[to] education and spreading the teachings of Buddha. He also distinguished himself as principal of the Kealakekua Japanese-Language School. Mrs. Hosokawa devoted much of her time to the education of the young people at the Napoopoo Japanese-Language School."⁵⁹

Most of the temple members lived in the Honalo vicinity and, unlike in the case of the Kona Hongwanji temple, there were no satellite branch temples. Therefore the priest had a close relationship with the area and with all of the temple's members.

The Kona Daifukuji priest's main responsibility was to officiate in Buddhist rituals, such as funerals, *Obon*, and *hoji*.⁶⁰ However, the priest also had various social responsibilities⁶¹: he was invited to almost every major event that took place in the community, including weddings and birthday parties. During these parties the priest would perform duties that resembled those within the Christian tradition: for instance, during big parties the priest would bless the guests or say a prayer before the meal.

Activities Organized by the Temple, and Relations with Shrines

Regarding the Kona Daifukuji temple, Shizuko Teshima (Teshima, interview 2006) remembered: "The *Otera* (temple) had lots of festivals before, not like now. The church [temple] used to help women: we had sewing classes and all the girls from everywhere used to come to sewing classes. You know, that is how I met some of my best friends." Shizuko Teshima explained that the temple provided various activities for the young Japanese Buddhist community. Other respondents⁶² to my research informed me that the Kona Daifukuji temple ran flower arrangement classes, *shodo* (Japanese calligraphy) classes, and, later, judo (wrestling) classes.

The Kona Daifukuji temple also had connections with Shinto shrines. On several occasions the shrines and the Kona Daifukuji celebrated the same holidays together, such as the New Year's festival, and autumn and spring festivals.

The Kona Daishi-do Shingon-shu: The Healers

Overview and History of Worship Sites and Temples

Every few miles along the Kona Coffee Belt Road there stood, until the 1980s, when they slowly began to disappear, a number of Kona Daishi-do worship halls, along with 88 miniature *ojizousan* (stone statues of children of Buddha) worship sites that were established in the Kona region during a 20-year period between 1910 and 1930. The sites were mainly located in the Holualoa area. On the night of the 20th day of every month a small group of Kona Daishi-do devotees met at one of the worship halls, and a service in honor of Kona Daishi-do was performed.

The Kona Daishi-do is a Japanese Buddhist religious community whose practices are similar to those of Shinto. The members of the Daishi-do community in Kona District were conservative and committed followers

of their religion. They were healers and strong believers in charms, talismans (*ofuda*), and holy water.⁶³

The 88 worship sites and the Kona Daishi-do worship halls referred to were constructed by the Daishi-do priest,⁶⁴ Kobo Takeda. Prior to 1937, there was no main temple for the Kona Daishi-do: instead there were several small satellite branch temples that were operated on a rotating basis. They were operated in this way because these satellite branch temples were spread out across the Kona area and the priest was unable to visit each branch temple in one day. However, in 1937, since the membership had grown, a main Daishi-do Shingon-shu temple was constructed. At this time a new priest was summoned from Japan, at the request of the acting members of the temple. The priest later utilized the small outposts in the surrounding area to establish Japanese-language schools that were similar to those created by the other Buddhist temples.

The 88 miniature Kobo-Daishi⁶⁵ monumental temples were available to anyone who had a desire to pray and meditate in the presence of the Kobo-Daishi. It was not uncommon to witness other Japanese Buddhist temple members worshipping at a Kobo-Daishi worship site. In many cases, non-Shingon-shu temple members even looked after these little temples. Yoshie Fukushima (Fukushima, interview 2009), a *Nisei* informant, told me: “My mother used to clean the *hotoke sama*—she washed the stone with water every week, and she used to make sure that there were always fresh flowers and a cup of water at all times, but the thing about it was that my mother was a member of the [Kona] Hongwanji.”

I witnessed the healing rituals of the Kona Daishi-do myself during my youth. One of my older brothers developed asthma at the age of one, and suffered from daily asthma attacks. During the nights these attacks got worse. On many such occasions I saw my grandmother (*Nisei*) put her hand on my brother’s chest, close her eyes, and chant for about a minute or two. She would also pin a healing charm to his T-shirt, again chanting a kind of prayer as she did so. She carried out these healing exercises up until her death. My grandmother has long since passed away, and therefore additional information about the exact nature of the ritual she carried out is not obtainable.

My grandmother was a long-time member of the Kona Hongwanji temple, but she later switched to the Kona Daifukuji temple. I can only assume that because the majority of the Kona Daishi-do satellite temples were located near her home in the Holualoa area she obtained horizontal ties

with, and interacted with, members of the Kona Daishi-do. This reveals the collective cohesiveness that existed among the different Japanese Buddhist temples in the community: even during the *Issei* period it was possible to switch among different Buddhist temples, with only slight resistance from the priests and other practitioners.

Religious Rituals and Practices

Ososhiki: Traditional Ritual Funerals of the Issei

The death of *Issei* migrant farmers caused extreme emotional distress within the Kona coffee farming community. Every person occupied a definite position in the social community, had a unique connection in the social life, and received support from a network of social relationships. After a death, the community had to reorganize itself and reach a new condition of equilibrium. This section describes and analyzes the *ososhiki* (funerals) carried out by the Japanese community in Kona, pointing out the various responsibilities ascribed to the Buddhist temples and the affiliated *fujinkai*, *kumi*, the *kenjinkai*, and the community at large. The funeral practices were greatly influenced by those in Japan, and as Japanese funeral and burial customs changed, so did those in Kona. Thus, the majority of people who died in the early twentieth century were buried.

The *Nisei* interviewees I spoke with recalled that members of the immigrant community in Kona District often disagreed about the correct way to carry out the funeral process, with different people having different ideas about what was the correct traditional custom to observe and the correct ritual to carry out. The disagreements included arguments about how to prepare the deceased's body, how food should be prepared, *koden* (monetary funeral gifts), *otsuri* (wakes), and other traditional matters. Yoshie Fukushima (Fukushima, interview 2009) remembered: "They were all fighting for nothing because everybody was wrong, nobody knew what to do. When my father came to Hawaii, he was only 18, so at the age of 18, how would anyone know about Japanese funerals or church kinda thing?" There was no extended family to provide a working knowledge of the traditional Japanese culture from the place which they had come from in Japan. Moreover, the Japanese migrant workers left Japan when they were at an age at which Japanese cultural traditions seemed unimportant. One of the most difficult problems seems to have been working together within the *kumi*, since these were formed based on geographic proximity

in Kona, not prefectural ties. Several participants claimed that their parents were particularly intolerant of people who came from different places in Japan. However, Yoshie Fukushima (Fukushima, interview 2009) explained: “But in the end the community grew together and formed their own system: something of a Japanese and Hawaiian way of working together.” To some degree, then, the disagreements among people from different prefectures in Japan actually brought the community closer together, suggesting that solidarity within the Japanese community was strengthened.

A death was marked by several ritual services. Kihei Ogawa (Ogawa, interview 2005), a *Nisei* in his late 90s, remembered that:

In the old days death was like a community thing. I remembered when my mother died—oh, this was back in the early 30s—from T.B. [tuberculosis] I mean within the hour, several *kumi* came so fast. Also within the hour the priest was there too, he read the *okyo*. [It] was a short prayer. The priest set up some kind of *butsudan* with a candle so when more people came they could light up the *senko*. So what happened next was that by 10 o’clock the women [*kumi* women] were in the kitchen cooking food (*shojin ryori*⁶⁶) for the family, and of course everybody. The men [*kumi* men] were outside straightening things here and there, trying to clean up the place, making things nice. All day people kept coming. Some people brought rice, food. Most people brought flowers. People from the *kenjinkai* were here too, like Kumamoto friends. You know my parents were from Kumamoto so a lot of our Kumamoto friends came and helped too. I remember all kinds of food wrapped in the *furoshiki* (a cloth used for wrapping and transporting items); some people even brought money *koden*. The *kumi* also brought all the things needed for a funeral. I also remember that the *kumi* kept a good record of what people actually gave: like the Abe family brought something food. ... I had to help with preparing for the body. Before [in the past] family members, with the help of some *kumi* members, had to wash the body, change her [the mother’s] dress and put on some kimono and make her look nice for the service, ya. The main thing was to just take a cloth and wash her a little is all we had to do [this was part of a ritual that symbolized the last duty as a son/daughter]. After the body was cleaned and dressed, everyone washed their hands with salt-water. [This action was another ritual, to purify oneself of any bad omens]. Soon after, the family and the *kumi* had a quick lunch and after that my mother was in the coffin with flowers around her. The priest in front of her made another service, read the *okyo* again. The priest passed around the *senko* box—you know, you take a pinch of the *senko* dust [sandalwood] and you bring it up to

your forehead and then sprinkle it on the fire, and so everyone did that. After the service, the coffin was carried onto a hearse and was taken to the temple for the funeral.

The first major funeral event was the wake, which usually started in the evening after death. It could take as long as an hour or an hour and a half for the priest to recite the *okyo*. In the case of Kihei Ogawa's mother's death, she passed away at night, which gave members in the community time during the day to pay their last respects. The family decided to have the funeral as quickly and smoothly as possible, by omitting the wake and proceeding directly to the funeral. Depending on the family involved, some preferred to hold a wake because it was less expensive and did not require a post-funeral meal. This also reduced the number of mourners attending the funeral. The wake service was carried out for those who could not attend the funeral.

The main funeral service usually followed, on the next day, and was generally held during the evenings to avoid missing a workday, ensuring that the majority of the community could attend.

During the period of the *Issei* it was customary to take portraits of the entire community gathered together at a funeral. A number of such photographs from the mid-1920s show that it was not uncommon for a funeral to be attended by several hundred people, including family, friends, the *kumi*, the *kenjinkai*, and others.

Due to the lack of extended family, most of the mourners were people from the same region in Japan (*tokoronomon*), and this included close friends of the deceased, such as business colleagues and members of clubs in which the deceased was a member. Each attendee at the funeral provided a monetary gift (*koden*) of about a dollar or more to the family of the deceased.

The most needed *koden* (gift) during the time of the *Issei* was money, due to the economic difficulties experienced in this period. It was difficult for the survivors to afford the high cost of the funeral and the post-funeral party, so monetary gifts were welcomed. Several *Nisei* mentioned that their parents taught them about the proper Japanese way of presenting money. Kiku Kubo⁶⁷ (Kubo, interview 2009) recalled: "You need to get some old money, or wrinkle the money, and place it in the envelope upside because my mother used to say when somebody dies you need to cover up every happy thing and you have to live a simple life for one year ... you need to cancel all trips and weddings, for one." Flowers were also often presented to survivors, in an adoption of the American custom. It was customary in Japan for the family of the deceased to use part of the *koden*



Picture 3.4 Otokichi Abe Funeral, March 4, 1927

to buy a return gift. However, in this matter of funeral gifts the *Issei* had little choice but to ignore some traditional parts of their cultural heritage because of the economic hardship they experienced, and because of their acculturation into the local Hawaiian culture. Due to this early marginalization, this custom of presenting a return gift was lost.

After the funeral service the mourners would gather for a post-funeral gathering that included a *shojin ryori* (a vegetarian meal), which at that time remained part of the Japanese Buddhist religious doctrine. For the most part, the majority of the arranging and planning of this meal was accomplished by the *kumi* members. Initially, this meal was partaken of by the family members and by people who had traveled a long distance to attend the funeral. As time went on, however, the *shojin ryori* came to be served to everyone who attended the funeral service, evolving into a post-funeral party (which increased the cost of funerals). Shizuko Teshima (Teshima, interview 2006) explained that the post-funeral party has not changed much since the early days:

The *Issei* did what they had to do. The coffee price was so cheap no one had money, and so we improvised. We used long tables and benches. The food was placed on the benches, with plates here and there. You know, the reception hall was too small to accommodate everyone, so there were people standing and eating while standing and picking food off the plates, in some cases using their own *hashi* (chopsticks), or even their fingers.

As time went on, the serving of the *shojin ryori* (special vegetarian dishes) to all attendees increased the cost of funerals, so the amount of people that could attend began to be restricted.

The post-funeral party raised issues of social etiquette and acculturation. During several interviews with Shizuko Teshima, she was still concerned, at the age of 99, about the breaches of traditional Japanese etiquette that took place in these post-funeral parties:

My mother always told me about Japanese manners. Like don't use your own *hashi* when you pick up food from the main food plate, or sit down when you eat, or of course don't eat with your hands.

It would seem that for the Japanese migrants in Hawaii, these experiences were signs of acculturation. Japanese would have been shocked to witness a person eating with his or her fingers and several *Nisei* participants explained that their parents did not take to this kind of *gyogi warui* (bad manners). (Teshima, interview 2007). Nevertheless, a shared culture was developing in Hawaii—one that involved table manners and other elements—due to the transculturation of this large population of Japanese migrant farmers. In the process, the Hawaiian and local white Americans began to use *hashi* (chopsticks), and various Japanese foods and rice became a staple for the Hawaiian community.

After the funeral, the deceased's body was immediately brought to the gravesite to be laid to rest. The *kumicho* took care of the gravesite, appointing young men to dig the grave plot.⁶⁸ Early in the morning the women from the *kumi* prepared food for the workers; later they prepared the food for the funeral.

During this time, another ritual service was carried out, for the final burial. (In later years cremation became the usual method of corpse disposal but in the *Issei* period, burial was the norm.) This required the reading of the *okyo* for family members only, and lasted for approximately 30 minutes. Typically, family members and close friends laid flowers on the

coffin, and then everyone sprinkled a handful of dirt over the coffin. The coffin was then completely enclosed in cement, which usually took about a week to complete. A *bohoyo* (temporary wooden grave-marker) bearing the name of the deceased was then placed over the grave. A *sekito* (gravestone) eventually replaced the wooden grave-marker.

Seven days after the burial, family members, close friends, and, on occasion, the head of the *kumi* would attend the home of the deceased's family and read the *okyo* for the customary seventh-day memorial service. This particular service was generally performed in the evening.

In the period of the *Issei* Japanese Buddhist rituals were observed strictly during the *shijukunichi* (first 49 days) following a death. For example, in some cases when a parent died the children were not permitted by their parents to attend public school. Spouses rarely left the house because they believed the spirits were not settled until 49 days had passed. Furthermore, as has been mentioned, vegetarian dishes were prepared as consuming meat and fish was not permitted.

At the end of the 49 days the *shijukunichi* (49th-day memorial) was held. The *shijukunichi* was an important service that was attended by all family members, by close friends, and by the *kumi*. Again, because of the harsh farming conditions, these services were held in the evenings. This memorial service continued with a post-memorial dinner party, where the final vegetarian meal of this period of mourning was served.

For many Japanese farmers, along with weddings and other events, funerals were one of the few occasions for social interaction with other members of the community. Sam Morimoto (Morimoto, interview 2006), a *Nisei* informant, stated: "My father and mother were always there when somebody passed away ... And what I remembered back then was, I don't want to say this but, people used to talk stories and a lot of people would drink up. It was like a party." How the person passed away would determine if drinking was morally acceptable. Some members, on the other hand, complained that while they possessed a strong affinity for the *fujinkai* they did not want too many responsibilities, such as preparing food for the different funeral memorial services. One *Nisei* participant recalled, "Especially during coffee season we were picking coffee from dark to dark (morning to night) we didn't have much time for anything else" (Anonymous 7, interview 2008).

After the funeral rituals had been carried out and the deceased person had been buried, it could often take several years for the *sekito* (gravestone) to be erected because the surviving family did not want the community

to think that the *koden* or additional donations had been used to pay for a gorgeous headstone, instead of being used to procure necessary items. Families wished to construct their parents' graves with their own money and to do so in the way they wanted, without any problems from the outside (e.g., from the *kumi*). Several *Nisei* accounts mentioned that it took an average of seven to ten years before the family decided on a new granite headstone. In the late 1920s my great-grandparents' headstones were carved from a beach stone, which lasted about 40 years—until my grandfather decided to replace it with black granite, which hopefully will last 1000 years. This was a common practice among the *Nisei* because of their spiritual belief that they must respect their ancestors, and one way to show this is to take care of grave site.

Funerals became community events due to marginalization, demographics, and isolation. When a community member died it was necessary for the family to gain financial and moral support from the community, and since the surrounding population consisted mostly of other Japanese immigrants the formation of the *kumi* made it easier for individual families to rely on their neighbors. In addition to the members of the *kumi* to which the deceased belonged, people attended from farther afield not only to pay their respects but also to participate in a rare social event.

New evidence from this study has revealed that even after the death of an *Isei* parent the *Nisei* continued to send financial support and goods to their relatives in Japan, despite their own economic hardship. Instead of a death leading to a severing of ties between the *Nisei* and their family in Japan, it led to a strengthening of the connection the *Nisei* had to their homeland.

Hoji: A Japanese Traditional Memorial Ritual

Hoji (memorial services) are significant spiritual ceremonies. Depending on the Buddhist temple concerned, these memorial services were held in the first, third, seventh, and even hundredth years after the death of the deceased. The *hoji* memorial services were widely practiced by the Japanese community. Shizuko Yamagata⁶⁹ (Yamagata, interview 2007), a 93-year-old *Nisei*, described the services:

We had lots of *hoji* for my grandparents back in Japan, and it was funny because we [referring to herself and her brother] have never met our grandparents in Japan. We had a couple for my mother's side and a few for my father's side. Also, actually I enjoyed the *hoji* because we could stop work early and plus that was a time we could enjoy something different for dinner.



Picture 3.5 Beach rock headstone in Kona



Picture 3.6 Headstone in Japan (John F. Embree Collection, Cornell)

Several accounts provided by *Nisei* suggest that *hoji* had a secular side. For instance, according to Shizuko Yamagata (Yamagata, interview 2007):

The *hoji* (service) would always make my mother cry because according to her the *hoji* would always bring back memories of family back in Japan. *Hoji* for my mother was happy and sad: sad because she knew she would never go back to her homeland. My father was different: he never said much but you could tell in his voice and his face that he really missed Japan. So in fact my father went to these memorial services without any complaints. So I guess these memorial services really helped him deal with being the only family here.

It was not uncommon for *Issei* to hold memorial services for their deceased parents who had remained in Japan. Through my research it became clear that the majority of *Issei* held *hoji* because the memorial services were a way to communicate with, and offer appreciation to, one's parents in the afterlife, despite the fact that they were far from home. In other cases, *hoji* were a part of the *Issei*'s Japanese-ness, which they needed to maintain because the homeland was too far away and had been left so long ago.

The Butsudan: Japanese Buddhist Altars

Buddhism was not practiced only in the temples: it was also practiced in each household. No matter how financially constrained a family might be, they made sure to construct a *butsudan* (a Japanese Buddhist altar) for their home. The ownership of a *butsudan* was so tied to their Japanese identity that not having a *butsudan* was considered impossible. This symbol of their religion was placed in the entrance to their homes and played an important part in their everyday lives. Through the act of praying and laying out offerings each day, they were able to establish a strong connection to their cultural heritage and to maintain their ethnic identity over a long period.

The basic purpose of a *butsudan* is to house the image of the Buddha and the family members' *ihai*. The *ihai* is a flat piece of wood, approximately half an inch thick, six inches high, and two inches wide. Upon one's death, a *kaimyo* (new name) is given and this is written in *kanji* (Japanese letters) on the front of the *ihai*. The family surname, given name, and date of birth and death of the deceased were written on the back of the *ihai* in English.

The *butsudan* was purchased from a temple and was usually placed near the entrance of the living room, so that extended family members, close friends, and guests could pay their respects to it. Several *Nisei* informants suggested that during the *Issei* period the customary first order of business upon entering a Japanese family's house was to pay respects to the family *butsudan*. Guests rang the bell lightly once, lit one stick of incense, put their hands together, and bowed for a few seconds. For many *Issei*, once a family member had passed away the *butsudan* became an extremely important object in their daily life—particularly when they were in mourning.

The early *Issei* men and women observed a *butsudan* appreciation ritual twice a day, in the early morning and late evening. This ritual involved a family member kneeling in front of the *butsudan*, and then on an individual and personal level, through meditation and the aroma of the burning incense, communicating with family members who had passed away.

It should be noted, however, that the *butsudan* was not a part of the *Issei*'s daily religious activities in the early years of the *Issei* period, for the reason that the newly arrived Japanese migrant laborers had not yet lost any family members in their new homeland or back in Japan. The majority of the Japanese Buddhist *Nisei* said that the *butsudan* was introduced to them only after one parent passed away. Kiku Kubo (Kubo, interview 2009), a *Nisei*, remembered:

When my father died, we didn't know anything about the Japanese altar, so I remembered the priest came to our house with this little tiny altar—not like the big ones we have these days. It was small and cheap and he set it up and taught us how to ring the bell and put the *senko* and with the *juzu* and all that. ... [It was] lucky the priest taught us how because my mother had little experience with doing these kind of Buddhist things.

In the case of my own family, my great-grandfather passed away when my grandfather was 10 years old. My grandfather was the oldest family member remaining in Kona, so he was responsible for ensuring that the *ihai* was watched over. However, my grandfather never got around to getting a *butsudan* even though he probably had the means to do so later in his life. Instead, the *ihai* was placed on a simple shelf, with beautiful flowers and a bowl with sea sand to hold up the *senko* (incense). Several other *Nisei* mentioned similar situations. For example, Chie Honda (Honda, interview 2008) stated: "We didn't have a *butsudan* and we were so poor,

so my father made us our own *butsudan* when my mother died, from some scrap wood. ... it worked for about 20 years and finally we bought a real one."

Thus for the majority of the *Issei* it was later in life—and particularly when a death occurred—that the *ihai*, along with the *butsudan*, and *ohakamairi*, became an important feature of their Japanese Buddhist religious practices. It was at such times that the priest educated the community about essential Japanese Buddhist spiritual beliefs. A *Nisei* informant, echoing several others, stated: "Learning from the priest was probably a better way to learn about Buddhism than from my parents, who didn't know anything about Buddhism but just believed, with no questions. ... So, for me it was a good experience" (Anonymous 8, interview 2008).

Several *Nisei* women described different *butsudan* rituals that their family practiced on a daily basis when a husband or a wife had passed away. Some *Issei* survivors spent a lot of time before the *butsudan*, in mourning. For example, every day before dinner *gohan* (rice) and water were offered at the *butsudan*, and in many cases this practice lasted for years. In many homes, the *gohan* was returned to the pot after dinner, to avoid wasting precious food. Many also read the *okyo* every day, and it was not uncommon for some to read the sutra once in the morning and once in the afternoon. Shizuko Yamagata (Yamagata, interview 2007) stated: "Every day we burned a stick of *senko* but we didn't read the *okyo* much, maybe once or twice a year." Other participants said that only on special occasions was food offered to the *butsudan*. They also stated that they felt spiritually connected with their parents through the burning of incense while meditating. For the most part, they stressed that the *butsudan* was a way for their parents to mourn at home.

In regard to the New Year's period, the *butsudan* doors were closed on the last night of the year in order to focus attention on the *Kami* (god). The next day, the *butsudan* doors were reopened. On the first or the second day of the New Year, during *oshogatsu* (the celebration of the New Year), *mochi tsuki* (making rice cakes) took place. The preparation of the *mochi* (rice cakes) usually occurred in the morning. Once prepared, a double stack of very large *mochi kagami*, approximately three or four times the usual size, was offered to the gods, being placed on the *butsudan* and the *kamidana* (Shinto altar). *Mochi* and various other foods were offered to the *kamidana*, but only *mochi* was given to the *butsudan*.

Ohakamairi: Ritual Attendance at the Buddhist Cemetery

Ohakamairi (attending a Buddhist cemetery) was second only to meditating at the household *butsudan* as the most vital ritual for the *Issei* Buddhists. For some *Issei* who had experienced an early death in the family *ohakamairi* was a weekly ritual—and for some it was even practiced daily. Shizuko Yamagata (Yamagata, interview 2007) recalled: “We would go to *ohakamairi* often. My mother used to put flowers and burn the *senko* on my father’s grave every week. Also, my mother really believed that going to *ohakamairi* was a spiritual thing, that she really believed that their spirits were somehow watching us.” Another *Nisei* stated: “I don’t really know if there is an afterlife but the reason I go there [*ohakamairi*] is because putting flowers on my parent’s grave is a sign of appreciation and respect” (Anonymous 8, interview 2008).

Some *Issei* spent as much as an hour reciting the *okyo* at the gravesite. They purchased expensive flowers and *senko*, and spent time every week cleaning and washing the gravestone area. For others, lighting a stick of *senko*, placing flowers, and putting their hands together while bowing for a few seconds were enough. Many believers performed *ohakamairi* at least once a week, out of respect for their departed loved ones.

The cemetery or the graveyard was located near the temple, but, as mentioned in the previous section, the Hongwanji satellite temples eventually closed and the cemetery at the main temple in Kealakekua became the central cemetery for followers of this temple. Although some feared that when the satellite temples closed the family graves located on the temple site would cease to be visited, few families decided to disentomb their family graves and move them to the main temple. In the case of my own family, both my great-grandfather and great-grandmother were buried in a Japanese cemetery in Holualoa. A few years ago my aunt, who was living in Honolulu on the island of Oahu, wanted to exhume the family grave and move it to the Kona Daifukuji temple. My father would not allow her to do so because he believed it would anger his grandparents and bring misfortune upon the family.

As mentioned in the section on funerals, families would upgrade the headstones of their relatives when they could. Each time they made sure to clearly write the names in both Japanese kanji and Roman alphabet, as well as to write the address of their home in Japan. It was important for the *Issei* that the grave stones had these elements because they wanted to make sure their descendants would know their roots, as well as in hopes that their descendants would one day actually visit their home village in Japan.

Obon: The Return of the Dead

Obon is a Japanese Buddhist custom of honoring the spirits of deceased ancestors that has evolved into a festival during which people return to the ancestral family home to visit and clean their ancestors' graves. During this holiday, the spirits of ancestors are purported to revisit the *butsudan* (household altars). This spiritual event has been celebrated in Japan for more than 500 years and traditionally includes a dance known as *Bon Odori*. For the *Issei*, returning to their Japanese hometowns and visiting the family grave during the *Obon* season was not possible, so instead they visited the graves of their family members who had died in Hawaii. In addition, with the rest of the community they organized an *Obon* event in which everyone participated. For them, this was a day when they could practice traditional Japanese customs, including dance, music, food, and costume-wearing. *Obon* was an important event for the *Issei*, not simply because of the spiritual aspect, but also as a way of showing their children the customs of their homeland.

In Kona District the *Obon* season is usually in the later part of August, and it lasts for three days. Similar to the practices in Japan, when marking this festival the *Issei* Japanese community in Kona would wear traditional *yukata* (light cotton *kimonos*). One particular feature of the festival that increased the *Issei*'s connection with their homeland was the food stalls (*yatai*) that were erected, which sold traditional Japanese food. My grandfather used to talk about *Obon* a lot when I was in high school. He spoke repeatedly about all the different kinds of Japanese food, like *yakitori* (grilled chicken) and *nishime* (Japanese stir fry), that was prepared for *Obon*.

The *Bon Odori* dance was the main event of the festival. Miki Sato (Sato, interview 2008) recalled:

This was back in the mid-1930s. People lined up in a circle around a high wooden scaffold made especially for the festival, called a *yagura*. Before, in the old days, the *yagura*⁷⁰ was big and tall—not like these days—and we had so much *chochin* [lanterns] and the feeling was different back then—everybody was into it, it was an exciting event. The music was also different, we had people coming from Japan, outer island like people from Honolulu to come play the big *taiko* (Japanese drum). Of course, what I miss the most was the traditional Japanese kimono—in those days almost everyone wore a kimono.

Along with several *Nisei* informants, John Embree has confirmed that the *kumi* and friends from outside the *kumi* donated the beautiful *chochin* that hung on the *yagura* during *Obon*. The *kumi* and *fujinkai*, together

with other friends who were not members of these organizations, were involved in the construction of the *yagura* and *yatai* (food stalls). On the next day, the same people would clean up. Matsuyo Hayakawa⁷¹ (Hayakawa, interview 2009), an 87-year-old N2 *Nisei*, recalled: “*Obon* was a [Japanese] community event which was sponsored by the members of the community. If you had a lot of money you gave a lot, and if you had a little you gave a little. Everyone to some degree gave to support the temples and these events.” Hayakawa also recalled that the amount of funds that were donated to the “church” was reported publicly in temple newsletters, “So everyone knew how much you gave. So if you were rich and only gave a little bit then it didn’t look good for you, you know what I mean?”

As with other Buddhist rituals, because they were first-generation immigrants the *Issei* had no family ancestors in Kona, and therefore they had little direct connection with the meaning of the *Bon* rituals. Nevertheless, some *Nisei* recalled that their parents recollected memories of their homeland and past family members during the *Bon* festival. One informant stated: “*Obon* was one of the times that my parents spoke about family back in Japan” (Anonymous 8, interview 2008). For the majority of the *Issei*, it was a time of socializing with their fellow Japanese Buddhist community members.

Fujinkai (*Buddhist Women’s Associations*)

Overview

Throughout the religious rituals and ceremonies that have been described in the foregoing pages, *fujinkai*, associations of Buddhist women, undertook various collective temple and community duties. These women’s groups had an effective and dramatic impact on the development of the Japanese coffee farming community. Not only did they provide a socially acceptable way for women to spend time outside of the coffee farms, but they also provided many opportunities for networking and the planning of events, which would help to maintain the Japanese ethnic identity within the community. Through the *fujinkai*, women were able to consolidate their individual families into a strong, coherent community. In Kona District the members of these associations were historically elderly female members of the Kona Hongwanji and the Kona Daifukuji temple *sangha* (associations). Their activities included preparing and serving traditional

meals (called *otoki*) after major services and funerals, and participating in the cleaning and upkeep (*omigaki*) of the temples. Although they have occasionally been misunderstood, and even labeled as subservient and outdated, the *fujinkai* are in fact an essential source of vitality for temple *sangha* (associations), particularly in terms of the preservation of Japanese American Buddhist traditional cultural heritage.

Like the other associations (such as *kumi*), the *fujinkai* played a crucial role when a member of one of the Buddhist temples passed away. The main function of the *fujinkai* at such times was to ensure that the families of the deceased were well taken care of during the ritual ceremonies. They also helped to prepare the corpse for the funeral ritual, which involved cleaning and dressing the body.

Other *fujinkai* activities included significant charitable works, which included the implementation of numerous projects for religious and language education purposes, as well as raising money for particular causes. For example, during his research fieldwork in Kona, John Embree observed several monthly meetings⁷² of *kumicho* (heads of the *kumi*), in which the *fujinkai* collected \$0.25 from each family in order to send comfort bags to Japanese soldiers in China.

When members of the Kona Hongwanji and the Kona Daifukuji temple were interviewed, they described the *fujinkai* members as strong, intelligent, and hardworking women who supported their temples. Several unpublished documents⁷³ relating to the history of the temples in Kona District attest to the *fujinkai*'s cohesive connection with the Japanese community in Kona. Drawing on these documents, and my own fieldwork, in the two sub-sections that follow, I will focus on the *fujinkai* in the two main temples present in Kona.

The Kona Hongwanji Fujinkai

The Hongwanji *fujinkai* was the first *fujinkai* to be established in the territory of Hawaii. It was involved in developing various start-up projects, including the creation of religious schools and Japanese-language schools. The *fujinkai* also collected monetary donations to purchase educational religious books (in Japanese) for the temple community. The *fujinkai* members worked hard and endured numerous challenges in order to ensure that a Japanese Buddhist temple would exist for the following generations.

Several temple documents,⁷⁴ as well as a number of personal interviews, reveal that the *fujinkai* was founded around 1900, at the time of the first

priest Gyoshin Sato's tenure. Under the leadership of his wife, Natsuno Sato, the *fujinkai* raised funds for the purchase of temple-related possessions, and to build a Japanese school dormitory. One document⁷⁵ states: "In April of 1904, the *fujinkai* donated 202 dollars to the Japan Red Cross."

During the term of the next priest, Jyoei Abe, "The *fujinkai* members helped build a teaching cottage and a satellite temple in Honaunau. The *fujinkai* provided valuable instruction to younglings [youth], as well as introducing practical skills, such as sewing." In 1915, under the leadership of Matsue Murota, wife of the fourth priest, religious education expanded. As Shizuko Teshima (Teshima, interview 2006) states, Murota organized "the *Okox* or *Nembutsu* study groups in five districts to perpetuate the *Nembutsu* teachings. Furthermore, the *fujinkai* members were able to raise and contribute 400 dollars to the *Kyodan* in order to construct a stone gateway marking the temple's entrance."

During the early period of the Hongwanji *fujinkai* in Kona District, the members met once a week at their local satellite temple and once a month at the main Kona Hongwanji temple in Kealahou. During the *Issei* period the president of the *fujinkai* performed most of the key duties associated with the association. These included arranging schedules, collecting donations, and performing various temple duties. As mentioned in the previous section, in this early period it was usually the priest's wife who was the acting president of the women's group. So, in addition to her normal family duties, she also had temple obligations to fulfill.

Due to the prominent role of the priests' wives, it is perhaps not surprising that during the *Issei* period the *fujinkai* appear to have exhibited an efficient working relationship with the temple priests. Documents from both the Kona Hongwanji and the Kona Daifukuji temples confirmed that the *fujinkai* and the priest worked together on the development of various projects.

The Daifukuji Zen Soto-Shu Fujinkai

The historical documents that record the Kona Daifukuji temple's early development contain very little data concerning the *fujinkai*. Therefore, this section will rely on the narratives recounted by *Nisei* in the community.

Overseen by its first priest and his wife, the Kona Daifukuji temple founded its *fujinkai* in 1915. This *fujinkai* was established much later than the Kona Hongwanji *fujinkai*. Like the Kona Hongwanji, the Kona

Daifukuji *fujinkai* meetings were held once a week, except during the coffee-harvesting season, when no meetings took place. In the beginning the presidents of the *fujinkai* were the priests' wives.

Although it was a much smaller organization, the *fujinkai* at the Kona Daifukuji temple had similar experiences to those of its counterpart at the Kona Hongwanji temple. For instance, the *fujinkai* supported key projects, including fund-raising projects for language and religious education. According to temple documents: "The third priest Gikoo Kanbara and his wife arrived at Kona in 1921. They soon organized the *shojokai* (young girls' organization) and opened a Sunday school. The *shojokai* members eventually became active *fujinkai* members. Mrs. Kanbara promoted education for the ladies and children. She also taught crafts, sewing, embroidery, and *Zoka* (flower arranging). The *fujinkai* became active under Mrs. Kanbara's leadership."⁷⁶

Shizuko Teshima (Teshima, interview 2006) told me:

Our church was kinda lucky because we weren't big like the [Kona] Hongwanji. So all we had to do was to make sure our little church was taken care of. We only had one main church, so I think that in the beginning all of the money was focused on this (Kona Daifukuji) church. Our *fujinkai* was similar to the other [Kona] Hongwanji, like we helped out the families when somebody passed away, or we would have fund-raising events for different projects. Also, most of the *fujinkai* members belonged to the church choir.

The Kona Daifukuji temple retained closer ties with the *jinja*s (shrines)—both Shinto and Inari shrines—and with secular Japanese cultural events than did the Hongwanji *fujinkai*. Temple events were planned and arranged by the *fujinkai*, with the financial support of the majority of the Japanese community. One example of such an event was the New Year celebration, which included *Hatsumode* and prayer services. With the assistance of the *fujinkai*, the Daifukuji temple also celebrated the New Year with *mochi tsuki*, which attracted members from other temples. Shizuko Teshima (Teshima, interview 2006) remembered: "When we were little we used to have *mochi tsuki* every year at the church. It was a happy time because everybody got together and everybody was having a good time. I remember we used to cook the *mochi* on the charcoal and eat it with *kinako* or *shoyu*. It tasted so good, not like the *mochi* today all made by machines."

Fujinkai: In Summary

Being a member of a *fujinkai* involved having horizontal ties with other members in the community: for example, through the small-scale bartering system it operated for trading physical labor and various kinds of produce among farmers. Other forms of interaction were less mercantile: because the *Issei* possessed no immediate or extended family, women turned to the *fujinkai* for support and society. The *fujinkai* provided women with an opportunity for socializing within the temple's collective group and with other *fujinkai* temple organizations on the Big Island of Hawaii.

As regards the *fujinkai*'s contribution to the rest of the community, this should not be underestimated. As has been said, the *fujinkai* promoted religious and Japanese-language education, supported the cultural and organizational development of the temples, and pursued other activities that strengthened Buddhist practices and fellowship. The *fujinkai* established community programs to ensure that the temples would pass on the ethnic cultural heritage to the next generation of Japanese Buddhists in Kona.

Religious and Social Communities: Conclusion

This chapter has sought to reveal the ways in which the *Issei* were able to maintain their Japanese identity despite the harsh economic conditions and systematic marginalization they faced, through the creation of social groups and the practice of their Buddhist and Shinto religions. *Kumi*, which were similar to those organizations found in the neighborhoods of Japan, and *kenjinkai*, organizations formed by Japanese immigrant men as a way to create a support network that could substitute for the lack of family ties, were two ways in which the isolated coffee farmers were able to create and maintain connections with their neighbors and support each other through the hard times. The practicing of their Buddhist and Shinto religions inside their homes, at the designated places of worship, during important life events, such as weddings and funerals, as well as during traditional religious events, also contributed to the formation of a close-knit community, and to the maintenance of their Japanese identity. In addition, Buddhism added another layer to the lives of the *Issei* and *Nisei* through the formation of temple *fujinkai*, which aided in networking among the families, and which saw to the education of the next generation in not only the Japanese language but also in traditional religious and cultural Japanese practices. The strength and importance of these communities in

the lives of the *Issei* and *Nisei* were only possible due in part to the large numbers of Japanese immigrants who settled in Kona. This concentration of an immigrant population contributed to the prolonging of assimilation into mainstream American culture, as the immigrants were able to form social communities similar to those in Japan that placed importance on, and reinforced, Japanese values and social practices. This concentration also enabled the immigrants to openly carry out their religious practices—practices that were deeply rooted within their identities as Japanese—without intense scrutiny from other non-Japanese neighbors. This in turn led to dualistic cultures among the *Issei*, who were able to fully participate in their Japanese community, while at the same time, despite the limited exposure they had to American culture, they also managed to obtain the ability to utilize American practices when this was needed.

NOTES

1. The *Issei* farmers of Kona District organized themselves into local cooperatives known as *kumi* or *kumiai*, which were perhaps the most significant social groups for the purpose of creating ethnic solidarity.
2. *Kenjinkai* associations were extended groups of men from the same region in Japan. Early *kenjinkai* consisted mainly of Japanese immigrants from the southern and rural parts of Japan.
3. A *ken* or prefecture in Japan is the equivalent of a state in the United States. Therefore, a *kenjinkai* is an association, *kai*, made up of people, *jin*, from the same prefecture, *ken*.
4. Masaaki Kodama, "Meijiiki Amerika Gasshukoku heno Nihonjin Imin [The Japanese Emigration to the United States of America in the *Meiji* Era]," *Shakai-Keizai Shigaku* [Social Economic History] 47 (1978): 4–32. Kodama states that 80 percent of Japanese laborers who emigrated to the United States did so from these areas.
5. As I was growing up in this community I witnessed the solidarity among the members of the *kenjinkai*. A few years ago I went back and revisited the Fukuoka *kenjinkai* and saw that the next generation had assumed the leadership positions, and the majority of the members were very active in preserving the Japanese American heritage.
6. Bill Hosokawa, *Nisei: The Quiet Americans* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1969), 155.
7. *Ibid.*, page 55.
8. Ruth N. Matsuda, "The Japanese Tanomoshi," *Social Progress in Hawaii* 3 (1937): 16–19. In the Territory of Hawaii, *kenjinkai* members agreed to contribute a specified amount of money, approximately \$5–10 per month.

For the majority of the Japanese farming community in Kona, \$5 was a lot of money, and was considered beyond their financial capabilities, and so they did not participate in the *tanomoshi* system.

9. Ivan Light, "Immigrant and Ethnic Enterprise in North America," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 7 (1984): 195–216. This study examines the advantages enjoyed by immigrant and ethnic minority groups in the United States. In twentieth-century America, a significantly greater number of foreign-born ethnic and minority groups were involved in small businesses, compared to disadvantaged native minorities.
10. Kihei Ogawa, refer to note 70 in Chap. 2.
11. The *kumi* will be described in the following section.
12. *Koden*: a monetary gift given to the family of the deceased.
13. Eileen H. Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity: The Nisei Generation in Hawaii* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994). Tamura makes reference to the *kenjinkai* community support group in the Honolulu Japanese community.
14. John F. Embree, "Acculturation among the Japanese of Kona, Hawaii," *American Anthropologist* 43, no. 4 (1941).
15. *Kumicho* refers to the head or president of each *kumi*.
16. Yoshi Tanaka, refer to note 19 in Chap. 2.
17. *Kumi* were organized based on geographical proximity. The Kona region is split into many little towns. These towns were situated every couple of miles along the Kona Coffee Belt Road. The *kumi* would be organized according to the towns in which they were situated, and would take their name from that town.
18. The *Eta* (*Burakumin*), who are descendants of outcast communities of the feudal caste system, have long been a persecuted group in Japan and before the *Meiji* Restoration period they suffered legal as well as social discrimination. People from Okinawa prefecture (the Ryukyu Islands) were regarded by the Japanese community in Kona as "not real Japanese." As the present study relied on in-depth personal interviews, in the interest of establishing a good rapport with interviewees I chose to avoid questions and issues pertaining to *Eta* and Okinawans. In addition, the population of Okinawans in Kona District was very small, and therefore would have provided only insignificant insights in relation to drawing any conclusions.
19. John Embree observed several *kumi* meetings and in the process, met with the *kumicho*. John F. Embree, "New and Local Kin Groups among the Japanese Farmers of Kona, Hawaii," *American Anthropologist, New Series* 41, no. 3 (1939b): 400–407.
20. Arthur Murata, refer to note 62 in Chap. 2.
21. Each *kumi* is given a name, which is taken from the area in which they live. Arthur Murata's *kumi* is located near the Waiaha river, thus it is called Waiaha.

22. *Nimono*: vegetables and/or meat simmered in fish or seaweed stock, soy sauce, and sake. *Hijiki*: a brown sea vegetable that is simmered in fish or seaweed stock, soy sauce, and sake, and is usually prepared with soybeans and carrots. *Sekihan*: rice steamed with red adzuki beans, which is usually served for celebrations.
23. After the *Meiji* Restoration a short two-year ban was placed on cremations; however, after the ban was reversed, the practice of burying the dead was still widespread and it was not until the second half of the twentieth century that cremation became the principal form of burial. Itaru Katsuda, *Nihon Souseishi* [A History of Funerals in Japan] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Koubunkan, 2012); Noboro Haga, *Sogi no Rekishi* [A History of Funerals] (Tokyo: Yuzankaku Inc., 1980).
24. On the first day, a few relatives, people from the same prefecture (*kenjinkai* group), close friends, and important members from the *kumi* were invited. In the case of a smaller *kumi*, the entire *kumi* would be invited to the post-wedding party.
25. Kentaro Tanaka, refer to note 23 in Chap. 2.
26. Embree, “New and Local Kin Groups among the Japanese Farmers of Kona, Hawaii.”
27. Embree, “Acculturation among the Japanese of Kona, Hawaii.” See page 8.
28. The destruction of the Shinto shrines is discussed in Chap. 5.
29. Andrew W. Lind, “Assimilation in Rural Hawaii,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 45, no. 2 (1939): 200–214.
30. Jiro Nakano, *Kona Echo: A Biography of Dr. Harvey Saburo Hayashi* (Kealahou: Kona Historical Society, 1990).
31. Yoshie Fukushima, refer to note 7 in Chap. 1.
32. Gladys Fukumitsu (nee Yokoyama), an N3 Nisei, grew up in the heart of the Kona Belt District. Her parents owned a general store where she worked until the 1970s when it closed down. Near the general store was one of the Shinto shrines which was built on the land her family owned. At the age of six she went to Japan for two years with her mother and returned to Kona in 1939 before the war. She was an active member of the Kona Hongwanji Temple.
33. Alfreida Fujita (Kimura), refer to note 87 in Chap. 2.
34. In actuality, the term “picture brides” is not an appropriate one for the brides of many of the *Issei*. Although these marriages were indeed arranged in Japan among families in the same area, in many cases the *Issei* men possessed knowledge of the girls in their neighborhood and, conversely, the girls knew of the men who went to work abroad. It was important for both families that the married couple were from the same place. The choice of bride was based on a consideration of whether the woman was mentally

and physically strong enough to live in Kona under extremely hard conditions. Older men, widows, and widowers were often married quietly by a *nakodo* (go-between). In Kona District, an average of at least two or three bachelors within each *kumi* was viewed as a possible candidate for marriage.

35. Dennis Ogawa, *Kodomo no tame ni* (For the Sake of the Children): *The Japanese American Experience in Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1978); Ronald Takaki, *Pau Hana: Plantation Life and Labor in Hawaii 1835–1920* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983).
36. Sam Morimoto, a 75-year-old N3 *Nisei*, was born in Honolulu and moved to Kona when he was three. He grew up in the Kealahou area in the Kona Coffee Belt. He is an active member of the Kona Daifukuji and a member of his *kumi* group. He worked for the telephone company and also farmed part-time.
37. For example, Bill Hosokawa mentions this in his 1969 book *Nisei: The Quiet Americans*. On several occasions he characterizes the *Issei* and the *Nisei* as possessing *Meiji*-era values. Yasuko Takezawa, *Breaking Silence: Ethnicity and Redress among Japanese American* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Gaku Kinoshita, *US, Hawai'i-born Japanese: Storied Identities of Japanese American Elderly from a Sugar Plantation Community* (New York: Routledge, 2012).
38. This figure was calculated based on the information taken from uncovered old receipts from 1907.
39. As mentioned in the previous section, my great-grandfather Otokichi Abe was married at a Shinto shrine in Honolulu, and later had a post-wedding party in Kona.
40. Miki Sato, refer to note 46 in Chap. 2
41. Miki Yamanaka, an 87-year-old N2 *Nisei*, grew up in the outer area of the Kona Coffee Belt in Holualoa. She now resides in the center of Kona District, Keauhou. She was a housewife, and has held several different part-time jobs over the years. One of her main part-time jobs was picking coffee beans during the coffee season. Mrs. Yamanaka is a semi-active member of the Kona Hongwanji. She was an active member of the *fujinkai* at the temple where she worshipped.
42. Chie Honda, refer to note 88 in Chap. 2
43. Shizuko Teshima, a 99-year-old N2 *Nisei*, is the owner of the Teshima restaurant, which is located next to the Kona Daifukuji Temple. The interviews I conducted with her were conducted in broken Japanese and English. She was eager to provide information about the past and on several occasions invited me to return so that she could provide me with additional information. As a family friend of my grandparents, she was very willing to provide me with assistance in my research. Another reason for

- her generous granting of interviews was her desire for the younger generation to retain a knowledge of the past, and to understand how resilient the *Issei* had been in times of hardship.
44. The word “temple” in this book is used in the same manner as the word “church.” Its meaning indicates not just the building where worship takes place, but also refers to the practitioners and the larger organization.
 45. Masaji Muramoto, “First Year Immigrants to Hawaii & Eugene Van Reed,” in *East Across the Pacific*, ed. Francis Hilary Conroy (Santa Barbara, CA: Clio Press, 1972). Masaji Muramoto has referred to similar experiences in other communities in Hawaii.
 46. In Hawaiian *Mauka* refers to “toward the mountain” and *Makai* “toward the ocean.”
 47. *Seiza* is the Japanese term for the traditional formal way of sitting in Japan. To sit *seiza* style, one first kneels on the floor, folding the legs underneath the thighs while resting the buttocks on the heels. The ankles are turned outward as the tops of the feet are lowered so that, in a slight “V” shape, the tops of the feet are flat on the floor and the big toes are overlapped, while the buttocks are lowered all the way down.
 48. Buddhist Church of San Francisco History Committee, Buddhist Church of San Francisco, 1898–1978 (San Francisco, CA, 1978); Kenryo M. Kumata, Notes of Conference with Attorney Kido (San Francisco, CA: BCA Collection, January 6, 1942).
 49. California Young Buddhist League, Minutes of the Emergency Meeting of the Buddhist Churches of America (San Francisco, CA: BCA Collection, February 15, 1942).
 50. *Sangha* (literally a “group, assembly”) is usually used in one of two ways: it refers either to the community of ordained monks and nuns (*bhikkhu-sangha* and *bhikkhuni-sangha*) or to the community of “noble ones” (*ariya-sangha*)—persons who have attained at least stream-entry, the first stage of awakening.
 51. Kona Hongwanji Mission, Centennial Celebration 1897–1997.
 52. *Kyodan* is the word used to describe members of the temple.
 53. Louise H. Hunter, *Buddhism in Hawaii: Its Impact on a Yankee Community* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1971).
 54. Yusen Kashiwahara, *Japanese Buddhist History: The Modern Age* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1998); Peter Hopkirk, *Foreign Devils on the Silk Road: The Search for the Lost Cities and Treasures of Chinese Central Asia* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1980). In 1902 Otani Kozui was the 22nd abbot of the Nishi Hongwanji sub-temple of Hongwanji Jodo Shin shū Buddhism in Kyoto, Japan. He was known for making expeditions to Buddhist sites in Central Asia. Between 1902 and 1910 he financed three expeditions to Central Asia. After his father

- Myonyo's death, he succeeded as abbot of the Nishi Hongwanji in 1903. While he continued to sponsor expeditions, he devoted himself to the modernization of the Hongwanji temple. His activities, however, saddled his temple with huge amounts of debt. Moreover, his purchase of an extravagant and luxurious house in Kobe with temple funds created a financial scandal that forced him to abdicate in 1914.
55. Toshio Nakamoto, a 79-year-old N3 *Nisei*, grew up in the Captain Cook area. He is a retired Hawaii Department of Agricultural Loan Division administrator. He was the president of the Kona Hongwanji Temple from 1974 to 1986. He was also an active member of his *kumi* group.
 56. Yumiko Kondo, an N2 *Nisei*, grew up on a coffee farm in the center of the Kona Coffee Belt, in Kealahou. She grew up in a large family of five brothers and four sisters. She worked at several jobs in the tourist industry, while raising three children and farming five acres part-time with her husband. She is an active member of the Kona Hongwanji and was a long-time member of the *fujinkai*.
 57. "History of the Buddhist Women's Association in Hawaii," Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, accessed June 23, 2011, <http://hawaii.bwa.org/history.htm>
 58. Six acres of land were purchased from a Hawaiian family. The 75th Anniversary, Kona Daifukuji Soto Mission, August 26, 1990.
 59. The 75th Anniversary, Kona Daifukuji Soto Mission, August 26, 1990.
 60. *Obon* is a festival of the dead, when those who have passed away are honored. *Hoji* is a memorial service for the dead.
 61. Yoshi Tanaka (Tanaka, interview 2008), a *Nisei*, stated that in the past the relationship with a few priests was so open that "it was easy to ask the priest to stop by our house to pray or bless the party."
 62. Comments from a focus group session in 2006 with six *Nisei* women after a Daifukuji Zen-Shu *fujinkai* meeting.
 63. Masako Agena and Eiko Yoshinaga, "'Daishi-Do'-A Form of Religious Movement," *Social Process in Hawaii*. V. 7 (November 1941): 15–20. Agena and Yoshinaga's research has confirmed similar accounts of supernatural religious powers. They claim that these religious rituals were practiced in the majority of small rural communities in Hawaii.
 64. On the West Coast the Buddhist priests were referred to as a reverend instead of as a priest; however, in Hawaii the term "priest" was used.
 65. Kobo-Daishi, Kūkai, also known posthumously as Kobo-Daishi, 774–835, was a Japanese monk, civil servant, scholar, poet, artist, and founder of the Shingon or "True Word" school of Buddhism. Shingon followers usually refer to him by the honorific titles O-Daishi-sama and Henjo-Kongo.

66. *Shojin ryori* is a strict vegetarian diet that is observed during the 49-day mourning period. No fish or meat is permitted.
67. Kiku Kubo, refer to note 71 in Chap. 2
68. Digging the grave plot was an extremely difficult task because the Kona District is mainly formed of hard volcanic rock. My grandfather said that it took several people, a few jack hammers, and in some cases TNT to dig the grave.
69. Shizuko Yamagata, refer to note 76 in Chap. 2
70. The *yagura* was usually the bandstand for the musicians and singers of the *Bon* music. Some dances proceed clockwise and some dances proceed counter-clockwise around the *yagura*. At times, people face the *yagura* and move toward and away from it.
71. Matsuyo Hayakawa, refer to note 32 in Chap. 2.
72. The *kumicho* (head of each *kumi*) would get together each month for a meeting to update each other on *kumi* activities and happenings.
73. Kona Hongwanji Mission, Centennial Celebration 1897–1997; The 80th Daifukuji Fujinkai, Anniversary 1915–1985.
74. Kona Hongwanji Mission, Centennial Celebration 1897–1997.
75. Ibid.
76. The 80th Daifukuji Fujinkai, Anniversary 1915–1985.

The *Nisei* Experience

INTRODUCTION

This chapter looks at the lives of the *Nisei*, the children of the *Issei*, and the development and configuration of their ethnic identity. I situate the research site and provide the reader with a discussion of the delayed assimilation and development of a dual cultural identity among the *Nisei*, which arose due to the high concentration of Japanese living in Kona. The chapter also provides an analysis of the labor and economic conditions, and interracial dynamics in Kona. It touches on the challenges the *Nisei* faced in an ethnically marginalized area during the years of the Great Depression and World War II. Factors such as the work environment, interracial entanglements, the creation of extended families, and independence from white American control are analyzed, in order to present an understanding of how the *Nisei* were able to exist comfortably in a dualistic Japanese and American culture.

The chapter utilizes assimilation theories to address the following main research question: to what extent did the *Nisei* maintain their Japanese culture and what were the contributing factors that facilitated a need to retain their Japanese cultural heritage? As I will show in this chapter, assimilation of the *Nisei* in Kona did not take place as rapidly as it did for other Japanese communities in the United States, such as those on the West Coast. As I discuss, the barriers to the assimilation of the *Nisei* in Kona are related to their cultural background, the social environment, ethnic community formation, family, and religion. These factors invite further

research sub-questions, including the following: To what extent was there a willingness on the part of Japanese Americans, and an opportunity, to give up a distinct identity so they could become mainstream Americans? Why did the *Nisei* continue to farm coffee? In this chapter I seek to answer these questions.

THE *NISEI*

Introduction

For the most part, scholars¹ write about the *Nisei* as if they were one group. However, the *Nisei* interviewed for this book were of very differing ages: a *Nisei*, being a child of Japanese immigrants to Hawaii, could have been born as early as the late 1880s or as late as 1964—an 84-year time span. The first Japanese *Issei* in Hawaii arrived in large numbers shortly after 1882, while the last large group of *Issei* arrived in Hawaii in 1924: the year in which the Immigration Act severely limited Japanese immigration to Hawaii. In this context it is not surprising that, depending on the particular *Nisei* (i.e., depending on their age), their experiences were very dissimilar. As one can imagine, the numerous events, changes, and developments that took place over this 84-year time frame make it impossible to characterize the *Nisei* as one group. For this reason, in this chapter the *Nisei* are categorized into three separate groups: early, middle, and late *Nisei*.²

Early Nisei (N1): Born Between the Late 1880s and 1906

The first *Nisei* (N1) are the Hawaiian-born children of those *Issei* couples³ who arrived between the mid-1880s⁴ and 1906. In this period a number of Japanese couples arrived in Kona to work as hired hands for the elite white Americans. The jobs they found were, for instance, as in-house maids, cooks, and grounds keepers.⁵ It is the children of these couples who make up the N1 category.

In general, the N1 *Nisei* were closer to their Japanese cultural heritage than those in the two other groups (N2 and N3) as they were more likely to develop closer ties to their parents' native country. Although they usually received a public education until the eighth grade, they also took after-school Japanese-language classes. Partly as a result of this schooling many of the N1 *Nisei* were bilingual: capable of reading, writing, speaking, and

listening in both English and Japanese. As a result of this fluency, they were able to obtain higher paying jobs, such as working as translators at the coffee mills, various hotel service positions, and other tourist-related jobs.

The N1 *Nisei* experienced various difficulties and some successes. Because they were born at a time when the Japanese community was still being established, life was difficult, with many uncertainties being faced by the newly established community. The children of the first Japanese migrants to arrive in Kona were often confronted with inequity and stigma. Andrew Lind explained that instead of living among kinsfolk (as they would have in Japan), to each of whom one owed specific duties and from whom one might expect definite privileges, the immigrant in Hawaii was surrounded by strangers, competitors, and potential enemies. On the other hand, however, being the earliest generation of *Nisei* gave them, for a short time at least, some special advantages, as well as a degree of respect accorded them by later generations.⁶ For example, they had access to better farming land, more of which was available to the earlier generation, and they were respected by the later generations because they were seen as “pioneers.” When they made suggestions, other people listened.⁷

In terms of economic activities, many of the N1 *Nisei* in Kona chose to follow in their parents’ footsteps, continuing to farm coffee. They did so for a variety of reasons that are discussed later. The coffee market was volatile through this period, with usually unstable prices, and it brought the N1 *Nisei* both prosperity and penury. From 1923 until the price peak of 1926 the coffee price was high. In this period numerous farmers among the N1 *Nisei* began to purchase land and, in many cases, built fairly decent houses. In 1929, however, the effects of the Great Depression resulted in a fall in the price of coffee to virtually nothing. This led to high unemployment and extreme hardship for the majority of the N1 *Nisei* coffee farmers in the area. The price of coffee remained low for the next decade. Thereafter, the Pacific War against Japan broke out creating even greater misery for the Japanese community in Kona and for the N1 *Nisei*.

The Middle Nisei (N2): Born Between 1907 and 1924

The N2 *Nisei* is the middle group. They were born in the 18-year period between the 1907 Gentlemen’s Agreement and the mid-1920s. Of the three groups this was the largest, due to the arrival of a large number of Japanese *Issei* women after the passing of the Gentlemen’s Agreement,

which, within a few years, dramatically increased the birthrate. Although most of the N2 *Nisei* attended Japanese school, the majority of them lacked the ability to write in Japanese. However, in terms of spoken Japanese some *Nisei* informants believed that the Japanese-speaking proficiency of the N2 *Nisei* was of quite a high level.⁸ For example, during my yearly summer visits back to Kona, the conversations I had with my own grandfather, an N2 *Nisei*, were mostly held in Japanese. My grandfather was usually very happy to speak Japanese.

Similar to the N1 *Nisei*, the average education level the majority of the N2 *Nisei* attained was eighth grade; however, a few graduated from high school—although many could not afford the further costs of higher education, such as college.

In regard to the assimilation of the N2 *Nisei*, the majority of respondents suggested that the level of assimilation achieved by the Japanese in Kona increased with the N2 *Nisei*. For example, during World War II some joined the US military to fight against Japan, working as interpreters. As will be discussed later, others fought as US soldiers in Europe in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the 100th Battalion. On the other hand, data suggests that these *Nisei* were dis-assimilated in regard to mainstream American culture. They were, however, more assimilated in regard to local Hawaiian culture.

The N2 *Nisei* in Kona District usually identified themselves as Japanese—only in rare cases identifying as Japanese Americans. For example, my grandfather, who was born in Kona and lived there his entire life, would always refer to himself as “Japanese,” instead of as Japanese American.⁹ This discussion of the formation of Japanese ethnic identity will continue later in the chapter.

The Late Nisei (N3): Born Between 1925 and the 1960s

The last group, the N3 *Nisei*, were born between the 1920s and the 1960s. As previously mentioned, the last *Issei* to enter the United States legally did so in 1924. One such immigrant was Mary Katayama’s¹⁰ father: he immigrated to America when he was 13 years old, in 1924. Mary was born in 1937.

The Japanese-language proficiency of this group was virtually nonexistent. Mary Katayama, an N3 *Nisei* (Katayama, interview 2009), informed me: “I never heard my father speak Japanese.” Mark Hashimoto¹¹ (Hashimoto, interview 2009), an N3 *Nisei*, stated: “The *Nisei* that belong

to this group, we can't speak Japanese or we are not too familiar with Japanese culture because we are the late *Nisei*. Actually we are very similar to the *Sansei*." The N3 *Nisei* therefore used English rather than Japanese as a means of communication with their *Sansei* children at home. Because their Japanese-language proficiency was not adequate enough, the N3 *Nisei* were not useful as interpreters for the US military in the war with Japan. However, some of them did fight in the US military forces that were active in Europe.

This group of *Nisei* had better higher educational opportunities due to developing social changes and financial stability. For example, Robert and Chie Ito, both N3 *Nisei*, had the opportunity to graduate from the University of Hawaii.

Assimilation to the local and American mainstream society was greater among this group. However, similar to the other groups, many of the N3 *Nisei* interviewed nevertheless held on to a desire to retain their Japanese cultural heritage (Table 4.1).

Dual Citizenship

The majority of the *Nisei* in Kona district possessed dual citizenship. Conflicting nationality laws made ethnic Japanese born in the United States before 1924 citizens of both the United States and Japan. The United States is one of only a few countries that applies the principle of *jus soli* (right of soil), which means that anyone who is born in the United States automatically becomes a citizen of the country. Under Japanese law at the time, which applied the principle of *jus sanguinis* (right of blood),

Table 4.1 The assimilation of the three *Nisei* groups

<i>Nisei</i> group	Date of birth	Language	Education	Japanese culture	Name	Religious or secular?	Japanese identity
N1	1880–1906	Japanese/ Hawaiian	8th grade	High	Japanese	Religious	Japanese
N2	1907–1924	Japanese/ English	8th grade/ high school	Medium/ high	Japanese	Religious	Japanese
N3	1925–1960s	English	High school/ university	Low	English, with a Japanese middle name	Secular or Religious	Pure Japanese or Japanese

citizenship was granted to children of the country's male citizens, no matter where the children were born.¹² Under Japanese law, it was mandatory to register newborn infants at the Japanese consulate within 14 days.¹³ Japan revised its nationality laws in 1916, granting *Nisei* the right to renounce their Japanese citizenship if they desired. The Japanese government further amended its nationality laws in 1924, to permit any person of Japanese ancestry born in the United States to expatriate in favor of Japanese citizenship at any age.

In Kona the process of applying for Japanese citizenship for a newborn was fairly simple: a letter and a birth certificate were sent to the Japanese consulate, located in Honolulu. These documents were later registered and filed with the family registry in Japan at the local prefectural government office, where they can still be accessed today. The family registry is known as the *kosekitohon* (*family register*). Upon death, or when a family member marries and moves to another family, their name is moved to the family's *josekitohon* (*a register of names removed from the family register*).

Eventually, most American *Nisei* relinquished their Japanese citizenship. The reasons for doing so depended on the person's situation. For the most part, the majority of those interviewed said the main reason for this was the loss of their connection to Japan due to the war—a connection that was never reestablished.

EDUCATION: THE FIRST ENCOUNTER IN THE ASSIMILATION PROCESS

An Introduction to Public Schools and Private Schools in Hawaii and Kona

Andrew Lind wrote that in 1909 there were 308 Japanese students (11.5 percent of the Japanese population in Kona) enrolled in the public school system. Within the next ten years the enrollment more than doubled, to 741 students, and by 1935 the figure was 1483 students (28.6 percent of the Japanese population).¹⁴ The first *Nisei* (N1) students to attend public schools did so up to eighth-grade level.

It is worth noting that the public schools in the Territory of Hawaii ranked highly in comparison to those on the mainland. Eileen Tamura explained¹⁵ that in the 1920s the Russell Sage Foundation ranked Hawaii's school system 23rd among the 53 states and territories, just below California. One of the greatest strengths of the public school

system in Hawaii was that educational opportunities were more equitably distributed throughout the entire area of the Territory of Hawaii than in any mainland state, and, therefore, rural areas in Hawaii received a quality education. Thus, it is likely that in Kona District the education system was relatively equal in quality to that in Honolulu.

For the few farmers that were wealthy, private schools in Honolulu were another option for the education of their children. Children might hope to obtain a better education in such schools, where the use of Hawaiian creole (pidgin) English was prohibited. However, not all private schools were accessible to the Japanese community. Punahou School was an all-white private school, where other races were not accepted. The majority of the *Nisei* were attracted to the Mid-Pacific Institute, Iolani School, and the St. Andrews Priory Hawaiian Mission Academy. More than half the students at the Mid-Pacific Institute between the 1920s and the 1940s were ethnic Japanese. In the 1950s, the Mid-Pacific Institute's enrollment was approximately 80 percent ethnic Japanese.

Nisei Experiences of the Public Education System

Early assimilation among the *Nisei* was initiated as they entered the public education system. The students at public schools in Kona were predominately Japanese, together with a few Chinese, Portuguese, and white Americans. This preponderance of Japanese is part of the reason why the assimilation process experienced by the *Nisei* was slower in comparison to that experienced by the Japanese communities on the West Coast of the US mainland and in Honolulu. However, nearly all of the teachers and staff were white elites. These teachers and staff were frequently discontented with the presence of a majority Japanese population. For many young *Nisei*, entering the public education system was the first stage of imposed assimilation, and, in parallel, the beginning of the foundation of their ethnic identity.

The public education system in Kona, which, after Hawaii was transformed into a territory of the United States in 1898, adopted the American educational system, provided the *Nisei* with a chance to interact with people outside the Japanese community, in a culturally diverse setting. During the early period, when the Japanese community was being established, the whites controlled the education system. At first they attempted to regulate the speaking of Japanese, both in class and, in many cases, outside the classroom. Several informants said they were not allowed to speak

Japanese on school grounds, and that breaking the rules in this regard would lead to strict punishment. Yoshi Tanaka (Tanaka, interview 2008), an N2 *Nisei*, remembered:

The teacher used to hate it when we spoke Japanese. I remember I was with my friends at the beach and we were doing things like most people would do at the beach, but of course we spoke all in Japanese and the teacher was at the beach too and she heard me speaking Japanese. The next day when I went to school, she told me if I speak Japanese that means you are not American and you are a Jap and don't come to school again. I think I was seven years old at the time, this was the first time I experienced prejudice. I think the reason why they were mean to us was because we were in the majority—you know, too many Japanese.

Several other informants claimed that they encountered similar experiences with different white teachers. When I was a child, Isamu Oshima¹⁶ said to me that the teachers were so strict they would never speak Japanese at school and if they did they would be in big trouble. In this way, then, the Japanese community's cultural existence was subjected to an intense attack, including outside the classroom. The English-only paradigm was revolting to many young *Nisei* students: they would have preferred a multicultural environment. In their old age, the *Nisei* today attribute their early disinterest in speaking the Japanese language in public to the strict no-Japanese policy that was imposed in elementary school.

It was not only in the form of language that the education system tried to eradicate the *Nisei*'s Japanese culture. The *Nisei*'s diet was another cultural element the education system tried to control. *Nisei* attending public schools in Kona were not allowed to bring certain types of Japanese foods into the school with them. Isamu Oshima often told me that when he was in grade school the teachers hated the Japanese *bento* (lunch box) and would get mad when the smell of *takuwan*¹⁷ (pickled daikon radish) filled the classroom. Oshima would always finish this story by saying how the teachers would tell him to never bring a Japanese *bento* again: his lunch had to be filled with American food. This paradigmatic incident, and many others like it, suggested the sort of racial discrimination the young Japanese *Nisei* endured as they entered the public education system.

The Japanese Buddhist religion was also subject to attacks in the public education system. Matsuo Matsumoto¹⁸ (Matsumoto, interview 2009), an N2 *Nisei*, recalled how the teachers forbade a key Buddhist ritual, as well as the wearing of lucky charms and other items:

When I first entered grade school one of the first rules was that you could not say *Itadakimasu*,¹⁹ this word was taboo at school. Boy if you said that you would get into big trouble. I also remembered the teacher used to tell us every once in a while that the Buddha is a bad religion and yeah they used to hate Buddhist things. You know I remembered this girl in my class she hid this *omamori*²⁰ in her dress somewhere, anyway the teacher found it and she was so angry these kinds of things. Now that I really think about it you know I'm 92 [years old] the kinds of thing the teacher did to us, there is no way they can do that kind of things nowadays.

Despite the harsh treatment experienced by the *Nisei* in the public education system, data presented by Andrew Lind²¹ in his early research indicates that assimilation took place in this environment. Lind writes: "[A] shifting in tastes of food, clothing, household furnishings, personal conveniences, and recreation has been marked among the Hawaiian-born *Nisei*." The appearance of such items as butter, bread, and cake and of American vegetables, fruits, and meat in the Japanese farmers' diets was largely in response to the influence of the schools. These changes in diet also initiated the adoption of new household appliances, such as refrigerators and ovens.

Nevertheless, although assimilation did take place slowly for the majority of the young *Nisei*, the discrimination they experienced in school as a result of their Japanese ethnicity created a dual cultural identity: at the public school they were forced to purge themselves of all things related to their Japanese cultural heritage, while at home they were expected to behave in a way that was suited to a Japanese environment in a manner similar to that of their parents.

Educational Opportunities Among the Nisei

For the most part, *Issei* parents were very keen to enter their children into the public education system. However, due to their circumstances there were many families that did not have enough money to send more than one child to school, and barely enough to send even that one. In numerous cases, therefore, the elder brother would drop out of school so that his younger sibling could achieve a higher education. In addition, many of the *Nisei* started working at an early age, to help support the family financially, so that continuing school was not always a possibility after eighth grade. This experience was not especially unique to Kona. Similar experiences were not uncommon in many other Japanese communities in

the United States.²² The chance of achieving upper educational mobility, attaining a level of education higher than eighth grade, was reduced due to the financial circumstances. Kiku Kubo²³ (Kubo, interview 2009), an N2 *Nisei* informant, stated:

I really, really wanted to go to college but my parents didn't have the money. We really made big sacrifices for my older brother. Because we all studied so hard and parents were telling us study, study but when we graduated from high school and it was time to go to college there were no money. You know it was so sad and embarrassing that we had no money for school. And you know what was even sadder was that my parents was really affected by the fact that they couldn't provide yeah. And so when our children went to school, they always gave them money for school because they felt guilty that they couldn't do it for us.

In the case of many *Nisei* their elder brother often made huge sacrifices in order for them to obtain a higher education, and thus provide an opportunity to "[get] out of the coffee land for good, to do something else or [have] an easier way of life" (Hayakawa, interview 2010). Kazu Hayakawa²⁴ (Hayakawa, interview 2010), an N3 *Nisei*, stated: "For a brother or a sister to sacrifice in order for a member of the family to move up (in the social structure) was an honor and the right thing to do."

The death of an *Issei* parent was also a factor that often made the possibility of attaining a higher education impossible, at least for a time. The untimely death of my great-grandfather, an *Issei*, at 46 years left my grandfather with excessive responsibilities, as he was the second son in a family of five. At the age of 16 he became the breadwinner of the family: to support his family he worked for a telephone company, installing poles in the extremely hard lava rocks of Kona. He was thus unable to obtain even a high school degree. Like others, however, his desire for education did not diminish. After some time had passed he decided to return to school, graduating with a high school diploma at the age of 48. In a private conversation with my grandfather in 1997, he stated: "This was something that I had to do, and it had nothing to do with my job."²⁵ After the war when things started to get good [stabilized], there were some people [*Nisei*] went back to get at least a high school degree. You know maybe now a high school degree can't really do much but before a high school diploma was worth a lot." My grandfather was able to name 10 or 12 *Nisei* friends, as well as other non-Japanese friends, who entered night school with him in order to obtain a high school degree.

In discussing this issue of financial need, and how it impacted on educational opportunity, it is important, however, to remind ourselves that, as we have observed, the experiences of the different *Nisei* groups were not uniform. In the prosperous years from 1923 to 1929 the N1 *Nisei* in North Kona experienced a different situation to that experienced by the N2 *Nisei*. Coffee prices were at their highest at this time, and production was also moderately higher. As mentioned above, during these years numerous coffee farmers purchased land and built fairly livable homes. With the increase in disposable income during this short period of time, a few *Nisei* had the opportunity to finish high school, and in a few cases were able to afford a college education. Yoshie Fukushima²⁶ (Fukushima, interview 2010), an N1 *Nisei* participant, stated:

My parents had the choice of sending my brother and me to college, sending money back to Japan or to buy the land on which we were farming at the time. My father chose to send my brother to college, for which we were so grateful, and because of that I think my brother did pretty good for himself. And as for me, we later bought five acres [for coffee] and farmed part-time.

As time went on, ensuring that their children obtained a higher education became the standard within the Kona Japanese community. Thus, the majority of N3 *Nisei* graduated from high school and, in some cases, also pursued a college education.²⁷ Based on my research I estimate that in Kona District approximately 15 percent of Do you mean N2? Perhaps we should change this. *Nisei* graduated from college. However, with the coming of World War II, educational prospects changed. Mark Hashimoto, an N3 *Nisei*, told me that his father had saved up for his college education from the time he was an infant. Hashimoto studied tremendously hard and eventually was accepted to the University of Hawaii, but within six months the war broke out and changed his life forever. He recalled: "I got a letter from the university that said basically because of the [Pacific] War, you need to go back to Kona and wait until further changes. At the end I never went back because even if I finished college I wouldn't be able to get a good job those days. If you're Japanese you're the bad guy and nobody [is] going to hire you" (Hashimoto, interview 2010).

As this survey has shown, then, as with many other aspects of their lives, the educational experiences of the *Nisei* differed depending on which group (N1, N2, or N3) they belonged to, and thus in which period they were living. For the N1 and N2 *Nisei* their educational opportunities were

limited compared to the N3 *Nisei*, due to the financial situation during their childhood. However, in regard to ethnic cultural education, the N1 and N2 *Nisei* were raised in an environment in which being Japanese and practicing Japanese customs openly as a community was not considered taboo; therefore, they were able to experience a childhood that was rich in Japanese culture, which in turn gave them a stronger Japanese ethnic identity as compared to the N3 *Nisei*.

Nisei Names

Another immediate and straightforward way in which Japanese in Hawaii and the United States more widely could take a step toward assimilating into the local and American mainstream society was by taking a Western name. Adding or modifying a name—or taking a Western name—was a way to avoid or defuse racial discrimination. Thus, on the West Coast and in Honolulu a large number of *Nisei* inserted middle names or transformed their first names in the hopes of achieving assimilation to mainstream America, and thereby the possibility of attaining upward social mobility.²⁸ Eileen Tamura's research into Japanese communities on the West Coast and in Honolulu shows that the majority of the *Nisei* who modified their names opted to alter their first names. Some *Nisei* in these areas utilized a component of their name to establish a lesser Japanese-ness: for example, Mari instead of Mariko, or Kiyo instead of Kiyohito, or Masa in place of Masahiro. In several interviews with a few *Nisei* informants in the Los Angeles area, it was mentioned that most people had difficulty pronouncing their names and that a shorter version of their names sounded less Japanese and reduced ethnicity-based stigma. This, then, was an incentive for changing their names.

In Kona District, however, far fewer *Nisei* changed their names—only 10 percent of the numerous *Nisei* interviewed had modified their names. Again, the differences between the different *Nisei* groups were important in this respect: of these 10 percent the majority were N3 *Nisei*. The reasons why the earlier *Nisei* groups did not change their names are interesting. During their youth, many thought that it would be disrespectful to their parents to modify their name. Steve Tanaka²⁹ (Tanaka, interview 2007), an N2 *Nisei*, stated:

When I first changed my name people would say that I was silly and I should not change my name because you are Japanese. But after a few years, people started getting used to my name and slowly people gave in to the idea.

At the time it was a good idea for being more American because when I was young I used to hate my Japanese name so as soon as I became 18 I changed my name. Now that I am older I think that my Japanese name has a different meaning, something that my Japanese parents gave to me. Sometimes I think I regret changing my name and sometimes I think it helped in many ways too.

In order to understand what form adopting, or conferring, a Western name took, it is worth noting some history regarding the form of names among the Japanese community in the United States. *Issei* who immigrated to America during the *Meiji* era registered their identities with the immigration officers using a Japanese surname and first name. This two-name system, with two Japanese names being used, was still being applied during the *Nisei* period. When the idea of adopting a more Western name arose at this time, the approach used was for parents to add a new, Western, middle name. The children would therefore have a Western middle name but they would still also have a Japanese first and last name. The Western middle name would be used for daily conversation (in contrast to the middle names of most American children, which are rarely utilized during spoken discourse). In this way, partial assimilation was achieved: the middle name conferred a Western identity, but the Japanese identity was retained in the form of the first and last (Japanese) names.

During the N3 *Nisei* era most N3 *Nisei* who fell into this category were content with having a Japanese first and last name and a Western middle name. In fact, having a Western-sounding middle name became fashionable. It also helped them avoid ethnic discrimination when they entered the public education system, while at the same time still allowing them to maintain a Japanese ethnic identity. In some cases an N3 *Nisei* might only have been given a Western name with no Japanese name. However, the *Nisei*'s attitudes to their own names changed over time. Sam Morimoto³⁰ (Morimoto, interview 2010), an N3 *Nisei* participant, stated: "English names for some reason became popular and so I got an English name, but later in life I wished I had a Japanese name too. It probably would have been better if I had a middle name ... A Japanese middle name would have made me more Japanese I think." Similarly, several *Nisei* informants shared emotional stories of how they had once wanted to modify their names but, as they became older, they had changed their minds and were glad that they had not gone through with it.

During the N2 and N3 *Nisei* period, large Japanese families would usually give the first two or three children a Japanese name, while the last two

or three siblings would be given non-Japanese names. Yumiko Kondo,³¹ an N2 *Nisei*, grew up in such a family, with five brothers and four sisters. Even though Mrs. Kondo is an N2 *Nisei*, she is one of the younger siblings and is therefore closer in age to an N3 *Nisei*. Some of the siblings were given Japanese names and some Western or English names. Mrs. Kondo stated (Kondo, interview 2008):

We had a big family. My first two brothers had Japanese names, and my three older sisters had Japanese names, and the last four children my parents had were given first English names and middle Japanese names. So let me explain, at home, although we had English first names, everyone called me by my Japanese name. Oh and by the way, I'm the youngest in the family. Even at school I had my friends call me by my Japanese name, even though I had an English name. The teachers at school called me by my first name [English] but like I said my friends and family called me by my Japanese name. I mean I was happy because I could use two names, with my Japanese friends I could be kind of Japanese and when I wanna be American I can use my English name. I think that when I was little my older brothers and sisters tried really hard to keep us younger sisters more Japanese, they never used my English name. But my parents' home was a place that could never be American.

Yumiko Kondo decided which name to use depending on the person with whom she was speaking. The name she chose correlated with her identity. The formation of her Japanese ethnic identity was fostered with the support of the Japanese community, peers, and most of all family. Kondo had various opportunities to fully utilize her English name but, due to the strong social support she received from the Japanese community, she chose to resist assimilation and to maintain her Japanese ethnic identity.

This shows how important the names of the *Nisei* were in regard to their ethnic identity. In addition, having both Japanese and English given names also assisted in the formation of a dual cultural identity, as well as providing a way to easily switch cultural identities depending on the situation. For those *Nisei*—particularly N1—with purely Japanese names their cultural identity as Japanese was very strong, whereas the N3 *Nisei* grew up at a time when being Japanese was a disadvantage, and therefore they were given Western-sounding first names and Japanese middle names. This allowed them to keep their Japanese heritage while at the same time making it easier for them to be accepted as Americans.

To further analyze *Nisei* ethnic identity through the lens of names, I extracted data from gravesites in Kona District. Within these cemeteries I discovered that the majority of the N1 *Nisei* names on the headstones were written in Japanese characters. There were very few exceptions. One *Nisei*'s headstone had his first and last names in Romanized Japanese (Latin script) and his Western name in brackets. Only four of the N2 *Nisei* headstones (less than 1 percent of the total analyzed) bore Western names. In these cases, the Western names were middle names, being placed between the first and last names. In contrast, 15 percent of the first names on the N3 *Nisei* headstones had English names. Empirical data revealed that for those few *Nisei* who changed their name their altered name was not used on the headstone or urn—their original given name was used instead. This reflects the high level of importance *Nisei* placed on their ethnic identity.

One point worth noting regarding the gravestones: many headstones had been replaced or upgraded and during this process of replacing or upgrading the headstones the *Nisei* opted to use Romanized Japanese letters on the new headstones. This suggests that they expected that later generations would lose the ability to read Japanese, and thus the Romanized form was preferred.

Kamon (*Family Crest*)

The *kamon*, the family crest, was usually hung in the living room, where it could be seen by visitors. Not all houses hung a *kamon* in their home but the ones that did obtained a stronger connection to their Japanese cultural heritage. The *Nisei* that were sensitive toward the family crest all had similar things to say about the *kamon*. For example, Hichiro Nakata³² (Nakata, interview 2008), stated: "The *kamon* was important to my parents and I try to keep the same spirit, and I think that my name and the *kamon* is the only thing we have from Japan, I mean personally."

During weddings, framed *kamon* of both the bride and groom's families were usually displayed in the reception area. *Kamon* were also embroidered into the shoulders of the groom's kimono, as well as the *kimono* of both the bride and groom's parents. Miki Sato³³ (Sato, interview 2010), an N1 *Nisei*, mentioned that "my mother-in-law insisted that the *kamon* be [placed] on their kimono. It was important for us to know our family and where we came from [Japan]. Especially during such an important event."

Kamon were also used during the *Obon* season for the *Bon Odori*. The *Nisei* wives would sew *kamon* patches onto *happi*.³⁴ This was a time when

all the *kamon* could be seen displayed together in one place. Miki Sato (Sato, interview 2010) remembered: “It was an amazing sight to see all of this different *kamon* come together in one place. It was fun to see which families belonged to which crest.” Again, this is another example of the community expressing their strong sense of collective Japanese identity through the utilization of *kamon*.

In many cases, headstones and urns also displayed the deceased’s *kamon*. It can be suggested that those whose headstone bore the *kamon* may have been less assimilated to Hawaiian local or main stream American culture, and, furthermore, may have had a stronger connection to their ethnic identity. Such people were often active members of the Japanese community, being concerned with preserving their Japanese cultural heritage for the younger generation.

JAPANESE-LANGUAGE SCHOOLS: LANGUAGE AS A SYMBOLIC TOOL, ETHNIC IDENTIFIER, AND CULTURAL BRIDGE

As has been seen from the discussion of *Nisei* names, language use was crucial to the development of a Japanese ethnic identity among the *Nisei* and played a large role in the socialization process. As mentioned earlier, language, regardless of the level of fluency, served as a huge determinant of how the *Nisei* ethnically identified themselves. For many *Nisei*, ethnic identity selection occurred several times, due to the outbreak of war and the political or racial discrimination they experienced as they grew older. Numerous *Nisei* employed language to legitimize their chosen ethnic identity: choosing to use English or Japanese depending on the situation. This is an example of their dualistic cultural identity and their ability to switch between American mainstream or local culture and Japanese culture. For instance, during the Pacific War some informants recalled identifying themselves as locals instead of as Japanese. Years later they reverted to a stronger sense of Japanese-ness than they had earlier possessed. Several *Nisei* participants mentioned that this was because throughout the war they had been restricted from communicating in Japanese. When the stigma passed the *Nisei* reverted to speaking Japanese. Ethnic identity selection also altered depending on the environment. One informant stated: “We speak Japanese at home and, therefore, we must be Japanese.”

As Lind described, Kona was an isolated area, with a large Japanese community.³⁵ The majority of the Japanese community there utilized the

Japanese language right up until the early 1960s. In this context Japanese-language schools (*Kokugo Gakko*) were organized in Kona, as elsewhere in Hawaii, in order to assist, and supplement, the role of the home and the community in transmitting the Japanese language, morals, and values to the *Nisei*. The first steps in the Japanese-language school movement in Kona began in the 1900s. A Japanese-language school was established in 1903 and seven more schools were established between 1908 and 1922. In addition to these language schools, there were also the so-called Sunday schools that were adjuncts of the Buddhist temples. The purpose of these Sunday schools, which were modeled on the Christian Sunday schools, was instructing children in the fundamental beliefs of the Buddhist religion. These Sunday schools at the temples provided classes from the first grade to the eighth grade, which provided, in addition to language instruction, education about various aspects of Japanese culture, such as Japanese history, geography, and literature.

For *Issei* parents who were planning on moving the family back to Japan at some later date, the Japanese-language schools were obviously very important. On the other hand for families that did not think they would ever return to Japan, the Japanese schools nevertheless provided a means of maintaining a traditional Japanese cultural heritage, reinforcing ethnic solidarity, and retarding the process of total assimilation. The majority of the *Nisei* interviewed stated that it was particularly important to the *Issei* that their children maintain certain Japanese moral values and not cave in to total assimilation into the mainstream local or American societal experiences.

The attitudes of the *Issei* and *Nisei* in Kona in regard to the Japanese language and the Japanese-language schools differed markedly to that of the West Coast Japanese community, who were less interested in acquiring Japanese as a second language because they had little use for it.³⁶ However, Karen Baker³⁷ (Baker, interview 2010) said: "I really wish my mother would have taught me some Japanese. Even a little bit about the culture would have been nice. It's such a shame I know so little and can't really pass very much on to my daughters." Many informants in Kona District stated that the majority of students studied Japanese very seriously. Many participants mentioned they had an average of about an hour of homework every day.³⁸ Several N2 *Nisei* explained that one of the reasons that their Japanese proficiency was acceptable was because their parents were very strict: they were subject to long hours of homework and parental tutoring.

As a result of this Japanese-language proficiency, however, a *Nisei*'s English-language ability might suffer. Lind described the community in Kona as being a decade behind other Japanese communities in regard to speaking English as a first language. Yoshi Tanaka (Tanaka, interview 2008), who grew up in the Japanese community in the Kona Coffee Belt in the 1920s, recalled that he was very poor at speaking proper English: "We speak pidgin English."

As mentioned above, the majority of the Japanese community in Kona District used the Japanese language until the early 1960s. Fumio Okumura³⁹ (Okamura, interview 2010), an N2 *Nisei* and part-time coffee farmer, said:

When I was little of course we spoke only Japanese in the house but outside of school we only spoke Japanese with my friends and friends' parents. We spoke fluent Japanese—I mean now it is different because we use more English now. But even now when I talk to my friends on the phone or in person we usually speak about 60 percent [Japanese] but when we were young or when I was in my 20s we only spoke Japanese. I think the ladies like to use more Japanese. It seems like every day my wife is talking to her friends on the phone all Japanese you know.

A number of N2 *Nisei* said that they had similar experiences. For many informants communicating in Japanese in addition to English was one factor in solidifying the strong ties that existed within the Japanese coffee farming community in Kona District, and in creating ethnic solidarity.

For the *Nisei*, learning Japanese also went along with a certain degree of political indoctrination. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the *Issei* were raised during the *Meiji* Restoration period: a time when Japan strongly emphasized Japanese ethics and morals under the new leadership of Emperor *Meiji*. The *Issei* respected and admired the Japanese Emperor: a majority of the *Issei* hung his picture next to the *kamidana*. Fumio Okumura (Okamura, interview 2010) remembered:

The Japanese Buddhist *sensei* (teacher) would teach us about Japanese history and Japanese morals, and most important was the way he spoke about the Japanese Emperor as being some kind of God. Ya you know in the classroom there was the picture of the [*Showa*] Emperor and the Japanese flag. I remember the *Sensei* always telling us to be loyal to our home country Japan. Every time we entered the classroom we had to bow to the supreme leader, the Emperor of Japan.

Most Japanese teachers at the Japanese-language schools in Hawaii were Japanese nationals certified by the educational institutions in their mother country.⁴⁰ These teachers taught young *Nisei* students not only the Japanese language but also important values and ethics, utilizing textbooks acquired from the Japanese Ministry of Education. Yasu Nakano,⁴¹ an N2 *Nisei*, explained how the Japanese-language teachers utilized their Japanese teaching position to communicate their political values. This nationalistic teaching was evidently widely accepted by the Japanese *Issei* community. Nakano (Nakano, interview 2009) remembered his Japanese teacher consistently relaying the same message every day:

Sensei always talking about this kind of *girininjo*,⁴² and *hajishirazu*.⁴³ They tried very hard every day to teach us this kind of Japanese culture. And so as I got older you know when the TV came out and later we used to watch these Japanese Samurai movies how they talk about this kind of Japanese Samurai code oh ... I used to like watching this kind of movies because it brings back all the memories that the Japanese *Sensei* taught us—you know, all that *girininjo* stuff and that code of honor.

Evidently, the Japanese Buddhist priests who taught the Japanese language were in a perfect position to educate the young *Nisei* into an unquestioning acceptance of nationalistic Japanese propaganda. The priests, who intended to return to Japan, had no interest themselves in assimilating to American and local cultural experiences. This fact was crucial in the formation of Japanese ethnic identity among the *Nisei*. These Japanese-language schools, with their conservative Japanese ideology, supported by the *Issei* community, delayed the process of assimilation within the Japanese community in Kona.

Language, then, influenced the construction of identity for the *Nisei*. Regardless of their level of language fluency, a majority of respondents utilized language as a means to connect or reconnect with their parents, to maintain their Japanese cultural heritage, and to sustain their ethnic identity. The Japanese language was a part of the socialization process that connected the different generations to one another. Especially in the early years, through use of the Japanese language, N1 and N2 *Nisei* children learned the ways of their *Issei* parents, thereby perpetuating *Meiji*-era values, norms, and social practices within the community in Kona.

However, once again there were differences between the different *Nisei* groups. Evidence from N3 *Nisei* respondents suggests that from the 1930s

onward the importance of acquiring the Japanese language decreased. Many of the N3 *Nisei* felt that their parents would never return to Japan, and therefore their parents were never serious about their children acquiring Japanese-language skills. Some of these respondents regretted that their parents were not at all strict, and therefore they did not acquire adequate Japanese-language skills. For instance, Masa Morimoto⁴⁴ (Morimoto, interview 2007) stated: “I think my parents didn’t think Japanese was that important because they probably knew we weren’t going back to Japan but I think my parents were concerned about other Japanese [cultural] things.”

For the N1 and N2 *Nisei* Japanese-language schools were an important part of their education, which enhanced their Japanese cultural identity. A word can be said here about how language affected my own research with these *Nisei* respondents. The majority of the N1 *Nisei* and N2 *Nisei* focus groups mentioned that it was easier to recollect memories when the group spoke in Japanese. Yoshie Fukushima (Fukushima, interview 2010) stressed:

Words like *girininjo* were difficult to explain in English and we actually hardly ever said these words in English. Really, the only time I ever used this kind of words was with my parents, so I never even think about this kind of words in English for many years. But when I became a parent I tried to teach my kids good moral values with English words that meant the same as Japanese but the English translation from Japanese is not the same. I feel that if you say these words in English it’s not the Japanese spirit or the Japanese way.

Utilizing both Japanese and English as a medium for communication assisted in developing trust within the N1 and N2 *Nisei* community. When it came to the N3 *Nisei*, this was simply not the case. For the most part, the use of Japanese was prohibited during the period of the war and the Japanese schools had all been shut down, with all the Japanese teachers being sent to the internment camps.⁴⁵ After the war, the Japanese schools were never reopened. However, by that time the N3 *Nisei* were not interested in learning the Japanese language. Thus, N3 *Nisei* who were born during or after the war spoke essentially no Japanese, and therefore had lost a Japanese cultural aspect that was so important to the identities of the N1 and N2 *Nisei* as Japanese.

JAPANESE BEHAVIORAL NORMS AND VALUES

This section of the chapter discusses behavioral norms among the *Nisei*. Such norms formed the fundamental core of Japanese morality for the *Nisei* and were an ongoing factor in the formation of their ethnic identity. The role of the family was vital in the formation of identity among the *Nisei* in Kona District. This was especially the case for the children of those *Issei* parents who emphasized certain traditional Japanese values and behavior patterns like *haji* (shame), *on* (appreciation or obligation), *oyakoko* (filial piety), *tatemae* (the art of hiding your feelings), *enryo* (when to say no), and *bachi* (bad luck).

Haji: Don't Bring Shame to Us

The literal translation of *haji* is *shameful*, especially in regard to bringing shame to one's family. According to the *Nisei* interviewed, *haji* was on the top of the list of those values that one must not violate within the small tightly knit Japanese community, where everyone knew each other and where rumors spread quickly. For example, my grandfather on many occasions taught me and my brothers the Japanese cultural meaning of *haji*, which he learned from his parents. He explained to us: "People in this community are always watching you and you need to keep this family's reputation, if you do something wrong it's so shameful for the whole family." I remember as a child when I did something that my grandfather did not approve of, or basically something bad, he would scold me and say *hajishirazu* (you don't know what shame is). This was a common experience. One respondent, Yasu Nakano (Nakano, interview 2009), stated:

My mother used to scold me with *hajishirazu* so many, many times. I remember one time when I was about 13 years old, my friends and I used to do all kinds of rascal things, but this time I think we went to the graveyard and we took some food from somebody's grave and someone saw us and told our parents. And my mother was so mad she must have said *hajishirazu* about 100 times.

There were small variations in the way the *Nisei* groups experienced *haji*. For the N3 *Nisei* the concept of *haji* became situational: in other words, their understanding of *haji* was much less than the other *Nisei*, and they were unable to use it as often and effectively as the others. For instance,

my grandfather, an N2 *Nisei*, always thought about *hajishirazu*, when he was interacting not only with non-Japanese but also with N3 *Nisei*.

On: Giving Back to Others

On is best described as the art of giving back to someone after receiving something: when someone receives a gift, it is important to outdo that gift with something bigger or better in return. For the majority of the *Nisei* the practice of *on*, consciously or sub-consciously, was a matter of Japanese traditional cultural heritage that was implanted by the *Issei*. Kentaro Tanaka⁴⁶ (Tanaka, interview 2006), an N2 *Nisei*, explained: “What other members in the community are going to think was important to, and stressful for, my father.” For instance, as Tanaka observed, bringing a small gift when visiting someone’s home was important: “Never go to somebody’s house empty-handed—that was a no-no.” Along the same lines, my own grandfather taught me never to show a lack of appreciation. He would say *onshirazu* (you don’t know appreciation). Of this term, Kiku Kubo (Kubo, interview 2009), an N2 *Nisei* informant, stated:

When I used to hear that I would be so afraid of my parents because we were taught that this word was the worst thing any Japanese can say to you directly. So every time, if I hear this word I would be scared and sad at the same time. Because I knew that my parents did so much for us, and when I let them down by doing something stupid, they would say that *onshirazu*. That we do so much for you, and in the end, this how you pay us back.

As is implied by Kubo’s words, *on* plays a role in the relationship between parents and children. The sacrifices parents make for their children require a return in the future, something that is also invoked in the idea of *oyakoko*, which is discussed in the next section.

Oyakoko: The Perfect Child and Citizen

In a normal relationship the bond between parents and children (*oyakoko*) is extraordinarily strong. It was well understood by the *Nisei* that since parents sacrificed for their children it was expected that the children should obey their parents’ wishes. This included in the major decisions of their lives, such as regarding their education, their future career, and their marriage partner. Preoccupation with one’s own happiness, as opposed

to that of one's parents, was considered selfish and was greatly frowned upon. In terms of education, *oyakoko* meant that excellent performance was expected of the *Nisei* in their schooling. Parents consistently ordered their children to study vigorously to achieve high marks in exams. In terms of public school studies, the *Nisei* youth (N1 and N2 *Nisei*) were expected to achieve second-language Japanese proficiency equal to their counterparts in Japan.

Oyakoko also meant being a good citizen. It is perhaps due to the value of *oyakoko* that the level of crime within the Japanese communities in America was exceptionally low.⁴⁷ The *Nisei* participants took pride in the low crime and delinquency rate within their community, but some rued the fact that things have changed: several compared the younger disturbed and troubled generation to their own safe and peaceful time. Yasu Nakano (Nakano, interview 2009), an N2 *Nisei*, said:

During my time we were taught to obey our parents and not to make problems. Nowadays you get all kind drugs and white-collar crimes. Oh in my days if we did [something] like that [crime], more better I commit *hara kiri* (suicide). In our days no more da kind murder like that you know Kona was a safe place. The only thing was bad was gambling no. But you know not many people can gamble because we were so poor few people had money to waste.

Nevertheless, as Nakano's words show, the situation was not perfect: crime did exist within the community. It was well known that gambling and prostitution took place in Kona District, and both continued secretly for many decades. These illegal activities were limited to a small group within the community and were deeply disapproved of by the majority. In addition, though serious felonies were almost non-existent, they did occur from time to time.⁴⁸

In regard to similarities and differences among the different *Nisei* groups, in relation to *oyakoko*, both N2 and N3 *Nisei* equally understood the importance of achieving high test scores, being a good citizen, and obeying their parents. However, in one area, looking after one's elderly parents, differences became apparent between the two groups in regard to the practicing of *oyakoko*. The majority of N2 *Nisei* who left Kona District for education or work returned to take care of their parents in their old age, considering this to be the most important form of *oyakoko*. On the other hand, some of the N3 *Nisei* relied on a private health care system

to care for their parents: something that would have been considered a breach of *oyakoko* by earlier generations.

Tatemaie (the Art of Hiding Your Feelings) and Enryo
(When to Say No)

Tatemaie refers to the face a Japanese person reveals in public, and signifies behaving as they are expected to behave in specific situations, regardless of their personal opinions or feelings. The essence of *tatemaie* is to be polite and to avoid confrontations as much as possible. To the non-Japanese this may seem dishonest but to the Japanese this is part of a complex tradition of social behavior. *Hone*—one's real feelings and opinions—is not something one is encouraged to show in public, especially during business dealings. It is something Japanese show only to their closest friends (or sometimes when they become very drunk).

Tatemaie behavior patterns were widespread among the *Nisei* in Kona District, especially the N1 and N2 *Nisei*. *Nisei* informants revealed that *tatemaie* was routinely practiced among friends, and even close friends. *Tatemaie* was often used to avoid problems, big or small. Examples might include saying, "Your dress is pretty," even though it was not, or, on a more important issue, "Your business and you are looking great," even though they were not. Depending on the person and the situation, *tatemaie* behavior patterns were on many occasions still present when a person was among family members.

Matsuo Matsumoto (Matsumoto, interview 2009), an N2 *Nisei*, recalled how his parents taught him about *tatemaie* as a little child:

When I was little my mother told me, those friends never tell you the truth, and for me as a little boy it was shocking to hear these kinds of things. My parents would many times say the only people you can trust are family. So among my Japanese friends, I would say things that were not true but for the purpose that it would not hurt my friend's heart, and in doing so, it helped me weather off many inconvenient arguments. I really think *tatemaie* is a useful way to communicate among the Japanese community. I also found out early in life that the *tatemaie* way was not always the good way, and of course the *haole* [white Americans] way, which is the straight talk, is not always good too. So when I talk to *haoles* I don't tell white lies nor do I tell them straight, I kinda say I don't know or say nothing. So you can say sometimes I can be really Japanese and sometimes I am just saying

nothing. It's kind of like a switch I turn it off or on depending on who I talk to. It's like I am sitting pretty in the middle.

It is clear that the traditional Japanese cultural behavior patterns associated with *tatemae* were strongly and widely practiced in the *Nisei* community. For many of the N2 *Nisei* *tatemae* was an important communication tool; for some it was a way of life. *Nisei* participants confirmed that even though young N2 *Nisei* were partially assimilated *tatemae* was still maintained. Utilizing *tatemae* within or outside the Japanese community in Kona was an indicator of "being Japanese." For some N2 *Nisei* it was a part of the process of forming and maintaining a Japanese ethnic identity. Jane Yonemura⁴⁹ (Yonemura, interview 2009), an N3 *Nisei*, mentioned: "*Tatemae* is something that only Japanese can understand and use. I mean, because Japanese people always *tatemae* this and *tatemae* that so sometimes you can get mad or go crazy if you are not Japanese because like I said only Japanese can understand these things." Another N2 *Nisei* participant told me how he endured similar experiences, but he did make clear that *tatemae* was one factor that helped define his Japanese ethnic identity.

Of the many Japanese American scholars that have studied and analyzed the *Issei* and *Nisei* experiences, only a handful of researchers⁵⁰ have attempted to analyze the cultural behavior of *tatemae*. One reason for this lack of broad scholarly attention may be that *tatemae* was not an important issue in other Japanese communities in the United States. During one focus group session I held in 2009 in the Los Angeles area, a *Nisei* woman explained:

I know the word *tatemae* but I guess you can say that I sometimes use *tatemae* with some of my Japanese friends and in the past I sometime used it with some *Issei* people. I learned this word when I was in camp [concentration camps]⁵¹ and when we came out you know all those Japanese ways soon died. So when you bring up these kinds of old words, I can think of it when I was little in the camps. When we were living in the camp we were surrounded by only Japanese people and a few guard men. In the camps there were different groups and so during that time I was little and so I basically stayed with mostly younger people and that is probably why we didn't learn so much Japanese [traditional] culture in the camps even though we were all Japanese as (a collective) group. (Abe, focus group, 2009)

The above narrative makes clear that the time young *Nisei* spent in the camps impeded their acceptance of various Japanese traditional cultural norms and experiences. Although such norms had been passed down to them, they rarely practiced them, and they soon forgot them after leaving the internment camps.

In Kona District, however, unlike on the West Coast, *tatemae* was widely practiced due to the density of the Japanese population there and the fact that the majority of them were not sent to internment camps on the mainland.⁵²

Turning now to *enryo suru*, this was another Japanese cultural behavior or characteristic that parents strictly reinforced—etching it into the minds of the young *Nisei*. *Enryo* is one of the most quintessential of Japanese concepts: it means to behave with modesty, to be reserved or humble, or to hesitate—though this definition is only an approximation because, as with *tatemae*, informants explained that only Japanese can understand exactly what is meant by *enryo suru*. Like *Tatemae*, *enryo suru* has been seen as a basic Japanese cultural behavior pattern that enforced Japanese ethnic identity formation for the *Nisei*.⁵³

For many *Nisei*, *enryo* was the hardest of all of the Japanese behavioral norms to practice. Masa Morimoto (Morimoto, interview 2007), an N3 *Nisei*, observed:

Enryo is hard because the only way to learn *enryo* is by example. When you don't do *enryo* your parents get angry at you and only at that moment you can understand *enryo*. Because there is no rules about *enryo*, and because you are Japanese and so it was expected of you to understand it well. *Enryo* sometimes can be pretty stupid, like when two parents are saying it is ok, it is ok for maybe three times, and then you can say yes and except the gift. Or when you go to some Japanese friend's house and they offer you a drink and you really want to drink it but you have to be reserved and say no, and no again. This is *enryo*. And to make matters worse, we had to do it all the time.

For the *Nisei* in Kona District, if practicing *enryo* or *tatemae* was difficult, negotiating the need to practice these behavioral norms while also associating with members outside of the community was even more so. Inevitably in such a situation cultural conflicts occurred. According to several *Nisei* informants, the *Nisei* would on many occasions stigmatize non-Japanese for not conforming to Japanese cultural behaviors while living in an area overwhelmingly populated by Japanese Americans. One *Nisei* participant, Ken Sasaki⁵⁴ (Sasaki, interview 2009), remembered:

Back when I was growing up, ya I tried not to use *tatemae* when I talk to anybody who was not Japanese, but for example sometime I hope that you know some other people [white Americans] would not be so direct, and so maybe I hope they can be more like *tatemae*. So you know all us Japanese would get together and we used to say *enryo ga wakaranai ne* (they don't understand *enryo*).

In regard to differences among the different *Nisei* groups in terms of practicing *enryo*, my assessment is that the N2 *Nisei* seemed to embrace *enryo*—or, to be more specific, they behaved with modesty, reservation, and humbleness within the Japanese community and outside the Japanese community. On the other hand, for the N3 *Nisei*, *enryo* seemed to be for the most part situational: they gracefully practiced *enryo* within the Japanese community, but when they were among non-Japanese *enryo* use tended to decrease. That is not to say that *enryo* was not used when communicating with non-Japanese—it was—but it was not practiced in the same way as in the Japanese community. The majority of the N3 *Nisei* interviewees stated that they thought that they expressed themselves more than the older *Nisei* (i.e., N1 and N2).

In regard to *tatemae*, from my own experience growing up in the Kona community it was clear that *tatemae* was practiced more widely by the N2 *Nisei* than by the N3 *Nisei*. The latter were less inclined to exercise *tatemae* outside the Japanese community. Nevertheless, even the N3 routinely practiced *tatemae* in their relations within the community. Reflecting a point of view that was common among participants, one participant stated:

Tatemae was often practiced maybe 30 years ago when Kona was still mostly Japanese and to avoid confrontation you would hide your true feelings and not say things that would discomfort the other person. But nowadays, *tatemae* has a reversed effect. You people get mad when you don't tell the truth, even in the Japanese community. We still use it sometimes but only to some people. (Anonymous 10, interview 2009)

Bachi: *Bad Karma*

Another expression commonly used by parents with their children was *bachi*. This idea of *bachi* was instilled in children from a very young age in order to prevent them from doing bad things. The idea of *bachi* is that you should not do bad things because if you do then bad things

will happen to you. This was used as a bridge to eventually understand the importance of *haji*. It is difficult for young children to understand the idea of shame, but as they get older it becomes clearer that doing bad things brings shame upon the family; thus the idea of *bachii* is tied to *haji*. For example, if I was caught telling a lie when I was young, my parents would say *bachii ga ataru* (“Don’t do that. You’ll get bad luck”). Another instance is when you did something stupid and then the situation became worse, they would often say *bachii ga atatta* (“See what happened? You got bad luck”). Hichiro Nakata (Nakata, interview 2008) stated: “When I was in elementary school, I played hooky with my friends one time. We went down to the beach to have some fun. I don’t know how, but someone must have seen us and told our parents because when we got home all of us were given just the worst punishments. And then we went to school we were called into the principal’s office and had to spend our afternoons doing community service, you know like cleaning up trash, for a couple weeks. After that my older brother would point and laugh ‘bachii ga atatta!’ for weeks.” This tactic was an important tool with which parents enculturated their children into Japanese behavioral practices.

Japanese Behavioral Norms and Values: Closing Arguments

The majority of the *Nisei* suggested that these Japanese cultural influences and behavioral norms contributed to an increase in Japanese ethnic identity formation. However, there were differences in regard to how this worked, depending on which group a *Nisei* belonged to. Interviews suggested that the N2 *Nisei* were more inclined to practice these Japanese behavior patterns daily; as a result, their ethnic identity was strengthened. The N3 *Nisei*, in contrast, used these behavior patterns “situationally,” to maneuver strategically outside the Japanese community within the multi-cultural Kona District.

Finally, how do we make sense of the varied meanings of Japanese cultural and behavioral norms for the three categories of Japanese *Nisei*? Participants suggested that of these norms *haji* was the most critical element among the Japanese community in Kona. The majority of both N2 and N3 *Nisei* agreed that it was forbidden to ever bring shame on the family. For *oyakoko*, on the other hand, very different findings were arrived at, depending on whether an N2 or N3 *Nisei* were discussing the issue. Although somewhat similar to *haji*, the practice of *oyakoko* was more

important for the N2 *Nisei* than for the N3, as the former tended to have a closer relationship with their parents. The N2 *Nisei* listened to, and obeyed, their parents' commands. The high percentage of endogamous marriages among N2 *Nisei* was related to the practice of *oyakoko*. The majority of N2 *Nisei* participants explained that it was *oyakoko* to marry within the Kona Japanese community. One N2 *Nisei* stated: "Marrying a Japanese girl from only Kona was the right thing to do to please my parents" (Anonymous 10, interview 2009). The N3 *Nisei* had a higher rate of intermarriage.

As has just been made clear, in regard to *enryo* and *tatemae*, differences between the different *Nisei* groups were less marked: for the majority of the *Nisei* the characteristics involved in *enryo* and *tatemae* (not taking advantage of people in the community and not talking too much) continued to remain with them throughout their lives.

When the N1 and N2 *Nisei* were growing up in Kona the number of non-Japanese people living near them was small and the Japanese community itself was very tight-knit; therefore, it was expected that they would understand and utilize these behavioral norms and values every day. This in turn slowed the assimilation process among the N1 and N2 *Nisei*. However, when the N3 *Nisei* were growing up, the influence of World War II and the stigma against the Japanese language and cultural practices made it more difficult for them to practice these cultural behavioral norms on a daily basis, as they frequently had to interact with the non-Japanese community in Kona. This led to the N3 *Nisei* being more selective about where, when, and who they practiced these Japanese behavioral norms with, which gave them the freedom to practice dual cultural identities.

MARRIAGE: TO APPEASE ONE'S PARENTS

A topic that is somewhat linked to the behavioral norms and values that have just been discussed is the issue of arranged marriage, which was common among the *Nisei*. The Kona-born *Nisei*, who reached maturity during the period prior to 1920, would have thought it highly improper to select their own marriage partners themselves. The majority of participants in this research implied that marrying without parental approval would have been thought sacrilegious. Likewise, interracial marriage, as suggested in the previous section, would have been deemed extremely disrespectful to the family and to the Japanese community: only 2.1 percent of

the *Nisei* who married between 1925 and 1935 sought partners outside of the Japanese community.⁵⁵ Interestingly, the percentage of exogamous marriages between 1896 and 1907 was 4.8—a difference that can be explained by the fact that there was a lack of Japanese women for the *Issei* to marry at the time. *Nisei* men and women were strongly encouraged to have endogamous marriages. The rate of exogamous marriages in Kona District for all three groups of *Nisei* and among the *Sansei* was less than 1 percent: less than half the rate for the Territory of Hawaii.

The process of matching partners for an arranged marriage was facilitated by a community network that stretched across Hawaii. Partners from Japanese communities on the other side of the island in the Hamakua coastal area and in Hilo District made popular matches for men and women in Kona. In some rare cases Japanese partners also came from the outer islands. Both my grandmother and my mother originated from the Honokaa area, off the Hamakua coast. The process of arranged marriage was usually organized through *nakodo* (honored go-betweens), who were usually an older, respected married couple.

Despite their rarity, *Nisei* marriages outside the Japanese community were subject to retribution by the Japanese partner's nuclear family, and on occasion by extended family members as well. For instance, my grandmother's sister married a non-Japanese person and was made an outcast for many years, to such a degree that I did not even know that my grandmother had another sister until I was introduced to her at my grandmother's funeral. Stories of this kind were often heard when I was growing up in Kona. It was perhaps for reasons such as this that of the three *Nisei* I interviewed who had had an exogamous marriage, all left Kona District to pursue their higher education and continued to reside on the mainland for several years. There was a distinct relationship between the type of marriage a *Nisei* entered into and their ethnic identity. Thus, while the majority of the participants that married within the Japanese community identified themselves as Japanese, of the three *Nisei* who had exogamous marriages, two identified themselves as Japanese American, while the third identified himself as American.

The custom of arranged marriage continued for quite some time in Kona, perhaps due to the large Japanese population there and the slower assimilation of the Japanese community into American mainstream society. Marrying the person one loved, which was—unsurprisingly—preferred by the *Nisei*, was rarely practiced in Kona District.⁵⁶

TO FARM, TO STUDY, OR TO LEAVE? THE INFLUENCE
OF FAMILY ON *NISEI* LIFE CHOICES AND THE DEVELOPMENT
OF THE *NISEI* JAPANESE COMMUNITY

The Influence of One's Family on the Future of Coffee Farming

The N1 and N2 *Nisei* period coincided with the years of the Great Depression, which for a considerable time left many without the prospect of a stable job. Even the *Nisei* who managed to attend college found there was no guarantee of attaining a good job. This instability in the economy exacerbated the already difficult choice facing the *Nisei*: to remain as a farmer on the family farm, to attend college, or to move to another place where employment opportunities might be better.

For the *Nisei* who grew up in the "coffee land" of Kona District life was very difficult and involved much hard work. One might expect that young people who had struggled through such circumstances might choose to escape the world of the coffee farm by seeking an alternative career. However, the influence of one's family was considerable, and this was one factor why so many *Nisei* continued to farm coffee like their parents. For many *Nisei chonan* (eldest sons) it was, anyway, an obligation to take care of their parents as they became old, and for this reason many took over the family farm, to remain close to their parents.

One factor in the *Nisei*'s choice to go into farming would have been the *Issei*'s assertion of the level of freedom that an independent farmer possessed. The memory of the servitude experienced on the sugar plantations likely played a role here: the *Issei* condemned sugar plantation work. Their memories of it made them feel privileged to live in Kona.⁵⁷ Sam Morimoto (Morimoto, interview 2010),⁵⁸ an N3 *Nisei* participant, recalled: "My father said all the time first go to college and if no can, you can always farm but never go back to the plantation." Although many Japanese coffee farmers were contractually bound to American Factors Co. and the Captain Cook Coffee Co., they nevertheless felt spiritually and emotionally fulfilled because they were their own boss on their own farms and lived in their own (albeit tiny) homes.

In this regard the situation in Kona contrasted to that in big cities on the West Coast of the United States, or on the sugar plantations. There, *Issei* parents wanted their sons to acquire white-collar jobs, but *Issei* in Kona District viewed farming as a positive and honest way to make a living, and often found pride and satisfaction in their occupation.⁵⁹ The *Issei*

therefore encouraged their *Nisei* sons to study agriculture at school.⁶⁰ Throughout the 1930s Konawaena High School (the only high school in Kona District) had the largest number of members of the Future Farmers of Hawaii organization in the Territory of Hawaii.⁶¹

Despite the tradition mentioned above that *chonan* (eldest sons) would take care of the parents as they aged, and in return would receive the majority of their parents' wealth, in Kona many families broke with this tradition, by allowing elder sons to leave the farm—in the hope of better ensuring the survival of the family. Due to the large family sizes, it was often financially impossible for more than one family member to pursue a college education, and thus the brightest in the family was chosen to pursue higher education (regardless of whether or not they were the eldest son), in the hope that they would obtain professional and higher paying work. This applied to daughters as much as sons because in the world of education it was one's performance that mattered, not one's gender: students with high scores received acceptance letters from universities, regardless of gender. In this way *Nisei* women had the opportunity, for the first time, to challenge the old *Meiji*-era values. The majority of the *Nisei* community stated that many women, whether or not they had the academic ability to accomplish their goals, put in an incredible amount of effort to achieve high marks.

The *Nisei* who enrolled in college in Honolulu or on the mainland usually remained there after graduation. Only a handful returned to Kona to pursue professional jobs. If they did so it was to take up such occupations as lawyers, doctors, dentists, and teachers.

Whereas those *Nisei* who went to college may have expected a brighter future than their siblings who remained behind and took over the family farm, one advantage enjoyed by the latter was receiving the bulk of the inheritance. In some cases this traditional arrangement in regard to inheritance resulted in family conflicts.

However, not all *Nisei* chose either to attend college or to work on the family farm. In the wake of limited employment opportunities for the N1 and N2 *Nisei*, approximately 50 percent of the Japanese laborers in Kona District departed in search of greater opportunities on other islands or the mainland. In some cases *Issei* parents encouraged their sons to stop farming completely and to find a different profession, or to farm on a part-time basis. Looking at these different routes and life choices, then, my research with participants has identified that a likely scenario for a family of *Nisei* siblings was that one would continue on to college, the women would

marry and reside with their husband's family, and one member would inherit the family coffee farm and take care of their elderly parents. For example, of my grandfather's siblings, three brothers and a sister moved away: the eldest brother joined the army, the younger brother worked at the shipping docks in Honolulu, the younger sister married and relocated to Honolulu, and the youngest brother found his way to Michigan and became a high school teacher.

A word can be said here about the *chonan*, the eldest son, who, whether they went to college or took over the coffee farm, occupied a special place in the family hierarchy. As the *Issei* parents aged, the eldest son would become the head of the household, exercising considerable authority over family matters. From the beginning, the *Issei* parents taught their children to respect their eldest sibling. In most cases this respect was accompanied by a certain amount of fear. For example, Miki Yamanaka⁶² (Yamanaka, interview 2008), an N2 *Nisei* participant, said: "My brother was the boss of the family after *Oto-san* (father) died ... and so I never challenge my older brother because he is the boss and I am glad he took this responsibility. I mean he is the boss—none of my other brothers even question it. When he says something, we usually listen." The majority of *Nisei* participants confirmed that the eldest son had an unconditional power over the other siblings. However, the *chonan* was more than just an intimidating figure. As Miki Yamanaka (Yamanaka, interview 2008) explained: "He was clever, strong minded, and patient. He provided strength and support for the family." Another *Nisei* participant stated: "If I need help about anything, I go see my brother first. ... If I need any advice, I go see *oni-san* (older brother) ... or if I need money, I ask my older brother first" (Anonymous 11, interview 2008).

Continuing to Farm

This section examines the *Nisei* families in Kona that continued to farm coffee full-time or part-time, and it also draws attention to the significance of Japanese ethnic identity for the *Nisei* in this period.

The standard of life of Japanese coffee farmers during the *Nisei* period varied from moderately prosperous to so impoverished that farmers took their own lives due to the economic hardship they experienced. There were, however, some good times economically—albeit short-lived. One such time was the thriving period from about 1924 to 1929, the year in which the Great Depression commenced. During this particular period

(1924–1929), when coffee prices were at their highest, a “back-to-the-farm” movement arose, which advocated that the *Nisei* should pursue careers in agriculture. The argument was that farming would enable the *Nisei* to enter the middle class and become an integral part of Hawaiian society. During this time the N1 and N2 *Nisei* farmers in North Kona were independent, eager to gain new knowledge, and enthusiastic about adopting new farming practices.⁶³ The “back-to-the-farm” movement also encouraged the idea of “autonomy,” encouraging the N1 and N2 *Nisei* to become landowning independent farmers rather than slave laborers on the plantations.

The ability to own the land on which they farmed was not possible for all *Nisei*, however. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the many independent family coffee farms in Kona District were still attached to the tenant land system, which at the time was embraced by both farmers and landowners. Nevertheless, despite the inherent economic uncertainties involved in being an independent tenant farmer, such farmers never forgot that they were in a much better position than those working in the sugarcane fields.

Whether a family owned the land they worked or not, economic hardship was still often unavoidable during the *Nisei* period due to the low prices obtained for the coffee they grew, which in turn was a result of the lack of competition in the coffee industry. Many claimed that price-fixing by the two major coffee processing and distribution companies in Kona—the Captain Cook Coffee Co. in Napoopoo, South Kona, and American Factors Co. in North Kona—kept prices artificially low. As has previously been described, both the Captain Cook Coffee Co. and American Factors Co., together with the local grocery stores and affiliated Japanese stores, maintained control over the tenant farmers by keeping them in debt. Like the majority of *Nisei* participants, Kazu Hayakawa remembered the power wielded by these companies, which meant that even if a family owned its land, they were often poor. Hayakawa (Hayakawa, interview 2010) recalled:

Over the years, price-fixing became worse, or should I say they became greedier. Because they knew that since we bought land, we weren’t gonna move we had all our money invested in the land. So they would keep the [coffee] price down but not too much because we might throw our hands up and give up. They would keep the price of coffee just right not high and not too low. Because if we made money, they think we would work less or move somewhere (possibly Honolulu or the mainland).

The informants suggested that price-fixing of this kind continued until the late 1960s.

When the world coffee price crashed in 1929, the majority of coffee farmers suffered great financial hardship. The Kona Civic Club conducted a survey from 1934 to 1936 and confirmed that an average family of seven sustained losses of \$436.22 yearly.⁶⁴ From 1930 until the 1940s approximately 50 percent of the *Issei* farmers left Kona District. In a dramatic indication of the effects of the depression, the suicide rate among these farmers was much higher than in other communities.⁶⁵ During this period the population of Kona coffee farmers decreased from 1077 to 600, with a corresponding reduction in the acreage of coffee farms from 5500 acres to 4500 acres.⁶⁶ It was only the debt adjustment movement of 1938 that saved the Japanese Kona coffee farmers and the coffee industry: "Under the leadership of a core group of *Nisei* farmers who had adopted the independent spirit of the *Issei*, the farmers refused to surrender to their economic woes and challenged the capitalist companies. Through the cooperative effort of farmers, merchants, and community organizations, the coffee farming community negotiated with the large companies, American Factors Co. and Captain Cook Coffee Co., to have their debts relieved."⁶⁷ This act of good faith enabled the farmers to start again, in the hope that coffee farming would have a prosperous future.

Landowner or Lease-Holder?

Returning to the issue of landownership, within the small window of opportunity made possible by the high coffee prices in the period between 1924 and 1929 many farmers had their first chance to transition from the tenant-farming system to become small independent landowners. With the closing down of several sugarcane plantations in North Kona, rich farmland for coffee had become available. Discussing this period Steve Tanaka (Tanaka, interview 2007), an N2 *Nisei*, explained: "Some of the nicer houses were built in about 1925 or '26. If you drive around today you can still see some of those houses, they were built really nice. That was the only time the farmers really made money." Informants, however, did state that those farmers who purchased land and built houses during this period were later "blind-sided" by the 1929 economic crash. My grandfather told us that during the Depression life was so hard that many people had to sell part of their farm land to survive.

During the 1920s Japanese coffee farmers in South Kona had often leased land on long-term leases from white landowners. As the years went by, the possibility of purchasing this farmland from their landlords arose. For example, the Masutomi family were part-time farmers and leased farmland from Sherwood Greenwell for many years before purchasing it. Hichiro Nakata (Nakata, interview 2008) told me: “We bought land from the Greenwell family in the early [19]70s. My family had rented land from Greenwell for 40- something years and finally they asked us if we wanna buy. It was good for us because we had saved some money and so we had a chance to buy.” In a telephone interview in 2010, Mary Katayama (née Masutomi) stated: “My father worked for the ranch [Greenwell] for many years so Sherwood gave us a deal at the time. It was right after the Vietnam War [1974] that he offered us \$25,000 an acre.” In another case, according to sales documents, 40 years of lease payments by the Takashiba family were subtracted from the proposed sale price: an approximately 50 percent discount. The farm was purchased in 1975.⁶⁸

In regard to the size of the land that was bought, Japanese farmers in Kona District would usually buy at least five acres, which at the time was considered the minimum to sustain a living.

Why Did People Choose to Buy Land?

One reason why landownership was a high priority for the *Nisei* in Kona District was simply that it was possible. Unlike on the US mainland, where land reforms prohibited the *Issei* from owning land, in the Territory of Hawaii purchasing land was possible.⁶⁹ Ken Sasaki (Sasaki, interview 2009), an N3 *Nisei* informant, recalled: “We can own land in Hawaii, not like those Japanese in the mainland. I think we were very fortunate. I had an uncle in Los Angeles and it was sad to hear that they were envious of us because we could own land.”

Some *Nisei* participants also commented on the social pressure to buy land. As Japanese farmers slowly acquired land, neighbors felt they needed to purchase land, to keep up: Ken Sasaki (Sasaki, interview 2009) stated: “Owning property was part of living in the Kona coffee community. We were kinda forced into buying land. The neighbor on the right bought land and the neighbor above bought land so we were kinda pressured into buying. Finally my parents did the same thing too and when the (Great) Depression and the war came we suffered a lot. ... this was back in the [19]30s.”

Nevertheless, it is important to remember that owning land did not always end in success. Families that had worked very hard to become landowners were often forced to sell the land they had bought so dearly. Megan Mitchell⁷⁰ (Mitchell, interview 2009) told me: “My uncles had to sell some of the land to pay for (estate) taxes to the government and also there were some marriage and divorces so they ended up selling the land to settle divorce cases.”

How Was the Purchase of Land Afforded?

Securing a mortgage was nearly impossible for the majority of the *Nisei* farmers in the mid-1930s, due to the high turnover rate (nearly 50 percent left Kona) and the high suicide rate. Therefore, the Kona coffee community established a cooperative banking system known as the Kona Farmers Federal Credit Union.⁷¹ However, this institution was not always remembered positively. Many participants claimed that the Credit Union had insufficient resources, and that it applied unfair lending practices. Kihei Ogawa⁷² (Ogawa, interview 2005) stated: “Everyone was in the same situation but for some unknown reason some farmers got loans and some didn’t, and that is why I took all my money out and put it in a different bank.”

Even when a mortgage was obtained, Arthur Murata⁷³ (Murata, interview 2010), an N3 *Nisei*, stated: “It took a long time to pay off the mortgage for the land. Our coffee farm was on the smaller size in comparison to other farmers. We had only four acres.” While owning one’s own land was desirable, the long payments required to purchase the land were often a heavy burden: payments could last for 30–40 years and several refinancing phases were often required. For many *Nisei*, the long mortgage payments caused extreme hardship for the entire family. In many cases this had an effect on the *Nisei*’s education: as was clarified in the previous section, a majority of the *Nisei* desired a higher education, but with the mortgage payments and the unstable coffee commodities market it became even more difficult to acquire the funds for tuition.

In some cases farmland was purchased without the need for a mortgage, through the actions of the previous owners. As mentioned previously, farmland in many cases was sold directly to the farmer without the involvement of banks or any additional up-front down payments. Billy Paris⁷⁴ (Paris, interview 2010) explained:

A large portion of our land in the upper Kainaliu area was divided into five acre farmland lots and sold to many Japanese farmers as direct loans to the farmers because they didn't have any money so we sold the land just like leasing the land but instead after 20 or 30 years you now own the land, and the agreement was monthly payments. For one thing, the Japanese farmers were very hardworking people. I remember before, the Nakata lady, she had one baby in one hand and another baby holding on to her leg and she had a basket around her neck and she was picking coffee. Hardworking people. So selling the land to them like this way was no problem to us because Japanese people are honest hardworking people that my family trusted. It was good for us because it motivated the farmers to work harder.

Table 4.2 shows the breakdown of landownership in Kona in 1953.

Not everyone could afford to purchase a farm, however. For instance, Elise Colon⁷⁵ (née Nonaka) (Colon, interview 2005) remembered: "In the early [19]60s, Sherwood Greenwell was offering to sell to us the farms for \$3000 an acre, so I told my girlfriend let's buy an acre together but at the time we all had small kids so we couldn't afford it." Either because they could not afford it, or for other reasons, some Japanese farmers chose to continue to lease farmland, rather than buy it. Such farmers were usually considered "second class" in the Kona community. This issue of the status attached to landowning or leasing was important in the community: during several interviews with participants when I referred to a family farm, the participants were quick to clarify whether the property was leased or owned.

Table 4.2 Landownership in Kona, 1953^a

Bishop Estate	201,780	39.30%
State of Hawaii	181,680	35.40%
Kealakekua Ranch (Greenwell)	26,560	5.20%
W. H. Greenwell Trust Estate	14,180	2.80%
Stillman Trust	14,160	2.80%
Yee Hop, Ltd.	10,510	2.00%
L. L. McCandless Trust Estate	8720	1.70%
Frank Greenwell	7700	1.50%
Liliuokalani Trust Estate	3800	0.70%
Dillingham Ranch Land Co., Inc.	3390	0.70%
Hawaii National Park	1770	0.30%
Other private holdings	39,250	7.60%
Total	513,500	100.00%

^aSource: Land Study Bureau, University of Hawaii, quoted in Lind, Andrew W. *Kona: A Community of Hawaii* (State of Hawaii: A Report for the Board of Education)

Combining Landownership with Lease Holding

It is important to remember that those who bought land could also continue to lease land—or they might decide to do so at a later date. For example, when they needed to increase productivity additional farmland would be leased. The coffee distribution companies might assist in this regard because when they themselves wished to increase coffee production they might be willing to provide Japanese farmers with longer leases or “lifetime leases.” On this subject, Fumio Okumura (Okamura, interview 2010) stated: “When the coffee price was high we would lease more land and when the price was down we leased more land to try to make up for the low price. This was probably after the war, so in the late [19]40s.”

However, some farmers, including my father, did not believe that it was a good idea to lease land. They knew that converting the raw rocky jungle-like land of Kona District to farmland was tremendously hard work and that it would be heart-wrenching to return the land, which had cost so much effort to convert, to the landowners when the lease expired. A personal experience will illustrate this point. Next to my grandfather’s house was the Kawaguchi family farm, a part of which had been allocated to growing vegetable crops. When I was ten years old my father⁷⁶ explained that when Mr. Kawaguchi (an *Issei*) passed away the land returned to the possession of the owners. As my father several times explained: “The land was nice for growing vegetables. I tell you when we were young I watched that family take every stone and rocks out and made that land so clean. All that work they did to that land, and now it’s going back to the Gomes [the landowners].”

The White Landowners

During my ethnographic research I was fortunate to have the opportunity to interview several white landowners. The interviews were usually conducted at Teshima’s Japanese restaurant, and on some occasions I was invited to the interviewee’s residence. Several follow-up telephone conversations were conducted over a period of five years. For the most part, arranging the interview was relatively simple: just the mere mentioning of my grandfather’s⁷⁷ name was enough to secure most interviews. The power relations that had existed in the time of the *Nisei* were still present in the language used by some interviewees: in an interview with one

prominent 85-year-old landowner while discussing the subject of land-ownership it became apparent that “we” referred to his family, members of the group of powerful landlord owners that controlled all aspects of the Japanese farming community, while “they” referred to hardworking Japanese farmers. As the interview continued, the informant became more relaxed and was keen to discuss social aspects within the community. His words exposed the division, in terms of social classes, between the powerful white landowners and the working class Japanese farmers. Although, as was clear from his discussion, power dominance and human instrumentalism existed, for the most part this landlord was sympathetic in regard to improving the lives of the Japanese farmers. On several occasions he stated how he was taught by his grandparents to “respect the hardworking [Japanese] farmers.” He articulated clearly how his family supported the Japanese community and provided farmers the opportunity to become landowners. The majority of the other landlords interviewed had very similar stories and experiences concerning the Japanese community in Kona District. They wanted to make it known to me that they were advocates of providing support to the farming community and the native Hawaiian cattle ranchers. The key point the white landowners wanted me to understand was how impressed they were with how hard the Japanese farmers worked in such severe conditions.

The Effects of Becoming a Landowner

Due to the idea of *oyakoko* and the relationship between father and son, several *Nisei* informants said that when they became landowners their parents had mixed emotions. Sam Morimoto (Morimoto, interview 2010), an N3 *Nisei*, said: “At first they were very happy and proud that their son, you know, bought some land and was a land owner, and that I was the good son that would be able to take care of them in the future. On the other hand, they knew that their hopes of returning back to Japan died as they finally realized that this place was going to be their home forever. Oh, this was back in the [19]30s.” As this quote makes clear, when the *Issei* or the *Nisei* acquired property, this implied a serious change.

Extensive changes transpired when a *Nisei* became a landowner. For the majority of the *Issei* and the *Nisei*, landownership was one of the deciding factors in severing transnational social connections with Japan.

Upon buying his own land, my grandfather, an N2 *Nisei*, renounced his Japanese citizenship and that of his children not because of any legal complications but because he felt that buying land meant putting down roots in America and the chances of returning to Japan would be considerably reduced.⁷⁸ For my grandfather and many other *Nisei* farmers, their connection to their parents' homeland was immensely strong, to the point that they had registered their children (*Sansei*) with the Japanese local government in order for them to acquire Japanese citizenship. Once the *Nisei* farmers purchased property in Kona District, however, some attitudes changed. I remember my grandfather saying that a few weeks after he bought his house he wrote a letter to the Japanese consulate to renounce his Japanese citizenship. Giving up Japanese citizenship did not mean severing all ties to the homeland, however. Like other *Nisei* my grandfather retained a long-lasting connection to Japan and he remained an advocate for maintaining traditional Japanese cultural heritage.⁷⁹

*To Farm, to Study or to Leave? The Influence of Family on Nisei
Life Choices and the Development of the Nisei Japanese
Community: Closing Arguments*

During numerous interviews with several N2 and N3 *Nisei*, the majority of the informants mentioned that as landowners they had few choices but to take on large mortgages and to stay in Kona to farm the land. They had lost the freedom and mobility of the *Issei* who had come to be in Kona. A lot of the *Nisei* I interviewed were approaching 80 or even 100 years old. They had experienced many difficult times but all echoed the words of one participant who stated that he had “no regrets in being a small landowner in Kona, and that I would do it all again” (Anonymous 13, interview 2010). Even though coffee farming was a kind of a gamble for the *Nisei* who remained in Kona, they did this because of their strong sense of respect for their parents and for what their parents had created. This is a result of the Japanese behavioral norms, particularly *oyakoko*, that they practiced, which have already been discussed in this chapter. The reason these Japanese behavioral norms were so strong is a direct result of the large Japanese community in Kona, which fostered the development of such norms among the *Nisei*.

JAPANESE, JAPANESE AMERICAN, OR PURE JAPANESE?
THE FORMATION OF JAPANESE ETHNIC IDENTITY
AMONG THE *NISEI* IN KONA DISTRICT

Having reviewed the various elements in the development of the Japanese coffee farming community in Kona District during the *Nisei* period, one further issue remains to be discussed, which can shed some useful light on the issue of assimilation among the *Nisei*: that is, how the *Nisei* saw and defined themselves.

During the interviews with the *Nisei* community in Kona District, it became evident that the majority of the Kona *Nisei*, particularly N1 and N2, but also some N3, identified themselves as Japanese and not as Japanese American, in contrast to the Japanese living on the West Coast who identified themselves as Japanese Americans. While it might not be possible to determine a single direct cause as to why the Japanese community in Kona District identified themselves as Japanese and not as Japanese American, certain factors specific to Hawaii might provide an explanation. The most significant is the fact that Hawaii was not an American state until 1959. For more than 60 years, from the time when the first immigrants arrived to the year in which Hawaii became a state of the United States, the majority of the Japanese living in the Kona coffee community identified themselves as Japanese, without the “American.” Ken Sasaki (Sasaki, interview 2009), an N3 *Nisei*, explained how his ethnic identity affected his early life:

Living in a situation where all of my friends were Japanese was great when I look back at it now. The community was always there to support each other in good times and of course many difficult times as well. You know when I was growing up, my friends, including me, we thought like we don’t live in America we living in Hawaii so we are Japanese not Japanese American. Actually I don’t like to be called Japanese American because it makes me feel like I have to say American (in Japanese American) to assure myself and others that I am American when in fact I am an American by birth. To tell you the truth, I never really heard the term Japanese American until I was older and some Japanese mainlanders called themselves Japanese American.

Another reason why the community in Kona did not identify itself as Japanese American may have to do with demographics. There was a high concentration of Japanese in Kona: approximately 80 percent of the population living along the Kona Coffee Belt Road were Japanese and the

number of white Americans was insignificant to their daily lives. As Andrew Lind has stated: “Kona signified little Japan.”⁸⁰ Respondents cited the influential effects of growing up surrounded by predominately Japanese peers. They identified themselves and their peers together as Japanese, instead of as Japanese Americans, indicating their sense of having a local Japanese identity. Some participants said that the word “American” in the term “Japanese American” had a *haole* (white/mainstream American) connotation, which was not something that appealed to the *Nisei* living in Kona. Sam Morimoto (Morimoto, interview 2010), an N3 *Nisei* informant, stated: “I think if I add American to the Japanese American, it makes me feel like I’m from the mainland, like I am from Los Angeles or something like that, I don’t feel like I am from here.” For the majority of the Kona *Nisei*, identifying themselves as “Japanese” gave them a sense of being part of a homogeneous Japanese community, one that made them feel comfortable.

In Kona District today the expression “pure Japanese” is often utilized to describe the endogamous marriages within their family lineage. This use of the term “pure” was introduced in the 1970s by the *Yonsei* (fourth generation). The term soon became popular among the *Nisei* community. In my own childhood in Kona District, there were a few *hapa*⁸¹ or *hapa haoles* (half Japanese) in my first-grade class in elementary school, which made me curious about my ethnic background. Therefore I asked my parents what nationality I was and my parents answered: “pure Japanese.” This term was echoed by my brothers and my [*Nisei*] grandfather. I assume that what my family was instilling was the fact that everyone in the family was ethnically Japanese. Thus, when I was growing up in Kona District, pure Japanese was the ethnic identifier used by the entire Japanese community. The idea of being “pure Japanese” became embedded in our everyday practices and values.

Thus, respondents from Kona identified themselves as “pure Japanese” when asked about their ethnic origin. Masa Morimoto (Morimoto, interview 2007), an N3 *Nisei*, explained his origins: “For example, if someone were to ask me if I’m Chinese, I would say that, no, I’m pure Japanese. Or maybe someone would ask if I was *hapa*, I would say no, I’m pure Japanese.” Another circumstance where the fact that one was “pure Japanese” was made clear was in relation to endogamous marriages. During a focus group session several *Sansei* (third-generation) participants in Kona District mentioned that while they were growing up their parents often told them, “You have to marry a pure Japanese.” During the

interviews and focus group sessions, two *Nisei* (N2 and N3) said that being pure Japanese made them feel more Japanese.

From my interviews with *Nisei* participants, it appeared that the *Nisei* held on to their notion of being “pure Japanese” well into their old age. When discussing the topic of what was meant by “pure Japanese” the majority of the *Nisei* participants definitely appeared to be proud of the fact that they had kept their pure Japanese blood lineage, and hoped that their grandchildren would marry a pure Japanese partner as well. Furthermore, the majority of the *Nisei* community believed that if you were not pure Japanese then you would be unable to truly understand the Japanese spirit.

The importance of this ethnic identity was also a factor for *Nisei* women. The majority of the women participants, when describing attitudes toward marriage, stated that they were constantly reminded that “pure Japanese men” were the preferred husbands. N2 *Nisei* mothers strongly supported endogamous marriage for their children and, in many cases, sharply criticized the fourth generation (*Yonsei*) for marrying outside their ethnic group. For *Nisei* women themselves such a marriage was not felt to have been an option: it was *kangaerarenai*, unthinkable, for any *Nisei* or *Sansei* to marry outside the Japanese community.

This section has shown that the identity of the *Nisei* as Japanese, and later as pure Japanese, was particularly strong among those *Nisei* living in Kona. For those *Nisei* who married within their ethnic group, their tendency to identify as Japanese was particularly high. This is another indication of the Japanese community’s strength in the maintenance of Japanese identity and the slowing of assimilation among the Japanese in Kona. For those *Nisei* who had more contact with the non-Japanese community or who married outside of their ethnic group, the frequency of utilizing a dualistic cultural identity, such as Japanese, Japanese American, and American, was more common than those who had closer ties to the Japanese community.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has drawn on the discussion contained in Chaps. 2 and 3 in the sense that the *Nisei* were constantly looking back to the past and reminiscing about their parents’ values, which they felt had been inculcated among them. The *Nisei* were grateful for the way in which their parents remained focused on community and family while enduring the many difficulties inherent in living in a strange new home.

Family influences, use of the ancestral language at home, foreign-language classes, cultural influences, food, endogamous marriage, religious rituals, and support of co-ethnic friends are intrinsic to ethnic and religious identity formation. This chapter has revealed several findings related to the research questions: To what extent did the *Nisei* maintain Japanese culture? What are the contributing factors that facilitated a need for Japanese cultural heritage? Further analysis was aided by additional sub-questions: Why did the *Nisei* continue to farm coffee? What were the conditions they faced in the Kona community, with respect to the challenges they faced in their daily lives? What other opportunities arose during the *Nisei* period? These are all ways by which the community created and maintained their Japanese ethnic identity, and they also contributed to the delay of assimilation into white American mainstream culture.

For the purpose of enhancing our understanding of the delayed assimilation, dual identities, and the effects of the high concentration of ethnic Japanese in the area on the *Nisei*, I expanded the existing literature on this group by considering them as three separate groups: early *Nisei* (N1), middle *Nisei* (N2), and late *Nisei* (N3).

Andrew Lind (1939) confirmed that language retention was remarkably high among the *Nisei* (N1 and N2) in Kona District. At the same time he claimed that Kona was a decade behind other Japanese communities learning English. This chapter confirmed that claim and further found that language and Japanese cultural knowledge were attached to the *Nisei*'s strong sense of a Japanese ethnic identity, which resulted in identifying themselves as "Japanese" and not Japanese American. The chapter has shown that the Japanese nationals who worked as language teachers at the Japanese-language schools taught their *Nisei* students *Meiji*-era morals and values. These Japanese values were drilled into their everyday lessons. Several *Nisei* informants suggested that the Japanese teachers conveyed Japanese propaganda to them at a very early age. The findings revealed that this type of education facilitated Japanese ethnic identity for the N1 and N2 *Nisei*.

The chapter suggested that family influences fostered the maintenance of a Japanese identity. It was found that higher education was a high priority for *Issei* parents. Many parents encouraged the *Nisei* to study vigorously and to set goals in terms of achieving a college education. However, financial hardship made obtaining an advanced education difficult for the N1 and N2 *Nisei*. The average education level achieved by the N1 and early N2 *Nisei* was up to eighth grade. Although many *Issei* parents had

no desire for their children to continue to work on the coffee farms, a lot of families could only afford to send one family member to college. However, the situation improved for the later N3 *Nisei* group: many of them obtained college degrees. Their better opportunities in this respect were due to the better economic conditions in the coffee industry. Due to educational opportunities, the N1 and N2 *Nisei* were in positions where they utilized dualistic cultural identity less than the N3 *Nisei*, who had a greater level of contact with the non-Japanese community.

The chapter further explained how some *Nisei* sought to avoid or defuse racial discrimination by adding, shortening, changing, or modifying their names, while still maintaining their Japanese identity. The N1 *Nisei* and N2 *Nisei* were given Japanese names, and in many cases they shortened their name to sound less Japanese, but they never relinquished their true Japanese name or identity. It was found that the N3 *Nisei* were given Western names, but they also had an additional Japanese middle name.

In some ways the N2 *Nisei* also gradually modified their lives, to adapt to American mainstream culture when they needed to, which is an indication of the utilization of dual cultural identities. However, they never totally assimilated. Instead, the N2 *Nisei* strived to maintain the Japanese culture and heritage passed down to them by the *Issei*.

One of the main focuses of this chapter was analyzing the various Japanese cultural experiences that aided in the formation of a Japanese identity for the *Nisei*. The findings revealed that the role of family was no doubt an intricate part of identity formation for the N1 and N2 *Nisei* in Kona District. *Issei* parents emphasized certain traditional Japanese values and behavioral patterns: for instance, *haji* (shame), *on* (appreciation or obligation), and *oyakoko* (filial piety). *Issei* parents also used scare tactics, such as *bachi ga ataru* (bad luck), to discipline the young *Nisei*. Although the N3 *Nisei* could not understand most of these Japanese terms, they practiced these Japanese values, which were vital to the formation of their Japanese identity.

NOTES

1. Bill Hosokawa, *Nisei: The Quiet Americans* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1969); Minoru Masuda, Gary Matsumoto, and Gerald Meredith, "Ethnic Identity in Three Generations of Japanese Americans," *Journal of Social Psychology* 81 (1970): 199–207; Dennis Ogawa, *Jan Ken Po: The World of Hawaii's Japanese Americans* (Honolulu: University of

- Hawaii Press, 1973); Jere Takahashi, *Nisei/Sansei: Shifting Japanese American Identities and Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997); George De Vos, "Ethnic Adaptation and Minority Status," *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 11, no. 1 (1980): 101–124.
2. Arthur Murata, an N3 *Nisei*. Refer to note 62 in Chap. 2. This three-category concept of the second-generation *Nisei* was introduced to me during an interview at his home. On several occasions he strongly mentioned that the "second-generation *Nisei* were not all the same." He explained how he categorized the *Nisei* in Kona District into three groups.
 3. Sociologist Andrew Lind mentioned in his research that in the 1900s women constituted 24.7 percent of the Japanese population of Kona. This low percentage explains why there were low numbers of couples in Kona District during this time.
 4. As mentioned in the previous chapter, for the most part the *Issei* who arrived on the first ship that arrived in Hawaii in 1868 were unsuccessful because they were not farmers. The second ship landed 17 years later, in 1885, carrying farmers from Yamaguchi prefecture. Therefore, I established late 1880 as the beginning of the *Nisei* era. Information about the second ship to Hawaii was retrieved from Yamashita Soen, *Nihon no Hawaii* [Japan's Hawaii] (Tokyo: Sekaido, 1942).
 5. Andrew W. Lind, "Assimilation in Rural Hawaii," *The American Journal of Sociology* 45, no. 2 (1939): 200–214.
 6. John F. Embree, "Acculturation among the Japanese of Kona, Hawaii," *American Anthropologist* 43, no. 4 (1941).
 7. Yoshi Tanaka, refer to note 61 in Chap. 3.
 8. I refer to summer trips I took to Hawaii. This was a few years before his passing at the age of 87. When interviewing the Japanese *Nisei* community, many would often say that they had forgotten how to speak Japanese because they hardly ever used the language, since most of their friends were dead. The research does not attempt to analyze the *Nisei*'s Japanese-language proficiency, but it can be observed that the Japanese that is spoken by the *Nisei* today is vastly different from that which was spoken in their youth.
 9. My grandfather, Chitose Abe, maintained dual nationality until 1959, the year Hawaii became a state, when he gave up his Japanese citizenship.
 10. Mary Katayama, refer to note 45 in Chap. 2.
 11. Mark Hashimoto, an N3 *Nisei*, grew up on a coffee farm in the Kealahou area. He was an automobile mechanic and farmed coffee part-time. He is an active member of the Kona Hongwanji Temple, the Fukuoka *kenjinkai*, and the local *kumi*.

12. Ichihashi Yamato, *Japanese in the United States* (New York: Arno Press, 1969); S. C. Huber, "Dual Citizenship," *Paradise of the Pacific* 50 (1938): 24.
13. William Petersen, *Japanese American: Oppression and success* (New York: Random House, 1971).
14. Andrew Lind, "Assimilation in Rural Hawaii," 209, based upon reports from the Department of Public Instruction. The proportion of all children attending school during this period clearly increased. Still another index of the maturation of Kona's Japanese population is provided in the marriage statistics. The ratio of second-generation marriages to the total of Japanese marriages steadily increased from 19.6 percent in the period 1910–1914 to 88 percent between 1931 and 1938.
15. Eileen H. Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity: The Nisei Generation in Hawaii* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994).
16. Isamu Oshima, an N2 *Nisei* in his 80s, was a general store owner who had several other brothers and sisters. The store is located in the center of Kealahou.
17. *Takuan* is an aged pickled turnip that has a distinctive smell. It is eaten with rice and in Kona was the main dish eaten during financially difficult times.
18. Matsuo Matsumoto, refer to note 55 in Chap. 2.
19. It is a Japanese Buddhist ritual prior to every meal to hold one's hands close together while saying the short passage *Itadakimasu*. Although this ritual is similar to the grace said by Christians before a meal, it was completely banned in schools in Kona during the *Nisei* period.
20. *Omamori* are Japanese amulets (charms, talismans) commonly sold at religious sites and dedicated to particular Shinto deities, as well as to Buddhist figures. They are said to provide various forms of luck or protection.
21. Lind, "Assimilation in Rural Hawaii," 211.
22. Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity: The Nisei Generation in Hawaii*; Ogawa, *Jan Ken Po*.
23. Kiku Kubo, refer to note 71 in Chap. 2.
24. Kazu Hayakawa, an N3 *Nisei*, grew up on a coffee farm in the Keauhou area on the Kona Coffee Belt Road. He worked in a garage as an automobile mechanic and as a part-time coffee farmer with two and a half acres. He was an active member of the Kona Hongwanji Temple. He was a big supporter of the temple and was known to everyone in the community.
25. My grandfather was employed by a telephone company for 42 years. He started with the position of installing poles and was later promoted up to management. My grandfather was an advocate for higher education but never had the opportunity to obtain such an education himself. Therefore,

- it was important for him to ensure that his children received a better education. He succeeded: my father graduated from a boarding school in Honolulu, the Mid-Pacific High School.
26. Yoshie Fukushima, refer to note 7 in Chap. 1.
 27. Kona Japanese Civic Association, "More Old Time Kona Stories" (2001). In this text, Toshio Nakamoto, of the class of 1946 in Konawaena High School, states: "We graduated and many of us left Kona for other parts of the world to further our education, join the military, to work and to find our niche in society."
 28. Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity*.
 29. Yoshio "Steve" Tanaka, refer to note 95 in Chap. 2.
 30. Sam Morimoto, refer to note 35 in Chap. 3.
 31. Yumiko Kondo, refer to note 56 in Chap. 3.
 32. Hichiro Nakata, refer to note 50 in Chap. 2.
 33. Miki Sato, refer to note 46 in Chap. 2.
 34. *Happi* is a traditional Japanese half-sleeve coat made of cotton.
 35. Lind, "Assimilation in Rural Hawaii," 209.
 36. Stephen S. Fujita and Marilyn Fernandez, "Religion and Japanese Americans Views of Their World War II Incarceration," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 5, no. 2 (2003): 113–137. Research data regarding Japanese experiences on the West Coast.
 37. Karen Baker, a *Nisei*; her mother was Japanese and her father is a retired American soldier. She lives in San Diego. Her mother was a war bride, spoke fluent English, and never taught her daughter any of the Japanese language, and hardly anything about the culture.
 38. *Kona Echo*, 1919–1937. Japanese newspaper translated into English.
 39. Fumio Okumura, refer to note 31 in Chap. 2.
 40. Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity*.
 41. Yasu Nakano, an 86-year-old N2 *Nisei*, was born in Honolulu and moved to Kona District at three years. He grew up in the Holualoa area on the Kona Coffee Belt Road. He was a semi-active member of the Kona Daifukuji Temple. He was also a member of the Fukuoka *kenjinkai* and the *kumi*. He worked in the hotel industry and farmed part-time.
 42. *Girinjinjo* refers to a person's human feelings.
 43. *Hajishirazu* refers to a person who does not know what shame is.
 44. Masa Morimoto, an N3 *Nisei*, grew up on a coffee farm in the Holualoa area along the Kona Coffee Belt Road. After he graduated from Konawaena High School, he moved to Honolulu and worked at the shipping docks. After his retirement, he moved back to Kona and started coffee farming part-time on three acres of land. He was a semi-active member of the Kona Daifukuji Temple.
 45. Ronald Abe (*Sansei*) told these stories on several occasions.

46. Kentaro Tanaka, refer to note 23 Chap. 2.
47. Stephen S. Fugita and David J. O'Brien, *Japanese American Ethnicity: The Persistence of Community* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991); Dennis Ogawa, *From Jap to Japanese: The Evolution of Japanese-American Stereotypes* (Richmond, CA: McCutchan Publishing Corp., 1971); Yasuko Takezawa, *Breaking Silence: Ethnicity and Redress among Japanese American* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).
48. Embree, "Acculturation among the Japanese of Kona, Hawaii."
49. Jane Yonemura, an N3 *Nisei*, grew up on a coffee farm near the Kealahkekua area along the Kona Coffee Belt Road. She was a housewife and also took on some part-time work at a local hotel. Her family also cultivated coffee part-time, on approximately four and half acres of "hilly, rocky land." Yonemura was an active member of the Kona Hongwanji *fujinkai*. She was also a member of the chorus group, which usually chats and sings during funerals.
50. Takeo Doi, *The Anatomy of Dependence* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1977); Y. Sugimoto, *An Introduction to Japanese Society* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); J. Hendry, *Understanding Japanese Society* (London: Routledge, 1995).
51. The reason why concentration camp is used to refer to internment or relocation camps from World War II is because this is the way the *Nisei* refer to them.
52. In the case of Hawaii, of the 157,000 Japanese living in Hawaii there were only approximately 2000 Japanese forcibly removed and interned in camps on the mainland soon after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Those who were sent were considered to have a strong connection to Japan and to pose a threat to American national security: people such as Japanese-language teachers, store owners, and temple priests.
53. Harry Kitano, *Japanese Americans: The Evolution of a Subculture, Second Edition* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1976); Doi, *The Anatomy of Dependence*; R. Okabe, "Cultural assumption of East and West: Japan and the United States," in *Intercultural Communication Theory: Current Perspectives*, ed. W. B. Gudykunst (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1983). Their studies helped document and analyze Japanese American behavior, especially *enryo*.
54. Ken Sasaki, an N3 *Nisei*, grew up on a coffee farm in the Kealahkekua area along the Kona Coffee Belt Road. He graduated from Konawaena High School. Over the years, he worked as a carpenter full-time for several different companies. In addition, he worked part-time as a carpenter and a part-time farmer with about three acres of land. He was an active member of the Kona Hongwanji Temple. He was well known as a weekend shore-line fisherman and therefore was an active member of several fishing casting clubs.

55. As previously mentioned, the picture brides arrived after the passage of the Gentlemen's Agreement in 1907. Prior to that, Japanese women were scarce in Kona District.
56. Embree, "Acculturation among the Japanese of Kona, Hawaii."
57. Romanzo C. Adams and Dan Kana-zo Kai, *The Education of the Boys of Hawaii and Their Economic Outlook: A Study in the field of Race Relationship* (Honolulu: University Press, 1928).
58. Japanese farmers borrowed money for food, fertilizers, and other necessities in advance from Japanese general stores at extremely high prices and high interest rates. Both the Captain Cook Coffee Co. and American Factors maintained control over tenant farmers by keeping them in debt. At the end of the year, the stores took each farmer's entire crop in place of their year-long debt. This system ensured the companies obtained high profits and a stable supply of Kona coffee beans. Sakae Morita, *Hawaii Gōjyunen Shi* [A Fifty Year History of Hawaii] (Waipahu, Hawaii: Shineikan, 1919).
59. Adams and Kana-zo Kai, *The Education of the Boys of Hawaii and Their Economic Outlook*.
60. The majority of the *Nisei* mentioned that their parents encouraged them to continue working the family coffee farm.
61. Associated Students Konawaena High School, Ka Wena O Kona, 1931.
62. Miki Yamanaka refer to note 40 in Chap. 3.
63. Agricultural Extension Service, West Hawaii County, Territory of Hawaii, "Annual Narrative Report for the Period Between November 1, 1928 and November 30, 1929," 5. Among other things, the Territory of Hawaii provided new farming technology and started a government agency called the Agricultural Extension Service. This agency offered free information concerning ways to improve the production of coffee crops, mainly in the form of reports on pesticides, herbicides, and fertilization.
64. Koji Ariyoshi, *Honolulu Star Bulletin* No.2, July 18, 1938.
65. Andrew Lind, *Kona: Haven of Peoples* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1949).
66. Ethnic Studies Oral History Project, *A Social History of Kona* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii at Manoa, 1981).
67. Ariyoshi, *Honolulu Star Bulletin* No.2.
68. Documents were acquired from Donn Kawabata.
69. Rechts Anne Pederson, "Alien Land Laws," accessed October 10, 2011, <http://www.santacruzpl.org/history/articles/147/>
The feelings and attitudes described in this source mirror those of the *Nisei* in Kona District.
70. Megan Mitchell is the granddaughter of William Henry Greenwell and the daughter of Doctor Mitchell, one of two medical doctors in Kona District.

71. "Hawaii Community Federal Credit Union," accessed June 16, 2011, <http://www.hicommfcu.com/about-us/overview/history>
72. Kihei Ogawa, refer to note 70 in Chap. 2
73. Arthur Murata, refer to note 62 in Chap. 2
74. Billy Paris, refer to note 82 in Chap. 2.
75. Elsie Colon (Nonaka), refer to note 97 in Chap. 2
76. Ronald Abe, a *Sansei*.
77. Chitose Abe, an N2 *Nisei*, was born in 1911 and was my grandfather. He was employed by the telephone company for 42 years and was an active member in various organizations, including the Kona Daifukuji Temple.
78. According to the Japanese local family registry (*josekitohon*) in Fukuoka, my father (a *Sansei*) was a Japanese national until he was one year of age.
79. Owning a home can be seen as a step in the process of assimilation. William A. V. Clark explores this link in his book *Immigrants and the American Dream: Remaking the Middle Class*. Clark makes clear that the process of assimilation is about more than just being able to purchase a home, however. Clark argues that "home ownership" is one of the steps of assimilation—it implies becoming part of the community and a neighborhood, and being a part of the daily activities that take place in a community. William Clark, *Immigrants and the American Dream: Remaking the Middle Class* (New York: Guilford Press, 2003).
80. Lind, "Assimilation in Rural Hawaii," 209.
81. *Hapa* is a Hawaiian-language term used to describe a person of mixed Asian and Pacific Islander ethnic heritage.

World War II

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the intense period of harsh change brought about by the outbreak of World War II. With the war came an increased stigmatization of the Japanese coffee farming community in Kona District. At the same time, this chapter shows that this stigma strengthened the community, which responded with increased ethnic solidarity. The community met the many difficulties faced during this period by adapting: engaging in greater interaction, sharing, and collaboration with the greater Kona community—weathering the storm of the war by a combination of learning, hard work, and a great deal of resilience.

As stated in Chap. 2, the literature on the incarceration of the Japanese community in internment camps during World War II overshadows studies of the struggling *Nisei* community in Hawaii during the war.¹ For this reason, the focus in this chapter is on the day-to-day experiences of the *Nisei* in Kona, and on those *Nisei* who fought with the US forces. It begins with the immediate effects of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

WARTIME EXPERIENCES

The Struggles and Hardships of Nisei Life During World War II

A few hours after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, on the morning of December 7, 1941, FBI agents—later to be joined by the Military Police—

arrested the majority of the leaders of the Japanese community in Hawaii, including Japanese school teachers, Buddhist priests, Japanese general store owners, and many others that had ties to Japan or the Japanese Consulate. Those arrested were forced to relinquish all of their documents—anything and everything in paper form—and a variety of other items, some deemed to be dangerous, including guns, swords, knives, letters, Japanese books, passports, pictures, and in some cases *butsudan* (Buddhist altars) and *kamidana* (Shinto altars). As a child my grandmother² told me that Japanese-language schools were also immediately closed down and everything they contained was confiscated or burned on sight, including books, tables, and anything that bore Japanese writing.

The arrested individuals were transported to the Kilauea military holding facility and brought before the Enemy Alien Hearing Board, where they were subjected to aggressive interrogations.³ To take one example, Kanesaburo Oshima was the owner of Oshima General Store, and he also worked with the Japanese Consulate. Oshima was arrested on the day of the Pearl Harbor attack because of his involvement with the consulate. He was then taken to the Kilauea military camp, where he was interrogated and ruled to be an enemy alien. He was shipped to the internment camp in Fort Still, Oklahoma. Oshima was extremely concerned about his family left behind, his business loans, and his store, so after a year in the camp he tried to escape over a fence. Within seconds he was shot in the back and died. Oshima's son, Susumu Oshima⁴ (Oshima, interview 2007), an N3 *Nisei*, stated: "When my father was in camp it was a very difficult time for the family, at times we didn't know where he was staying, because the government moved him several times, so we were always worried." Some of the people who were taken to Kilauea were released but those labeled enemy aliens were interned in Department of Justice detention camps set up across the US mainland.

Of the approximately 150,000 Japanese residents in the Territory of Hawaii at this time, approximately 2000 were taken to the internment camps on the mainland, where they were interned for the duration of the war.⁵ The vast majority of *Isei* and *Nisei* in Hawaii, however, were not interned. There were several reasons for this. First, detaining this large a number of people would have been enormously challenging in terms of logistics.⁶ Secondly, the Hawaii Territorial Government had already declared martial law, which significantly reduced the supposed risks of espionage and sabotage by residents from the Japanese community.⁷ Finally, the Territory of Hawaii was dependent on the Japanese community

economically: losing the Japanese labor force would have had a devastating impact on the economy in Hawaii.

The lives led by the Japanese community in Kona during the war involved both a continuation of previous patterns and at the same time new hardships and challenges. For example, the N3 *Nisei* youth continued to attend high school at this time, but pupils were obliged to carry a gas mask, for use in the event of Japanese air raids. On several occasions my father, seeing that my brothers and I were wasteful with food or old items around the house that might still be useful, lectured us with stories about the war and how the entire Japanese community suffered during this time. He recalled: "Some of the friends that I walked to school with were so poor that they couldn't afford shoes."⁸

As has been said, the entire Island of Hawaii was under martial law, mandating curfews and total blackouts at night.⁹ There were constant worries about food shortages because shipping between the mainland and Hawaii was limited. Transportation was also limited due to gasoline rationing. The Japanese coffee farmers met these hardships with resilience: they continued planting their coffee crops to pay their loans and they expanded their vegetable gardens to produce additional food.

In terms of anti-Japanese racism and discrimination, the picture was mixed. While the Japanese in Kona tended to keep a low profile in order not to attract attention during this period, unlike the Japanese communities on the West Coast and other parts of the country that were interned in concentration camps across the United States, the Japanese in Kona did not experience similar atrocities, nor did they suffer from institutionalized discrimination. Several *Nisei* participants mentioned that the Military Police stationed in Kona for the duration of the war were actually sympathetic toward the Japanese community. Mary Katayama,¹⁰ in a Skype focus group in 2009, explained:

Our family had a good relation with the military [police] soldiers. When they found out we didn't have a bomb shelter the soldiers came and helped us build one, and they even provided us with sea rations [military canned goods], blankets, and gas rations. The army had a setup next to our house, and so we brought water from our water catchment to the soldiers and, in return, they gave us candy. I was only four years old at the time.¹¹

Katayama also mentioned: "At night during the black-out time, when light was visible, the soldiers would knock on our door and kindly ask us

to cover the window. I mean, they weren't mean at all, they were nice to us."

Anti-Japanese racism certainly existed, however, and was perpetrated by different ethnic groups. For example, a few non-Japanese who controlled the supply of beef on the Big Island of Hawaii refused to sell meat to the Japanese community. One *Nisei* remembered: "We couldn't get good cuts of beef but rather bones or cheap meat or scraps was the only thing we could get" (Anonymous 14, interview 2007). Another clear example of discriminatory treatment was the fact that a few owners of private fishing holes along the Kona coast prohibited the entry of Japanese. Indeed, a polarizing tendency in the social structure of the greater Kona District became evident at this time, with the society dividing into Japanese and non-Japanese communities. Friends from other ethnic groups who had associations or interactions with Japanese were ostracized. Work and work-related relationships broke down, which was a source of great unhappiness for the Japanese community. Finally, it became taboo to speak Japanese in public places, including schools. The non-Japanese-speaking community reacted strongly to the speaking of Japanese and therefore the *Issei* and *Nisei* parents would tell their children not to speak Japanese in public places.

These developments led to a polarization within Kona District between Japanese and non-Japanese, and resulted in a considerably stronger and more unified Japanese community. Ethnic solidarity within the community was central to it adapting to the changing conditions. In the face of the more threatening actions of the anti-Japanese members of the Kona community, the Japanese community banded together. Yumiko Kondo¹² (Kondo, interview 2008), an N2 *Nisei*, agreed that the Japanese community became closer and stronger during this time, with the *kumi* acting as the fundamental basis for support: "Before the war it was *dore demo ii* (whatever) but when the war broke up [out], everyone became serious about participating in the *kumi*."

The war also brought about a shift in the relations between the *Issei* and the *Nisei*, a process that was also experienced by the West Coast Japanese communities. On the West Coast the *Issei*, who had occupied leadership roles in the Japanese community, were pushed out of these roles by the *Nisei*, on account of their being too Japanese. As a result they became disadvantaged within the Japanese community because of their citizenship status, and the language and cultural barrier. In Kona the *Issei* experienced a similar transfer of their power and responsibility to the *Nisei*, mostly due to the *Issei*'s lack of English-language proficiency. Recognizing that their

better language skills meant that the *Nisei* could negotiate more effectively with government authorities, the Kona *Issei* saw that it was in the best interest of their community for them to relinquish power. Many of them stepped down and handed their positions over to *Nisei*, who were on average about 30 years old¹³ at the time.

Attacks on Japanese Religion

The Destruction of the Kamisama (Shinto Shrines)

Soon after the attack on Pearl Harbor two FBI agents arrived at Kunigoro Yokoyama's general store, which stood directly below the Shinto shrine in the Holualoa area of North Kona. Gladys (née Yokoyama) Fukumitsu¹⁴ remembered clearly when the FBI arrived and arrested her father, Kunigoro Yokoyama. He owned the property on which the Shinto shrine was built, so there was a very high risk of him being accused of being an enemy alien. Kunigoro Yokoyama was one of the fortunate ones, however, and was saved by his past kindheartedness within the community. After being arrested and interrogated Mr. Yokoyama was in the process of being shipped to an internment camp on the mainland when William Hill, a Hawaii Territorial Senator, interceded and secured his released.¹⁵ Yokoyama's daughter Gladys Fukumitsu (Fukumitsu, interview 2009) explained:

William Hill—in his younger days this *haole* [white American] guy used to go all around the island peddling reading glasses. That is how he got his nickname, Doc, or Doc Hill. You know in those days (pre-WWII) from Hilo to Kona it used to take up the whole day, and so to save some money instead of staying in a hotel my father offered him to stay or sleep any place where there was space in the store, or I think in the living room. My father was so kind to him and of course to everybody. He used to eat with us and like he was kinda like family. Later, I don't know when but he became like now a State Senator. So when Doc Hill heard about my father was being detained in a Hilo relocation camp, he went down right away and because he was a Senator got him out of there, and so we were very lucky. And so my father always used to tell us "*ongaeshi*": if you give good things then something good will always come back, and that is what we learned from our parents. After my father was released, maybe I think about less than a week the Shinto shrine problem came up. The FBI¹⁶ agents first started talking to my father asking all kinds of questions and left. Then a few days later the FBI (agents) came for the second time. Then my father called my brother and

me, and told us to take these two men up to see the *kamisama* (shrine). So I was so scared so I let my brother take them up there and I was about 20 or 30 feet behind. In the beginning, the FBI started looking around, and all of a sudden one FBI agent picked up a stick and started wrecking the walls outside. The other FBI agent entered inside and scratched everything inside, tore up all the *kakejiku* (scrolls) and smashed the glass casing and took all the precious Shinto documents and artifacts with them. The only thing they left was a big [taiko] drum. I don't know why they left it...maybe because they couldn't carry it. My whole family was shocked and scared. This is something that I will never forget. At the time I was only 10 years old so I didn't know what to think but I was scared.

Sixty years later, the story of the destruction of the Shinto shrine at Holualoa was still well known within the Japanese community. During a focus group session¹⁷ at the Kona Daifukuji temple in 2009, I informed the group that I had interviewed Gladys Fukumitsu about her family and the destruction of the Shinto shrine at Holualoa. Many of the participants in the session reported that their parents often brought up the subject of the Shinto shrines, expressing their sadness that the shrines were never rebuilt. For many *Nisei*, the Shinto shrines were a part of their ethnic identity formation that was lost during the war. This loss is discussed in more detail in Chap. 6.

The Survival of the Temples

The bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese had a dramatic effect on the Japanese Buddhist communities in the United States. Firstly, the war effectively ended all ties with the head temple in the motherland.¹⁸ Secondly, the *Issei* priests and lay leaders in the communities faced political, social, and cultural marginalization. As previously mentioned, considered as high-risk candidates for espionage, *Issei* priests and lay leaders were rounded up and incarcerated across the mainland: they were targeted as potential enemy aliens and arrested in FBI sweeps.¹⁹

The Kona Hongwanji Jodo Shin-Shu

The Kona Hongwanji temple was closed for a few weeks but was later given permission to reopen by the Military Police. Once reopened, the temple was able to continue holding Japanese ritual ceremonies, led by volunteer lay persons instead of the priests, who were all taken to internment camps on the mainland. Several *Nisei* informants remembered, however, that

after the outbreak of the war few members attended “church,” for fear of being targeted as enemy aliens. The only Buddhist-related rituals people would regularly attend at the temples were funerals, and even those were poorly done in comparison to the past.

Nevertheless, the temple unofficially continued to function as a source of support to the community. Members of the *fujinkai* would meet outside of the temple and work together to help the community; therefore, their service was seen less as an extension of the temple and more as a group of women working in the community to outsiders. Several *Nisei* informants indicated that the *fujinkai* were very supportive of families in need at this time. For instance, for the several families in the Kona area that were considered to be enemy aliens and sent to camps throughout the Hawaiian Islands or shipped off to the mainland for internment, the temple took on the responsibility of maintaining their private possessions while they were interned.

The Kona Daifukuji Zen Soto-Shu

The military took over the Kona Daifukuji temple complex and converted several of the buildings into a central command station for the Military Police. Several military officers patrolled the area surrounding the temple for the duration of the war. However, according to Shizuko Teshima²⁰ (Teshima, interview 2006), an N2 *Nisei*, they did not go inside the building that housed the religious artifacts: “The soldiers stayed away from the *Hotokesama* because you know Buddhist churches are dark and scary and so we told them that there were ghost and spirits and so they were so scared that they never bothered with the inside of the church.”

Teshima mentioned that, despite the absence of the Japanese priests, it was basically business as usual with regard to the Kona Daifukuji. The main Buddhist practices continued at private homes, with laymen leading the ritual services. A majority of the *Isei* and *Nisei* members also continued to practice Buddhist spiritual rituals by themselves. In addition, sewing classes, *ikebana* (flower arrangement), and other non-spiritual rituals that had been started by the temple as community outreach programs also continued throughout the period of the war, in various privately owned locations.

The Japanese Buddhist community endured roughly five years during which they had limited resources—such as updated religious information and items needed for rituals—with which to practice their Buddhist religion. A majority of the *Nisei* informants agreed that, despite the various

hardships and ethnic stigma created by the war, the Japanese community's attachment to the temples did not weaken at this time. In fact, the difficulties during the war generated the need to exercise a form of ethnic solidarity. The temples played a key role in this process, by facilitating this solidarity. As a result, the community's connection to its Japanese Buddhist religious identity was strengthened.

Elements of Japanese-ness Affected by the War

As described in previous chapters, prior to World War II the *Nisei* retained close ties with their parents' country of origin. Throughout their childhood, out of respect for their parents' wishes and to conform with the practice of *oyakoko* (being a good child), they sent money back to their families in Japan. The majority of *Nisei* also had dual citizenship. In addition, most married within the Japanese community, thus perpetuating Japanese culture. However, the onset of war between America and Japan disrupted these ties to the motherland, and created various struggles within the Japanese community, and within families.

When the war broke out, the majority of the *Nisei* severed all ties with Japan. They had to stop sending things to their families in Japan. Many were angry at Japan for starting the war: they felt betrayed and instantly pledged their allegiance to the United States. However, on a personal level, they were concerned about their family's well-being back in Japan. Yoshie Fukushima²¹ (Fukushima, interview 2010), an N2 *Nisei*, mentioned: "Before the war we'd send so much money and stuff back to Japan. Sometimes I'd be envious that those people I never met got so much nice stuff from us. After the war began, my mother was always concerned about them [family in Japan]. She was afraid they'd not make it without our help." According to numerous *Nisei* participants, soon after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, many *Nisei* (both N2 and N3) stopped speaking Japanese among their friends, in an attempt to prove their loyalty to the United States. This action significantly affected the ability of the N2 and N3 *Nisei*, as well as the early *Sansei* children, to acquire a Japanese cultural heritage.

The psychological consequences of the war for the *Nisei* were varied. For example, Masa Morimoto²² (Morimoto, interview 2007) mentioned: "My motivation for learning Japanese just went out the door the day that the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor; I had no desire to learn Japanese at all. At that time we only spoke Japanese to our parents and that was it.

As soon as the war started we immediately stopped speaking Japanese. If you spoke Japanese you were like the enemy.” As previously mentioned, Japanese-language teachers were sent to internment camps on the mainland and Japanese textbooks and other supplementary materials were confiscated and burned. The N3 *Nisei* and the *Sansei* therefore had to rely on their parents for language education.

The Pacific War lasted approximately three and a half years, but the racial stigma for the Japanese community continued long after the war’s end. Some members of the community felt ashamed to communicate in Japanese in public places and chose to continue speaking exclusively in English. Matsuo Matsumoto²³ (Matsumoto, interview 2009) mentioned that after the war ended friends told him: “We are Americans so please speak only English”—they were afraid that they would not be socially accepted. Many chose to speak exclusively in English in private conversations as well, especially on the telephone.²⁴

Nisei in the US Armed Forces

Nisei Loyalty: To Join the Armed Forces or Not?

Many *Nisei* felt that it was obscene for the government to ask the Japanese community to volunteer for the war.²⁵ One N3 *Nisei* participant from Kona²⁶ (Anonymous 15, interview 2007), who refused to volunteer, said: “What person in his right mind would volunteer for a stupid cause when your parents are behind a barbed wire fence in some jail in the desert?” Other interviewees, who did not want their identity to be known, mentioned that they had similar experiences during this period. One informant said: “At the time, I thought I wanted to go but a bunch of us said we don’t wanna fight with the haoles [white Americans]—they hate us anyway.” Many *Nisei* participants felt that there was nothing to gain but dying. Many believed that even if they came back as heroes, it would not have guaranteed them upward mobility in the social structure in Hawaii.

Despite this feeling, however, 82 *Nisei* from Kona District decided to enlist in the US military to prove their loyalty. *Nisei* war veterans explained that there were basically two positions that the military sought volunteers for: translators with the Military Intelligence Service for the Pacific War, and combat soldiers to fight in Europe. The *Nisei* who volunteered were required to pass several different exams, including a Japanese proficiency test. Yasunori Deguchi²⁷ (Deguchi, interview 2008) confirmed that the

33 *Nisei* sent to the Pacific War were almost all N1 *Nisei*, because these people were able to score high marks on the Japanese proficiency test. However, two N2 *Nisei* also participated in the Pacific War. The parents of these N2 *Nisei* had sent their children back to Japan for a Japanese education: one had stayed in Japan for a duration of two years and the other had stayed for four years.²⁸ The majority of the N2 *Nisei* who enlisted in the US military, however, became combat soldiers and fought in Europe.

442nd Regimental Combat Team/100th Infantry Battalion

In May 1943 approximately 1500 volunteers from the mainland and 3000 from Hawaii were assembled for training at Camp Shelby in Mississippi. After training in the surrounding hills and swamps, the regiment was sent to Italy, where they joined forces with the 100th Battalion.²⁹ The troops of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team (RCT) fought in five major campaigns in Italy, France, and Germany between 1943 and 1945,³⁰ and would become one of the most decorated units, relative to its size and length of service, in the history of American warfare.³¹



Picture 5.1 Yasu Abe (Abe Family Collection)

As a child growing up in the Japanese community in Hawaii, stories about the 442nd RCT were often heard in my family—partly due to the fact that my grandfather's elder brother, Yasu Abe,³² fought with the 442nd RCT. For most members of the community in Kona, however, the regiment was only an occasional topic of discussion—for example, at school, where I sometimes discussed the subject with my friends. However, in the Japanese communities across the West Coast, and especially other places in Hawaii, the *Nisei* veterans from the 442nd RCT/100th Battalion were considered heroes—a reputation that they retained for the remainder of their lives. According to Carol Sullivan,³³ one veteran's daughter (Sullivan, interview 2010), in recent times, as the *Nisei* veterans passed away, various scholars have hastened to conduct oral historical narrative research utilizing digital recordings.

The 442nd RCT/100th Battalion After the War

For the most part, the *Nisei* veterans who returned to Kona after the war returned to their pre-war ways of life. After traveling half way around the world and experiencing different cultures, the *Nisei* veterans nevertheless continued to value their own ethnic identity, which, according to their children, they expressed positive feelings toward. The prominent role of Japanese peers in their early ethnic identity formation made them proud of their Japanese ethnic heritage and after the war the Japanese community in Kona was instrumental in the speedy return to the pre-war era norms.

Back home in the United States many of the *Nisei* veterans of the 442nd RCT/100th Battalion remained in close contact. They established a veterans' network and published quarterly bulletins that provided up-to-date news of other *Nisei* veterans, as well as information about various veteran events. Among these events was an annual reunion that was usually held in March at an upmarket hotel in the Waikiki area, and that featured various keynote speakers, along with high-ranking military officials. The annual reunion was a social and family gathering, which offered veterans the chance to reconnect with other veterans. Another event held by both the veterans of the 442nd RCT/100th Infantry Battalion was an annual gathering at the Punch Bowl Memorial Cemetery, where, again, veterans and family got together to reminisce about friends lost in the war, and to discuss family and other social issues. In this way the *Nisei* veterans ensured the continued remembrance of their wartime experiences—and especially of their comrades who did not make it home.

Within this overall network, smaller organizations were formed that mirrored the division of the 442nd RCT into companies. For example, “A” company published its own quarterly bulletin and conducted its own annual reunions. These reunion parties were particularly intimate because these soldiers had fought together, and lost comrades. Some organizations were more active than others, depending on the *Nisei* veterans in the particular company. In many cases these organizations experienced a revitalization when one administration was handed over to another. This was particularly the case when young, vibrant, and energetic *Sansei*—who wished to keep the memory and history of the 442nd RCT heroic bravery alive—assisted and were slowly given responsibility within the organizations.

Veterans of the 442nd RCT did not only maintain connections with each other, however. They retained the relationships they had established with the townspeople of Bruyeres and Biffontaine, the two towns in France they had liberated from German occupation. The relationship was so strong that throughout the years people from the towns would visit the *Nisei* veterans of the 442nd RCT, and the *Nisei* veterans and their families would go back to visit them. On several occasions these veterans hosted reunions with the allies they had fought alongside in both cities.

The Sons and Daughters of the 442nd RCT: The Role of the Sansei in Veterans’ Organizations and Remembrance

As the *Nisei* aged, the veterans’ *Sansei* sons and daughters started to assist in organizing the majority of the events. They also added new events, including a Christmas party. During several interviews, *Sansei* informants indicated that the *Sansei* have slowly taken over the running of the majority of the veterans’ organizations. For example, the current Board of Directors of the 100th Infantry Battalion Veterans Club completely comprises the veterans’ *Sansei* sons and daughters. Numerous *Sansei* interviewed stated that they felt that it was their duty to preserve the heroic stories of the veterans, and that it was a part of the practice of *oyakoko* (filial piety) that their parents had taught them. In doing so, they have vastly improved the level of recognition accorded to these *Nisei* military veterans. To this end, during various events the *Sansei*, as well as the *Yonsei*, assist the aging *Nisei* veterans. For example, according to their internal records, the “Sons and Daughters of the 442nd” organization provides the following assistance to *Nisei* at major events (such as parades)³⁴: assisting veterans and family members to register (family members do not need to man the registration tables); once they are registered, assisting in hand-

ing out wrist tags for those riding trolleys and shuttles (a shuttle service is provided to registered attendees); escorting veterans who arrive early to their designated lounge area inside the exhibition hall; assisting veterans and family members boarding trolleys and shuttles; and assisting veterans as they walk to the lounge area after the parade.

The children of the *Nisei* veterans are also working toward learning more about their parents' wartime experiences. Numerous *Sansei* explained that their fathers never talked about the war. One *Sansei* (Anonymous 22, interview 2010) said: "One of the reasons I am active in these events is because the only way to find out stuff about my father was to talk to his friends or listen to stories when they get together and talk—you know, make believe you're not listening." Several children of *Nisei* veterans explained that now the *Nisei* are elderly they are beginning to share stories that they had suppressed in their own minds for years. Some are beginning to write notes and others are accepting invitations to attend oral narrative sessions. Numerous *Nisei* veterans are now ready to pass on these stories to the next generation. To this end, the "Sons and Daughters of the 442nd" are in the process of constructing a 442nd Legacy Center, in collaboration with the University of Hawaii, the purpose of which will be to teach Japanese cultural history to the younger members of the Japanese community. The hope is to preserve the stories of the 442nd RCT and the 100th Infantry Battalion, which made such a significant contribution to the war effort.

Recent History of the Veterans of the 442nd

The *Nisei* 442nd RCT veterans are now in their 90s and are becoming fewer in number. On a trip to Kona, in March 2010, I witnessed a military funeral with full honors for a member of the 442nd RCT. It was a specially orchestrated funeral, including high-ranking military officials, the folding and presenting of the US flag to the next of kin, the playing of "Taps," and a gun salute. All 442nd RCT/100th Infantry Battalion soldiers are eligible for burial at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, also known as the Punch Bowl Cemetery. This is where, according to the 442nd RCT Veterans' Club, the majority of the 442nd RCT/100th Infantry Battalion veterans are buried.

In June 2000, President Bill Clinton awarded an additional 20 Medals of Honor to both the 442nd RCT and the 100th Infantry Battalion. This was the result of a reexamination of the files of dozens of Japanese American soldiers, with the aim of seeing if any of them might have been denied awards because of possible prejudices.³⁵ Unfortunately, it took the

US government 55 years to recognize the *Nisei* veterans' heroism. To further honor the *Nisei* veterans, in October 2010 President Barack Obama signed S.1055, a bill granting the Congressional Gold Medal collectively to the 442nd RCT/100th Infantry Battalion and *Nisei* interpreters of the Military Intelligence Service, for service during World War II.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the intense period of harsh changes brought about by World War II, which involved ethnic stigmatization of the Japanese community in Kona, but which also resulted in the creation of a stronger Japanese community, marked by ethnic solidarity and resilience. The community was considered to be a possible source of enemy aliens during the Pacific War, which resulted in a polarization between Japanese and non-Japanese in Kona District. Despite this, in many ways the community continued to live much as they had done prior to the outbreak of war. Nevertheless, *Nisei* participants revealed that the community did try to keep a low profile throughout this period. Ethnic solidarity remained central in the community's process of adapting to the changing conditions: the Japanese community became closer, stronger, and more unified, with the *kumi* acting as the fundamental basis for support.

This chapter has also discussed the destruction of the Japanese Shinto shrines, and has briefly touched on the subject of Japanese ethnic identity formation. The destruction of the shrines was a grievous blow to the *Issei* community, and resulted in the *Nisei* losing a key piece of their Japanese cultural heritage. In regard to the Buddhist temples, the practice of Buddhism continued, with laymen leading the ritual services instead of the official priests, who had been sent to internment camps. The Japanese Buddhist community endured approximately five years of limited resources, but they managed to retain their Japanese Buddhist identity.

The study uncovered that in 1943 82 *Nisei* from Kona District enlisted in the US military. Of the 82 *Nisei* that enlisted, 49 fought with the 442nd RCT/100th Infantry Battalion. Four were killed in action. When the *Nisei* veterans returned, they were considered heroes. *Nisei* participants explained that the demonstration of loyalty to the United States on the part of these young men resonated throughout Kona District, and helped to weaken racial discrimination. The fact that the 442nd RCT fought a heroic battle in France while taking heavy casualties also proved to many in the Japanese communities in the United States that the Hawaiian

Japanese Americans indeed retained certain *Meiji*-era values, which should be respected.

NOTES

1. Examples of studies of Japanese communities in Hawaii during the war include: Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore* (Boston: Little Brown, 1989); Gary Y. Okihiro, *Cane Fires: The Anti-Japanese Movement in Hawaii, 1865–1945* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992); Eileen H. Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity: The Nisei Generation in Hawaii* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Dennis M. Ogawa and Evarts C. Fox, Jr. “Japanese Internment and Relocation: The Hawaii Experience,” in *Japanese Americans: From Relocation to Redress, Revised Edition*, ed. Roger Daniels, Sandra C. Taylor, and Harry H. L. Kitano (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991).
2. Tsunoyo Hirayama, an N2 *Nisei*, was my grandmother. She lived in a plantation community in Honokaa on the other side of the Big Island from Kona. She recalled watching the Military Police take away and then burn all of her possessions, including pictures of her father and mother.
3. Susumu Oshima, “Susumu Oshima’s Notes about his Father” (Private collection, 2005).
4. Susumu Oshima, an N2 *Nisei*, was a general store owner, who had several other brothers and sisters. The store is located in the center of Kealahou. He was an active member at the Kona Daifukuji temple. This data was taken when I was little. On several occasions he would reminisce about the time he was in elementary school.
5. Ogawa and Fox, Jr., “Japanese Internment and Relocation: The Hawaii Experience.”
6. Stetson Conn, Rose C. Engelman, and Byron Fairchild, *United States Army in World War 2: Western Hemisphere, Guarding the United States and Its Outposts* (Washington, DC: Defense Dept., Army, Center of Military History, 1964).
7. Ogawa and Fox, Jr. *Japanese Internment and Relocation*.
8. Kona Japanese Civic Association, “More Old Time Kona Stories” (2001). Other *Nisei* reported similar stories during the war.
9. Total blackout meant that all windows needed to be covered to block out all internal lights.
10. Mary Katayama: refer to note 11 in Chap. 4.
11. This contribution was made during a focus group session arranged by Shari Yates, using Skype.
12. Yumiko Kondo, refer to note 56 in Chap. 3.

13. The majority of the Issei women came after the 1907 Gentlemen's Agreement, and therefore many children were born between a ten-year span from around 1909 and 1919.
14. Gladys Fukumitsu, refer to note 32 in Chap. 3.
15. William H. Hill, a.k.a. "Doc," of Hilo, Island of Hawaii, Hawaii County, Hawaii. Republican Member of Hawaii Territorial Senate, 1928–1959; delegate to the Republican National Convention from the Territory of Hawaii, 1944; member of Hawaii State Senate, 1959–1967.
16. It was not possible to confirm if it was indeed employees of the FBI who destroyed the shrine. FBI agents were involved at this time in the search for Japanese nationals deemed to be a national security risk.
17. After discussing this particular issue, the focus group became more receptive to further discussions, providing increasingly rich stories about the resiliency of the Japanese Kona community and how they survived throughout the difficult times described in this chapter. Toward the end of the focus group session some of the *Nisei* participants made me promise that these stories would be added to future research papers, so that they would not be forgotten. They were concerned that the younger generation would forget their Japanese cultural heritage.
18. Similar experiences to this were evident on the West Coast, as mentioned by Michael Masatsugu. Masatsugu and Michael Kenji in their "Reorienting the Pure Land: Japanese Americans, the Beats, and the Making of American Buddhism, 1941–1966" (PhD diss., University of California, Irvine, 2004).
19. Stephen S. Fujita, and Marilyn Fernandez, "Religion and Japanese Americans Views of Their World War II Incarceration," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 5, no. 2 (2003): 113–137. This article notes the targeting of Buddhist priests.
20. Shizuko Teshima, refer to note 43 in Chap. 3.
21. Yoshie Fukushima, refer to note 7 in Chap. 1.
22. Masa Morimoto, refer to note 45 Chap. 4.
23. Matsuo Matsumoto, refer to note 55 in Chap. 2.
24. During that era, the general population could not afford private telephone lines. Most homes obtained party lines, where several homes were connected to the same line.
25. Moreover, a large portion of the Japanese community in Kona (known as the *Kachi-gumi*) firmly believed that Japan would not lose the war. At the time, most of the *Issei* were strongly against their children volunteering for the military, especially volunteering to fight against Japan. It was not surprising that the *Issei*, who sometimes exhibited pronounced Japanese nationalism, were loyal to their mother country. This was another factor

- that deterred *Nisei* from volunteering, in addition to those mentioned above.
26. The interviewee's father was interned on the mainland for the duration of the war.
 27. Yasunori Deguchi, an N2 *Nisei*, grew up in the Kealahou area on the Kona Coffee Belt Road. He was in the 442nd RCT. He is now an advocate for the Japanese American soldiers who fought in World War II.
 28. Those who were sent to Japan for their education were known as *Kibei*.
 29. "442nd Regimental Combat Team," accessed November 7, 2016, <http://www.the442.org/442ndfacts.html>
 30. Ibid.
 31. In total, about 14,000 men earned a total of 9486 Purple Hearts. The unit was awarded an unprecedented seven Presidential Unit Citations. Twenty-one of its members were awarded Medals of Honor. Members of the 442nd received 18,143 different awards.
 32. Lieutenant Colonel Yasu Abe, an N2 *Nisei*, fought with the 442nd RCT. He was one of the few Japanese American officers and was awarded a Purple Heart. He graduated from the University of Hawaii Reserve Officers' Training Corps.
 33. Carol Sullivan (née Abe), a *Sansei*, is the daughter of Lieutenant Colonel Yasu Abe and is an active member of Sons and Daughters of the 442nd RCT.
 34. Sons and Daughters of the 442nd RCT, Meeting agenda December 1, 2011.
 35. "442nd RCT/100th Battalion," accessed May 29, 2007, <http://www.nikkeiheritage.org/research/442.html>

Rebuilding Social and Religious Communities: The Aftermath of the War

INTRODUCTION

This chapter looks closely at the conditions of post-war life on the Japanese coffee farms, and at the characteristics that affected the rebuilding process during the adaptive phase of reorganization that followed the end of the war. It begins by examining the reorganization of the social community, focusing on the *Nisei* and their role in the post-war reconstruction of the Japanese social community in Kona, including their continued involvement in farming. It investigates ethnic solidarity, assimilation, and identity formation in a mostly homogeneous Japanese environment, where white racial discrimination was not present.

The second part of the chapter examines religious identification in this period. It asks: What aspects were vital to the formation of an ethnic and religious identity for the *Nisei*? How did their views of the community change as they learned about their religious heritage, and as they interacted with fellow believers? This section of the chapter examines what role ethnic identification played in the reorganization of two major Japanese Buddhist temples—the Kona Hongwanji Jodo Shin-shu (Kona Hongwanji) and the Kona Daifukuji Zen Soto-shu (Kona Daifukuji)—as well as a smaller sect, the Kona Daishi-do. Finally, it looks at the loss of Shinto and Inari shrines.

This chapter will focus on the development of situational cultural identity and the dense population of the Japanese community, which facilitated their resilience. Resilience is central to adapting to changing conditions

caused by external forces. In this context the chapter focuses on how, because of its ability to self-organize and to build and reconstruct social communities, the Kona community actually experienced relatively little change in the post-war period.

POST-WAR CHANGES IN COFFEE FARMING AND IN THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE *NISEI*

Farming

The majority of the *Nisei* in Kona District who decided to continue farming coffee beans full-time in the post-war period soon realized that coffee farming alone could not provide sufficient revenue to sustain a comfortable lifestyle. In the post-war period, therefore, increasing numbers of *Nisei* sought to obtain other jobs: jobs that would be less strenuous, more stable, and that would provide higher wages. Some downsized their commercial coffee farms, engaging in farming only in order to earn a supplementary income, while others kept their farms but relied on hired help during the peak harvest season, thus enabling them to hold other jobs. This turn away from full-time coffee farming is clearly illustrated by the sharp drop in the number of full-time coffee farmers in the Kona Coffee Belt. During the beginning of the coffee boom, there were approximately 1077 full-time Japanese farmers in the Belt. That figure fell to 600 farmers during the Great Depression of the 1930s, and slowly dwindled to just 32 farmers by the 1980s.

For many of the part-time *Nisei* coffee farmers in Kona District, the coffee farm provided much more than just supplementary income. It also served as a form of insurance: if their main employment was terminated, they could fall back on coffee farming. Conversely, if coffee prices went down, the part-time farmers could rely on their main employment for income. Therefore, many of the *Nisei* slowly decreased their overall dependence on coffee farming, and on the two major coffee brokers who controlled the prices. To a large degree, those that continued farming, either full-time or part-time, did so because they believed it helped them to maintain their freedom—they had learned from their *Issei* parents the importance of not being economically or physically enslaved.

During the post-war period many of the now elderly *Issei* continued to participate in those family farming businesses that still existed. Well beyond retirement age they continued to help cultivate the land. They were an essential part of the labor force, necessary for the *Nisei* to keep

farming part-time. Kihei Ogawa¹ (Ogawa, interview 2008), a *Nisei* part-time farmer, stated: “Since my father cleaned, and took out all the rocks and trees and worked the land for many years, it was difficult to stop and watch the land become overgrown with vegetation again *mottainai* (wastefully).” Another N2 *Nisei* participant, Fumio Okumura² (Okamura, interview 2010), said: “Who the hell wants to pick coffee anymore? But it was difficult to suddenly stop farming. If I stop caring for the land then the land looks ugly, full of grass and weeds—really no choice but to keep farming.”

Changes to the Social Organizations of the Nisei

The Kumi: The Nisei Experience

As mentioned previously, the effective size of a *kumi* was said by respondents to be approximately 15 households. In the post-war period, as membership numbers changed, some *kumi* increased in size and were broken into two separate groups, while others shrank in size and were combined with other *kumi*. As explained in Chap. 3, at the time of the *Issei* the function of the *kumi* consisted of house building; repairing roads; assisting with weddings, funerals, and other social events; and helping the sick. After the war, responsibility slowly shifted to the *Nisei* and the *kumi* were no longer in charge of building houses, repairing roads, and assisting with weddings. However, funerals remained the responsibility of the *kumi*. Traditional Japanese funerals continued to require the additional help and support offered by the *kumi*.

A new *kumi* responsibility that began in the post-war period was the organizing of an annual summer meeting and party. The first such meetings were held in the early 1950s. They usually took place just before the coffee-picking season and were usually held at the beach. During these gatherings the men minded a barbeque pit and the women prepared the table. The agenda of the meeting was similar to the gatherings held in the New Year period. The main difference was that the summer gathering was more oriented toward family. At this event many families from the local community came together to go swimming, play games, and dine together. Many *Nisei* stated that the summer *party* was important to them as it brought the *kumi* members closer together and made them stronger as a Japanese community. Sam Morimoto³ (Morimoto, interview 2010), an N3 *Nisei*, stated:

I am grateful to my parents that made this all happen that we can come together with my children. ... I think for me this yearly *kumiai* party is

one of the ways I identify myself as Japanese but not only this party but the way we come together and help each other at funerals or weddings or when someone becomes sick, we stick together. This is how we define our Japanese culture and values that comes from our parents (*Issei*).

The *kumi* system was an important part of the way in which Japanese ethnic identity was formulated. As mentioned in Chap. 3, the community established the system of the *kumi*, which was a familiar community organization they brought with them from Japan, as a means of assisting each other. The emerging young *Nisei* community embraced and strengthened the *kumi*. For the majority of the N2 *Nisei*, the *kumi* represented Japanese ethnic identity and solidarity. Sam Morimoto, an N3 *Nisei*, stated that only at such gatherings as the *kumi* summer party did he identify as being Japanese. This is in line with statements by the majority of the N3 *Nisei* participants, who made clear that the utilization of dual cultural identities was not uncommon and was a strategic way of reducing ethnic stigma.

Regarding assimilation, the *kumi* system provided the necessary elements for maintaining Japanese cultural heritage and for slowing the speed of structural assimilation among the *Nisei*. Full integration into major institutions of society was impeded by a strong sense of ethnic solidarity. Kihei Ogawa (Ogawa, interview 2008), an N2 *Nisei*, stated: “I guess we had enough things to do *kumiai*, *kenjinkai*, family, and other church-related things we had to do. So I guess there were other social non-Japanese clubs but it didn’t appeal to me because I prefer to stay with my Japanese friends.” The *kumi* were vital in forming a cohesive collective ethnic group that strengthened their members’ negotiating powers within the Kona community.

Other Social Changes

Limited Physical Changes to Houses

Although the post-war era generally saw improvements in living standards in the United States, the home environment of the *Nisei* changed little during this period. Having experienced the Great Depression, racial issues, and high uncertainty in the coffee market, it is perhaps not surprising that the *Nisei* farmers in Kona were conservative in terms of their finances, and therefore any improvements to their homes took place very slowly. The homes of those farmers who continued to farm on a full-time basis changed little as coffee prices remained low and unstable. Even

part-time coffee farmers, who acquired a bit more wealth, refused to purchase expensive consumer goods during the post-war era. One *Sansei* (Anonymous 16, interview 2007) recalled:

My parents (N2 *Nisei*) worked really hard: my father worked at the hospital and my mother at a [general] store. During coffee season they picked coffee every day Saturday and Sunday, grew their own [vegetable garden] food, picked mangos and Lilly koi on the side of the road for free, and never took any trips anywhere. They made pretty good money but never really spend on anything, they were so conservative with their money. I can't believe we grew up in that coffee land junky house all those years.

Electricity: Nothing to Plug In

Electricity was introduced to Kona in the early 1930s but only small businesses and the few who could afford it were able to take advantage of it. For the average coffee farmer obtaining a direct electrical line to the house was a slow process, particularly because, as previously mentioned, the house was usually far from the main road. Several electrical poles were needed to carry the power line to the house, making it too costly for many coffee farmers.

Even if a family did acquire electricity, however (e.g., those who lived closer to the main road), they usually did not have other modern essentials. A refrigerator and other electrical appliances, and later televisions, were beyond most family budgets. Jane Yonemura⁴ (Yonemura, interview 2009), an N3 *Nisei* and a part-time coffee farmer, stated: "I remember when my elder brother brought home the first ice box (refrigerator); you know just about everyone had one except us. We had so much hard times but we managed, it took a long time to save up money for any improvement to the house."

A desire to save money was thus often the cause of retaining traditional household practices well into the post-war period. For example, even those *Nisei* families that had the luxury of receiving electricity still continued to utilize the traditional style *ofuro* (bath), which was heated with firewood, because firewood, unlike electricity, was free. Over time, however, such practices came to be valued as traditions in their own right. My grandparents heated their old-style *ofuro* bath with firewood until the early 1980s. They refused to switch from the outhouse *ofuro* system (which required extra labor) to the more modern indoor-style electric-heated shower system, claiming that the former was a Japanese tradition and was part of their Japanese cultural heritage.

Piped Water

A system of water pipelines was introduced to Kona District in the early 1950s. This was an enormous improvement for the cattle ranchers and coffee farmers in the district, and for the expansion of the tourist industry. In the beginning, however, as was the case with the electricity network, the water network was limited to certain areas. In addition, as was the case with electricity, even those residents who were connected to the county water system did not always fully utilize it during this period because the water it provided was too expensive for the already struggling farmers. The alternative—rainwater—continued to be used instead. In general, the tropical weather in Kona District provided adequate amounts of rainwater to sustain normal growth for the coffee crops. At the same time water catchment tanks captured adequate amounts of rainwater for drinking water, watering vegetable gardens, bathing, and other various needs. Nevertheless, in years when rainfall was not plentiful, the water provided by the county water network proved useful.

One area where the new water network was essential, however, was the development of the tourist industry. Billy Paris,⁵ a large landowner, explained that when the water system was established in Kona investors became enthusiastic about investing in the Kona tourist industry (Paris, interview 2010). Soon after the water network was implemented in the 1950s, an airport and a new hotel were constructed, in the hopes of receiving an increase in tourists from the outer islands and from the mainland.

Food Trends During and After the War

During the war, goods from Japan were unobtainable. Even after the war, when food from Japan finally became available again, numerous *Nisei* farmers indicated that the food supply was not the same as it had been before the war. My father (*Sansei*) mentioned on many occasions that for approximately ten years a number of Japanese foods were unavailable.⁶ During this ten-year window of time, the Japanese community had to create its own Japanese food using the ingredients that were available in Hawaii and from the mainland. It was during this period that several brands of *miso* (bean paste), *udon* (Japanese noodles), and *tsukemono* (Japanese pickles) made in Hawaii started to appear in stores. Other Japanese food products, such as *shiitake* (shitake mushrooms), bottled *rakkyo* (Japanese shallots), and *miso* made by Japanese communities on the mainland, were also sold in Kona stores. Using these ingredients individual Japanese families produced their own Japanese traditional food. For example, my grandmother,

an N2 *Nisei*, made the most delicious daikon *tsukemono* using a recipe that she had learned from her mother. She explained: “The next door neighbor used to make really nice *konnyaku* and we used to kinda trade with each other.”

Within the Japanese community in Kona trading food items in this way was frequent and widespread. Vegetables were traded for fish or other goods. One *Nisei* participant stated (Anonymous 17, interview 2007): “There was a lot of giving back and forth. I wouldn’t say it was trading but you know in Kona if we have too much to eat then we don’t wanna throw it away. ... there was fish and smoke pork, vegetables, bananas, mangos and all kinds of Japanese homemade food.” Another informant stated (Anonymous 18, interview 2007): “Trading with close friends was of course common but we even traded with acquaintances too.” This process of trading provided opportunities for interaction with other members of the Japanese community, which fostered resilience.

It was also during the first ten years after the war that the *Nisei* community gradually began to consume greater quantities of American food products, perhaps due to the reduced availability of Japanese food goods. One area of products that was new to most within the community at this time was canned goods, such as Spam, Vienna sausages, corn beef, and sardines. When transport ship crews went on one of their frequent strikes, these were typically the cheapest sources of meat available in Hawaii.

In regard to the kinds of food consumed in this period, I got a taste of the sort of traditional Japanese food consumed by the *Nisei* when I was present at a funeral in Kona in 2007. The funeral was for an 87-year-old *Nisei* who was a member of my extended family. The post-funeral reception was a buffet, with traditional Japanese food items and popular local items, such as *Kalua* pig, *poi*, and *lilikoi* cake. The Japanese items included sashimi, *tsukemono* (pickled vegetables), *hijiki*,⁷ *nimono*,⁸ *daikon* (daikon radish) salad, and *shiitake* (shitake mushrooms). I observed that the majority of the *Nisei* filled their plates with Japanese food, taking only a few local items. The *Sansei*, by contrast, selected both Japanese and local dishes almost equally, while in general the *Yonsei* appeared to enjoy traditional Japanese dishes, such as *hijiki*, *tsukemono*, and even *nimono*. The majority of the *Sansei* used *hashi* (chopsticks) and the *Yonsei* were similar, with only a few using forks. These observations show that, in regard to Japanese traditional food, preferences did not change very much between the generations in Kona District. This is probably the result of

a cohesive unified Japanese community and the willingness to maintain close family ties.

Traditional Japanese dishes have been passed down to the *Sansei*, but not without some variations. The elderly *Nisei* and the *Sansei* are more concerned with health issues than the older generation, and therefore they have removed several important ingredients in Japanese traditional cooking. For example, people feel that Ajinomoto (monosodium glutamate [MSG]) causes cancer, so it is now omitted from many Japanese dishes in Kona. Low-sodium soy sauce and other products that contain lower amounts of salt are popular as well.

In regard to beverages, when the *Nisei* were young green tea was the their first choice among various beverages, followed by coffee and water. Later, other drinks became popular, such as juices and soft drinks. Elderly *Nisei* participants confirmed that many *Nisei* do not drink as much tea as their parents did. Kiku Kubo⁹ (Kubo, interview 2009), a 94-year-old *Nisei* participant, said: “When we were young we drank green tea everyday but as I grew older, I started drinking other things and eventually now I drink green tea—maybe once a week.” The *Nisei* eventually lost the taste for Japanese sake as well: the majority of *Nisei* prefer beer and other alcoholic beverages instead.

A discussion of the food consumption trends of the Japanese community in Kona would not be complete without a consideration of rice. Rice from California has been available in Hawaii since before the war; however, in the last 20 years California rice farmers have been distributing a Japanese species of rice known as *koshihikari*, under the brand name Tamaki Gold. The Tamaki Gold brand is approximately three to four times more expensive than the other California rice available in Hawaii, which is more popular. Although the *Issei* immigrants complained that California rice was *mazui*—the worst-tasting rice¹⁰—the majority of *Nisei* and *Sansei* prefer the cheaper American rice to the Tamaki Gold brand. As one participant stated (Anonymous 17, interview 2007): “I can’t taste the difference so I just buy the cheap one.” Another participant (Anonymous 18, interview 2007) said:

When I go to the supermarket I see Japanese from Japan they always buy the expensive rice, so one day I thought to myself, gee, if the Japanese (real Japanese from Japan) buy the expensive stuff it must taste better. So one day I spent \$42 on a 25 lbs. bag, while I usually spend only \$7.99 for a bag

of rice. It was good but oh kinda expensive. I can't justify paying so much more for rice.

During my field research in Kona District, I experienced first-hand these differences in opinions regarding rice. My mother, a *Nisei* living in Kona, complained that my purchases of Tamaki Gold were a waste of money. However, to her surprise she realized that the Tamaki Gold brand was indeed tastier in all respects. Since that time, she has bought only the more expensive *koshihikari* rice, along with other members of my family who tried it. I account for this difference in opinion by reference to the fact that the *Issei* had grown up consuming the rice of their homeland, and thus remembered the true essence of Japanese rice, while the *Nisei* did not (until recently at least) have the opportunity to appreciate this important part of their culture.

Post-War Changes to the Religious Life of the Nisei

Rebuilding the Temples: The Kona Hongwanji Jodo Shin-shu and the Kona Daifukuji Zen Soto-shu

During the period of the *Nisei*, transformation of the temples in Kona District, in terms of adopting more Christian-style practices, did not take place as quickly as it did in the case of Buddhist temples on the West Coast or in Honolulu. The services mainly continued to be performed in the Japanese language, and prayers (*okyo*) continued to be performed in the traditional Tibetan language. Prayers and the offering of incense, together with a Buddhist theological sermon on moral topics, were standard elements of services. Services were usually held on Sundays at the Kona Hongwanji, and soon after at the Kona Daifukuji temples as well, in an emulation of the Christian churches. However, only a few people attended, because the *Issei* were not accustomed to “going to church every Sunday like the Christians.”¹¹ In the early 1930s pews were added to the temples and some Buddhist religious doctrines and hymns were translated into English for the *Nisei* who had not seriously studied written Japanese.

As the community accumulated wealth, the two temples—the Kona Hongwanji and Kona Daifukuji (Picture 6.1)—were eventually renovated, to make them closer in appearance to traditional Japanese design.



Picture 6.1 Renovated Kona Daifukuji Temple

This was in contrast to the many temples on the West Coast, which mimicked the architectural forms of Christian churches—or, alternatively, were dull monotonous buildings that had no sense of Japanese-ness. For instance, the Kona Daifukuji temple, which can be seen from the main road, is an incredibly unique temple in the sense that it is made of wood, with a tall curving roof and a Japanese rock garden.

After World War II each temple appointed a Board of Directors, which included a President, Secretary, and a Treasurer, who were elected by the members of the temple. During the *Nisei* era the Board of Directors administered many activities to maintain the Japanese cultural heritage among the *Nisei*, ranging from Japanese calligraphy classes to judo training, as well as various fund-raising activities. Judo was popular with men, while Japanese calligraphy and sewing were practiced by young women.

After the war the three temples retained ongoing organizational and religious ties with the main temples back in Japan, but with limited financial support. The Kona Hongwanji, the Kona Daifukuji, and the Kona

Daishi-do therefore relied on membership donations. This resulted in degrees of organizational freedom.

For the most part, the *Nisei* who resided in Kona District retained a reasonable level of Japanese-language proficiency. For this reason, Japanese national Buddhist priests with very minimal English skills were able to officiate in the temples, although there were some problems for the *Nisei* community in terms of simple day-to-day conversations. Masa Morimoto (Morimoto, interview 2007), an N3 *Nisei* informant, noted:

I guess the English was rehearsed. I mean when he [the priest] came to the house and explained many things about our religion it was interesting but, if you had a question, I don't think he knew what I was asking. And then there was this other priest, I also think it was a cultural problem. For example, we are not to question anything but to just believe, but you know if nobody tells you anything then how do you know what to believe? The *obo-san* (priest) had enough English [proficiency] to teach us many things. He knew we had zero knowledge of our religion, and so he taught us many things. Come to think about it, we were all kind of sitting there waiting for some hint about what this religion was all about.

This situation of the priests' lack of linguistic assimilation lasted until very recently and had an effect on the development of ethnic identity among the *Nisei*. Japanese was not the first language of the *Nisei* and *Sansei* (who spoke English first), so the use of the Japanese language in the temples helped create a Japanese identity among these generations.

The majority of the *Nisei* Buddhist community identified themselves as Japanese Buddhists, having long-lasting ties to their traditional Japanese cultural heritage. Since I am of Japanese ancestry myself, and an insider within this community, it was easy for the interviewees to tell me "I am a Buddhist," or "I belong to the [Kona] Daifukuji." However, some informants explained that it was difficult to explain their religion to people outside of their Buddhist community. Masa Morimoto¹² (Morimoto, interview 2007), an N3 *Nisei*, said: "When I am with people outside my close friends, I usually avoid talking about my religion." One of the reasons why the *Nisei* concealed their religion from those outside of the community was that many Buddhist members had experienced religious discrimination, especially during the war. Another participant (Hayakawa,¹³ interview 2007) mentioned that the demographics had changed over the years, with a small influx of outsiders coming to Kona: "Local *haoles* [white

Americans] are different from mainland *haoles*, so maybe the local *haoles* can understand our religion but not the mainland kind.” The majority of the *Nisei* I interviewed shared these beliefs.

The religious discrimination the *Nisei* Buddhist community experienced, as described in Chap. 5, created a sense of community and ethnic solidarity within the Japanese Buddhist temples, which strengthened the community. Many within the Buddhist community said they felt good about belonging, familiarity, and similarity. Thus, the temples were vital to the continuation of an ethnic and religious identity for the *Nisei*.

Belonging and familiarity can be considered to be the defining characteristics of a person’s connection to a community. In this regard it is interesting to note that the word “belonging” was mentioned frequently in personal interviews with Kona residents. It was often used as a synonym for a sense of community. For instance, when interviewed, participants typically started the conversation with the words “this/our Japanese community is ...” The informants further suggested that belonging referred to more than just being a member of a Japanese Buddhist community—it also referred to familiarity, the affective quality of a relationship between the individual and other members. Informants stated that they felt accepted, included, and welcomed in the Japanese Buddhist temple environment. One participant described how something as simple as a nod or a smile of acknowledgment from a participant in his temple created for him a strong sense of belonging. Miki Sato¹⁴ (Sato, interview 2010), an N2 *Nisei*, stated: “We always feel good when we go to church because we believe in the Buddha of course, but also I am always welcome here because all my friends are there too. I also feel comfortable at the church because I am around my Japanese friends. You know before we all speak Japanese. So really we like speaking Japanese to my [our] Japanese friends.” These experiences also provided Miki Sato with the opportunity to construct and interpret her personal and emotional feelings toward her ethnic identity. As she never attempted to venture outside of the Japanese Buddhist community, her Japanese ethnic and religious identity was strong.

However, despite these important effects of temple membership on *Nisei*’s sense of community, it is interesting to note that in many important respects the temples were unable to offer their *Nisei* members various kinds of support that one might expect from such institutions: financial or practical assistance in times of need, or emotional support in the form of encouragement to reach goals, acknowledgment of accomplishments, and celebration of important occasions. The reasons for this are various.

In regard to financial assistance, Toshio Nakamoto¹⁵ (Nakamoto, interview 2007), president of the Kona Hongwanji, mentioned that the temples barely survived financially: they relied on donations and fund-raising events during particularly difficult times. Thus, they had no capacity to help their members financially. In terms of emotional support, the *Nisei*'s Japanese linguistic proficiency was not sufficiently adequate to allow them to consult with the priest, a Japanese national who spoke Japanese and very little English. In addition, for the most part the *Nisei* had obtained the so-called *Meiji*-era values from their parents, which were conservative, and this limited the support they would request from the priest. One *Nisei* woman (Kondo,¹⁶ interview 2007) from the Kona Daishi-do temple stated: "I never talk to the *obo-san* (priest) about any of my problems. Sometime I wish I could. Sometimes when you watch TV and you see the minister providing comfort to their members of the church, well that never happens in our church." Informants who were members at the other two temples offered very similar comments.

As a child growing up in these temples I can recall watching the elderly Japanese members (*Nisei*) meditating extremely seriously during the services. The elderly women would close their eyes very tightly, bow their heads, with their hands held together with their favorite *juzu* (Buddhist prayer beads), and chant the sutra (*okyo*) out loud. All the elderly members in the temple were very sincere in their belief. They were traditionally connected with their religion. In comparison, a few years ago I attended a funeral in a Los Angeles Buddhist temple, in which the atmosphere was quite different. Many of the members sat slumped over, and there were only a few people holding *juzu* beads. Some members were looking around while reciting the *okyo*. Even the few that were attentive appeared to be unable to recite the sutra by heart.

Reestablishment of the Kona Daishi-do Shingon-shu Temple

Turning to the Kona Daishi-do Shingon-shu temple, during the post-war period the temple, and the charms and talismans it sold, continued to remain popular. As mentioned in Chap. 3, the Kona Daishi-do members were known as healers, having a strong belief in *ofuda* (charms, talismans) and holy water, which could be purchased from the temple. To this day, the Kona Daishi-do temple continues to sell *omamori* (safe charms) pins and *ofuda*. Indeed, *ofuda* can be seen today in almost every Japanese Buddhist and non-Buddhist home across the Kona Coffee Belt. My mother and brothers have *ofuda* and *omamori* in every car and boat

they own. Matsuyo Hayakawa (Hayakawa, interview 2009), an N2 *Nisei*, explained the popularity of such charms: “If you don’t have the *ofuda* then *bachi ga ataru* ... (‘bad fortune will come upon you’) and you know everyone has one in their house, if you don’t have this in your house then your house is not a Japanese house.”

In addition, *Nisei* wore an *omamori* around their neck for the reason that Matsuyo Hayakawa (Hayakawa, interview 2009) mentioned: “I always want to have something Japanese or from Japan.” The *omamori* was worn inside of their shirt, to avoid religious stigma.

In regard to the actual members of the Kona Daishi-do temple, those *Nisei* who practiced at the temple identified themselves as ethnically Japanese or as Japanese Buddhists. Interestingly, the N2 *Nisei* were more attached to the temple than the N3 *Nisei*: they were less afraid of hiding their Japanese Buddhist religious identity inside and outside the community. Both N2 and N3 *Nisei* possessed a strong feeling of belonging but because the N2 *Nisei* could converse in the Japanese language they seemed to have a special bond. Ken Sasaki,¹⁷ an N3 *Nisei*, pointed out: “I feel uncomfortable when I go to church and when the two guys (N2) start speaking Japanese. Even though I am a *Nisei*, I feel bad but that was before, now most of the older *Nisei* are dead so now us younger *Nisei* and the *Sansei* have kinda taken over. Still, our Japanese is a little better than the *Sansei*, so in some ways the *Sansei* I think respect us.” The N2 *Nisei* were also more spiritual than the later N3 *Nisei*. I can only assume that the older N2 *Nisei* were more sensitive to, and more attached to, the old ways—perhaps as a result of growing up in a period when modern medicine was less available.

Funerals: Out with Tradition—The Nisei Experience

During the *Nisei* era there were two types of funerals: the traditional Japanese-style funeral, described in Chap. 4, and the new Western-style funeral. This section examines the new Western-style funeral ritual. *Nisei* and *Sansei* informants told me that most *Issei* preferred the traditional Japanese-style funeral but, as time progressed, the new Western-style funerals proved less expensive and easier to carry out. As mentioned previously, the downside to the traditional Japanese funerals was the fact that they were expensive and required considerable effort to carry out, and on top of this many of the *Nisei* did not possess the knowledge of how a traditional funeral was supposed to be carried out. Key differences between a Western-style funeral and the traditional funerals they began to replace included the hiring of a mortuary to prepare the deceased’s body, reducing the amount of times the sutra was recited, and cutting back on special meals. The prac-

tice of digging the grave was also continued until about the 1960s, when it began to be phased out due to an increase in mortuary services.¹⁸

Although many families decided to carry out Western-style funerals, the majority who did so did not break with the Japanese funeral traditions altogether. To take one example, *Nisei* informants stated that, even where a Western-style funeral was carried out, the immediate family continued to wash the body of the deceased before proceeding to the next step. Peter Kawahara's¹⁹ research notes reveal that this was important for many of the N2 *Nisei*. A mortician was then called to take the body away, in preparation for the wake and funeral (unless the police were needed to confirm the death or investigate the cause of death). The body was usually taken back to the house for the wake in the same evening.

The wake itself was a short service in which the *obo-san* recited the sutra for approximately 20 minutes. A meal was prepared for family or relatives from out of town, and for friends. The body was usually taken back to the mortuary to be stored until the funeral. Because traditional protocol required the funeral to be held the next day, the traditional ritual was to leave the deceased's body at the home so the family could sleep together for the last time. However, as Western-style funerals became more common, only a few families insisted on keeping this particular traditional ritual.

As regards to the funeral itself, this involved the *obo-san* reciting the sutra several times, utilizing a *mokugyo*.²⁰ During the recital of the sutra, incense was first offered by the family of the deceased, followed by close friends. After the sutra was recited, the temple choir sang a few hymns. One *Nisei* informant (Hashimoto,²¹ interview 2009) stated: "In the later years, the funeral became a little more personal—I think something like the Christian kind of funerals where you had grandchildren and best friends go up to the front and say a few nice things on his [or her] life. I think that started to happen just after the war." The body was then taken to be cremated during another reading of the sutra, which lasted about 15 minutes.²² Such Western-style funerals remained largely the same until about the 1990s, when English came to be used for reading the sutra, in place of Japanese or Tibetan.

Although the new Western-style funerals were indeed simpler than the traditional funerals, the community was still very much involved, though with fewer responsibilities. As one participant (Hayakawa,²³ interview 2007) stated: "The *kumi* somehow gets involved, and also basically the whole community gets involved." In a practice that continues to the present day, friends and family bring lots of food to the house of the deceased's family, for several days, wrapped up in traditional *furoshiki*. In addition,

koden is given to the family during the wake or the funeral. In a focus group discussion among *Nisei* and *Sansei*, all participants agreed that some *kumi* members enjoyed funerals, due to their sense of community. They also agreed that not everyone enjoyed participating in collective community services, especially when the *kumi* became too big. For instance, Sam Morimoto²⁴ (Morimoto, interview 2010) explained that helping an acquaintance was seen as “too much—if that person was my friend, of course I would support that family with all my heart, but helping someone I really don’t know?”

As mentioned in Chap. 3, the *kumi* had been the major contributor to traditional funeral services. However, in the new Western-style funerals almost all that remained of the *kumi*’s responsibilities was the preparations for the reception party after the funeral. In regard to the reception itself, several *Nisei* informants remembered that both the Kona Hongwanji and the Kona Daifukuji temples had recreational halls that were used for this purpose, which accommodated approximately 200 people. Photographs taken before the war confirm this. The cause of death determined the mood of the reception. For instance, if death was by natural causes at a ripe old age, then a celebration was in order. Sam Morimoto (Morimoto, interview 2010) remembered that on these occasions the community “would be drinking beer, loud laughter, and partying.” On the other hand, if the cause of death were a tragedy, celebration would be frowned upon.

Up until the 1980s the menu for the reception party remained *shojinryori* (a vegetarian diet). *Shojinryori* was also strictly applied throughout the 49-day mourning period. According to one *Nisei* informant (Hayakawa, interview 2007), this was “religiously followed.” Interestingly, although adoption of a Western funeral involved many departures from the traditional kind, the *Nisei kumi* members were especially strict in enforcing this particular religious tradition.

After the body was cremated, the *okotsu* (ashes) were brought back to the house to start the mourning period. After the mourning period was over, the second important funeral ritual was the *shujukunichi* service (the 49th-day service). This religious ceremony, which included the recital of the sutra, lasted about 30 minutes. The *shujukunichi* service included a small reception for family and close friends.

The new streamlined Western-style funerals removed three to four sutra recitals, two to three special gatherings (which had included meals), and the elaborate preparation of the deceased’s body, which included washing, dressing, and embalmment if the funeral was set to take place many days after the initial death. Most importantly, however, the new form of funerals

reduced the numerous favors or obligations (*giri*) required of the Japanese community. In a focus group discussion among *Nisei* and *Sansei*, one *Nisei* (Abe, focus group, 2005) explained how troublesome the old-style funerals were, due to the large number of helpers, and the resultant *giri*:

So for example you have 30 to 40 people helping out on this funeral, like for the women cooking all these meals, or five or six guys digging the grave [plot] with the jack hammer, and like you may not be doing nothing but because you are there, you are considered helping. So when people help you, you know in the future you gotta give back. So in the old days maybe the down time [the time you were expected to help] is two days for a funeral.

With the Western-style funerals, as the numbers of helpers was reduced so the degree of *giri* was also reduced.

The adaptation to the new form of funerals did not require the total abandonment of all traditional Buddhist rituals, however. Also, as a result, the resilience of the Japanese Buddhist community created the ability to continue practices that provided potential societal benefits.

The Family Butsudan: A Place of Comfort for the Religious Nisei

As mentioned in Chap. 4, because the *Issei* were first-generation immigrants, and therefore had no deceased family members in their new homeland, and thus no remains (in the form of ashes of the deceased), in the early *Issei* years *butsudan* were almost non-existent. The majority of the *Nisei* Buddhists stated that they were introduced to the use of *butsudan* when a parent passed away. When it became time to establish a *butsudan* in the home, the altar was usually purchased, along with other related items, from an importer in Honolulu or in Hilo (on the other side of the island). The items were imported from Japan. The majority of the *Nisei* possessed a *butsudan* and they were generally upgraded an average of two times, and in some cases three times, over the course of several decades. Each time a bigger *butsudan* with more gold replaced the old one.

Along with obtaining a *butsudan*, the *Nisei* developed a greater desire to learn more about the Buddhist belief system and rituals. Many *butsudan* religious rituals were passed down from generation to generation. Ken Sasaki (Sasaki, interview 2009), an N3 *Nisei*, recalled: "I learned many Buddhist things [rituals] from the priest but I think my parents taught me about the feeling, about how important it was to offer to the *butsudan*, and of course *ohakamairi*." However, for many *Nisei* the *obo-san* (priest) came to replace their *Issei* parents as the key source of knowledge

of religious rituals. For example, during memorial services the *obo-san* provided education on religious rituals. Yumiko Kondo (Kondo, interview 2008) explained: “The *obo-san* would explain why we do thing like this or that, or, for example, why we put our hands together or the purpose of *senko*. ... All this, the *obo-san* taught us. He basically was our teacher.”

Comparing the narratives of *Nisei* informants from the Kona Daifukuji temple with those from the Kona Hongwanji temple revealed that the ritual practices of members of each temple were very similar.

Upon a person’s death, a *kaimyo* (new name for the deceased in the afterlife) was given to the deceased. The *kaimyo* was written in *kanji* (which most *Nisei* could not understand) on the front of the *ihai*. The Japanese priest, rather than the family of the deceased, usually chose this name. The *ihai* was used for the funerals and for all memorial services. Prior to the service, the *ihai* was placed in the center in front of the deceased, usually accompanied with flowers and a photograph of the deceased. In order to overcome the problem of having too many *ihai*, the *Nisei* would use a box, in which all the family *ihai* were placed.



Picture 6.2 Family *ihai* box

This structure had a removable top, for the purpose of inserting the thin slices of wood, from which the *ihai* were made. The *kaimyo* was written on the front, and on the back were the name, birth date, and time of death.

The *Nisei* were remarkably faithful to their Buddhist religion. One 72-year-old *Sansei* (Anonymous 20, interview 2008) claimed that her *Nisei* parents were very involved in most of the spiritual rituals, both in their home and at the temple. Several Japanese Buddhist *Sansei* participants, members of the Kona Hongwanji, confirmed that the majority of the *Nisei* shared similar experiences, religious beliefs, and ideology. During a focus group session in 2006, with four *Sansei* women, one participant stated that her father and mother would place offerings and read the *okyo* every morning and before going to bed at night. Another *Sansei* participant (Abe, Focus Group, 2006) claimed that part of her everyday chores was to “make sure the *butsudan* (altar) had fresh *gohan* (rice) every day. ... then after that my mother and sometimes my father would light a *senko* (stick of incense) and *ni kai narasu* (ring the bell twice) then with our hands [held] together with some *juzu* (hand beads), we would start reading the *okyo*.” On the other hand, some *Nisei* participants stated that they only offered food to the *butsudan* on special occasions, but they affirmed that they felt spiritually connected with their deceased *Isei* parents through the burning of incense and meditation.

As was the case with the *Isei*, on the second day of the year during *oshogatsu* (the New Year’s celebration), *kagami mochi* (a very large double-stack rice cake) was offered to the *butsudan*. Many *Nisei* informants insisted that it was especially important that each year they offer the *kagami mochi* to their *senzo* (ancestors), to obtain their blessing. Kiku Kubo (Kondo, interview 2009), an N2 *Nisei* participant, stated: “Offering *kagami mochi* is the most important thing of the year—*shinai to bachi ga ataru* (‘if you don’t do it you will have bad luck’). ... Also for me it was important for my Japanese culture [heritage].” Another N2 *Nisei*, Yumiko Kondo (Kondo, interview 2008), had similar feelings about *kagami mochi*, stating: “*Sore wa joshiki* (‘this is common sense’).” This practice reflected the belief held by the majority of the *Nisei* that if one did not obey certain Buddhist spiritual rituals, one might be cursed (particularly by one’s ancestors) with bad luck. This was part of a general superstition on the part of the *Nisei*, reflected in participants’ narratives, in which numerous *Nisei* participants referred to *bachi* (bad luck).

In addition to offerings of food, the offering of flowers to the *butsudan* was an essential spiritual ritual. In this way, flowers were always present on the *butsudan*. In Kona District, orchids, anthurium, and other popular Hawaiian native flowers were used. Red, white, and pink anthurium lasted the longest—a month, on average—while orchids and other flowers lasted an average of about two weeks. Therefore, replacing flowers was not as troublesome as it might seem. In many cases, the flowers were cultivated under the coffee trees.

As mentioned in Chap. 3, during the time of the *Issei* the family *butsudan* stood near the entrance of the living room, so that other extended family, close friends, and guests could pay their respects to the altar. A *Nisei* informant (Hayakawa, interview 2007) mentioned that they were taught that when one entered a Japanese house: “the first order of business was to pay your respects to the family *butsudan*.” In the *Nisei* period, however, the *butsudan* was often relocated. Approximately half of the participants said that the *butsudan* was moved out of the living room and into another room. This usually took place only after *Issei* parents had passed away. The motivation for this relocation was a feeling that the family’s Buddhist religion should be practiced privately. One N3 *Nisei*, Jane Yonemura (Yonemura, interview 2009), stated:

We decided to move the *butsudan* because actually when we invite [non-Japanese] guest to our house, we feel uncomfortable about our religion and I think our invited guest also feel uncomfortable too. I mean I don’t want to say that I am embarrassed about our religion but you know, while we were growing up, our *haole* [white] teachers used to condemn our Buddhist religion and so ever since then, I feel that our religion is some kind of taboo or forbidden ... But still just because we moved the *butsudan*, does not mean that I don’t offer flowers and food but on the contrary, I still do my everyday offering and change the water every day, and change the flowers when they need to be changed. This is my Buddhist religion my parents taught me while we were growing up.

The size of the *butsudan*, and its prominence in the house, varied, and there were varying opinions on this subject among the different *Nisei* groups. An N3 *Nisei*, Masa Morimoto (Matsumoto, interview 2007), described how “too big and too gorgeous” a *butsudan* created an image of a family being “too religious” among non-Japanese, and even among Japanese Buddhist friends. Matsumoto explained:

After my father [*Issei*] died, my mother bought the biggest *butsudan* she could find, and I mean it was huge. Anyway at first I didn't want my friends to come to my house because they would think that we were too religious. Even though my friends were all Buddhist that belong to the same temple and the other [Kona] Daifukuji Church [temple], they look at the *butsudan* and they were very intimidated. Some of them used to tease me [by calling me] 'Buddha head'.

For N3 *Nisei* having the *butsudan* in the living room was embarrassing when they were younger, but as they aged they continued the practice of keeping a *butsudan*—but they moved it to a different location in the house. On the other hand, the N2 *Nisei* embraced the Japanese Buddhist rituals in a more open fashion, purchasing the biggest *butsudan* available, and placing it in the traditional location, which is the living room. However, it is important to emphasize that regardless of whether *butsudan*-based rituals took place more openly or less openly, retaining these Japanese Buddhist rituals was important for all three *Nisei* groups: regardless of perspectives on the prominence of the *butsudan*, everyday offerings and meditation continued.

For the majority of the *Nisei* Japanese Buddhists, the *butsudan* was a key religious and ethnic symbol: it contributed to the formation of a strong Japanese ethnic identification.

Ohakamairi: *A Religious Ritual Experience for the Nisei*

This section discusses the *Nisei*'s commitment to afterlife communicational rituals, known as *ohakamairi*. Many aspects of the *Nisei*'s relationship to *ohakamairi* were similar to their relationship to the *butsudan*. Like the *butsudan*, the *ohakamairi* figured in both secular and non-secular approaches to Japanese Buddhism in Kona district. Like the *butsudan*, the *Nisei* were introduced to *ohakamairi* only when an *Issei* parent passed away. And, as in the case of the *butsudan*, *Nisei* learned about the practice of *ohakamairi* from the Japanese Buddhist priests.

Due to the absence of ancestral blood relatives in Hawaii, the absence of grandparents' graves on which to place flowers or burn incense, and due to the fact that the *Issei* had migrated to Hawaii as teenagers—and thus had received little exposure to Japanese religious rituals—*ohakamairi* was almost never practiced in the early *Issei* years. When it came time to practice *ohakamairi* (upon an *Issei* relative's death), the *Nisei* therefore had no one to teach them about this particular religious tradition. It fell

to the Japanese Buddhist priests to act as educators for the *Nisei* farmers, in the hopes of restoring this religious and cultural ritual. Yasu Nakano²⁵ (Nakano, interview 2009) recalled:

When my father died, we didn't know anything about the Japanese altar, so I remembered the priest came to our house with this little tiny altar—not like the big ones we have these days, it was small, cheap and he set it up and taught us how to ring the bell and put the *senko* and with the *juzu* and all that. ... Lucky the priest taught us how because my mother had little experience with doing these kind of Buddhist things.

Another *Nisei* participant (Hashimoto, interview 2007) mentioned: “Learning from the priest was probably the best way to learn about Buddhism than from my parents that didn't know anything about Buddhism but just with no question believe. ... so for me it was a good experience.” The priests also provided the *Nisei* with the religious instruments with which to perform these rituals, including the *butsudan*, *senko*, *juzu*, candles, and books.

Ohakamairi was often a weekly, and in many cases even a daily, ritual. The majority of the *Nisei* participants stated that the members of the Kona Hongwanji temple practiced *ohakamairi* more frequently than those of the Kona Daifukuji or the Kona Daishi-do. *Nisei* participants who were members of the Kona Daifukuji said the priest who had been in charge when they were younger had not stressed the importance of *ohakamairi*. By contrast, the Kona Hongwanji priest explained the importance of *ohakamairi* many times. The majority of the *Nisei* participants from the Kona Hongwanji temple remembered that the previous priest placed an emphasis on the importance of *kansha* (appreciation), rather than on the number of visits to the grave. Numerous *Nisei* members of the Kona Hongwanji temple stated that both of their parents strongly emphasized *kansha*, with support from the Japanese priest. Offering flowers and food to the *butsudan* and the family grave on a weekly or daily basis was considered to be the least one could do to honor, and gain the favor of, one's ancestors. As was explained in Chap. 3, one N3 *Nisei* participant (Hashimoto, interview 2007) recalled: “We would go to *ohakamairi* often: my mother used to put flowers and burn the *senko* on my father's grave every week. Also, my mother really believed that going to *ohakamairi* was a spiritual thing that she really believed that their spirits were somehow watching us.” In his interview, this participant also stated: “My mother and the *obo-san*



Picture 6.3 Graveyard in Kona

(Japanese priest) in the past influenced me to go to our family grave and clean up my family grave site and place flowers and offer incenses at least once a week. I remember many times that the *obo-san* would often say that in the Japanese society and the Buddhist religion that appreciation was the most important thing.”

A change seems to have occurred between the *Issei* and *Nisei* generations in regard to male participation in *ohakamairi*: *Nisei* men seem to have participated in the ritual much more frequently than their *Issei* fathers. Miki Sato (Sato, interview 2010), an N2 *Nisei*, stated: “My father would drive us to *ohakamairi* but most of the time he would wait in the car. On the other hand, my husband would always visit the actual grave. He would fill the vase with water for the flowers and help clean the grave site.” Several *Nisei* claimed that it was the Japanese priests that helped bring about this change in attitudes to the ritual among men. Many claimed that this change did not happen overnight but over a period of time and with the assistance of the Japanese priest and the whole Buddhist community.

The majority of the *Nisei* practiced the spiritual ritual of *ohakamairi*, but they did so in different ways. Non-religious *Nisei* found something to cherish in the practice, but they did not attach spiritual importance to it. For example, Matsuo Matsumoto²⁶ (Matsumoto, interview 2009), a *Nisei* participant, stated: “I don’t really know if there is an afterlife but the reason why I go there [*ohakamairi*] is because putting flowers on my parents’ grave is a sign of appreciation and respect. It’s not like I believe in church.” For Matsuo Matsumoto, who offered flowers and water on a weekly basis, *ohakamairi* was not a spiritual ritual: its purpose was to show respect and appreciation. He explained: “It makes me feel good [safe] when I put flowers on my parent’s grave.” For non-religious *Nisei* like Matsumoto, lighting a stick of incense, offering fresh flowers, and *gassho* (putting hands together) and bowing for a few seconds were considered sufficient. On the other hand, for some *Nisei*, *ohakamairi* was a serious spiritual ritual, and was invested in as such. Survivors purchased expensive flowers and incense and spent as much as an hour reciting the *okyo* at the gravesite. Thus, while it was practiced by most *Nisei*, the attitudes to *ohakamairi*, and the exact details of the practice, varied depending on the individual concerned.

In regard to the relationship between *ohakamairi* and ethnic identity formation, several N3 *Nisei* participants mentioned that carrying out *ohakamairi* on a weekly basis brought them closer to their Japanese ethnic identity. Ken Sasaki (Sasaki, interview 2009), an N3 *Nisei*, said: “Of course it is part of our Japanese ethnic identity—you know the name of the cemetery is Holualoa ‘Japanese’ Cemetery. We go to a Japanese Buddhist temple and everything else that is ‘Japanese’. We bring our *juzu* and burn *senko* (incense). This is our Japanese identity. How can you not relate all of this to Japanese ethnic identity?”

Before concluding this analysis of the *Nisei*’s relationship to *ohakamairi*, it is worth making some comments regarding the manner of disposal of the deceased’s body, and the form of gravesites. After World War II there was a change in the manner of burial among the Kona Japanese community. Kiku Kubo (Kubo, interview 2009), an N2 *Nisei*, stated that “when the new priests came from Japan, they kept telling us, oh we don’t bury people any more. In Japan it’s all cremation. So we started cremating.” The *okotsu* (ashes/urn) were placed in a beautiful decorative metal box or urn.²⁷ The urn was then placed in an individual compartment in a mausoleum.²⁸ In many cases, these individual compartments became family grave

compartments. For many *Nisei*, the mausoleum was where the bereavement process, and *ohakamairi*, took place.

In many cases, however, a family might have multiple gravesites to visit, which could be problematic in regard to practicing *ohakamairi*. During the time of the *Issei* the majority of graves were outside—and in some cases these graves were scattered, which caused difficulties for many families. In cases where more than one family gravesite existed, it was standard to carry out *ohakamairi* twice a year. Such visits would be longer than would have been normal in other circumstances, and involved totally cleaning up the gravesite, carrying out maintenance, and laying an abundance of flowers, as well as bundles of incense to burn. Although performing rituals was troublesome in the case of graves that were located outside, *ohakamairi* was nevertheless maintained in such cases.

To solve the problem of multiple gravesites many families made another *ihai* box and placed it in the mausoleum at the temple. For example, my great-grandparents were buried in the Holualoa cemetery, which is



Picture 6.4 Mausoleum at Kona Daifukuji

about five miles from the temple. My father would not allow the bodies to be exhumed and moved to the temple, so instead they had a new *ihai* made for both and placed those new *ihai* in the family *ihai* box in the mausoleum.

In regard to gravestones, the first “marker” was often a wooden stick. In time, a beach rock would replace the stick. Later, families installed a concrete headstone, and finally a granite stone would be put in place.²⁹ Over time family graves were often lavishly upgraded, with some being upgraded twice or more. *Nisei* participants explained that people spent a



Picture 6.5 Granite headstone viewed from the front



Picture 6.6 Granite headstone with home address in Japan written on the side

lot of money in order to please their ancestors and in the practice of their spiritual beliefs.

Finally, it is worth noting that in some cases, families decided to disinter their relatives' bodies and to move them to a satellite temple of one of the large temples. In time, the majority of the members of these smaller temples moved their relatives' bodies again, to the major Kona Hongwanji or the Kona Daifukuji temples. They did so because they feared that in the future no one would tend the graves.

The New Japanese Buddhist Kekkō Shiki (Wedding): The Nisei Experience

One change that came about in the religious and social life of the *Nisei* after the war was in how weddings were conducted. This case is interesting because immigration to Hawaii had already brought about a profound change in how weddings were celebrated among the Japanese community. Thus, the changes that took place after the war were part of a process of development that had begun when the first Japanese immigrants landed in Hawaii.

In the period in which the *Issei* first immigrated to Hawaii, there were in fact no specific wedding rituals, comparable to those seen in Christian practices, in Japan. Weddings were celebrated in different ways, or not at all, and they were not considered a religious ritual. However, when the Japanese picture brides arrived in Honolulu, the Christian community in Hawaii insisted that the Japanese immigrants' marriages be formalized in a ceremony before God. Surprisingly, they did not force the Japanese to conduct a Christian ceremony. Soon after, to satisfy the Christians, the *Issei* community created a wholly new Shinto marriage ceremony—and a shrine, Izumo Taishakyo, near the immigration office, where they could perform it. The ceremony involved a Shinto priest, traditional musical instruments, and sake, with an offering of branches to the gods. This form of ceremony endured in Hawaii for approximately 40 years, from around 1900 to December 7, 1941.

After the destruction of the Shinto shrines (except for the Izumo Taishakyo in Honolulu) at the beginning of World War II, the Shinto marriage ceremonies could no longer take place. Once again it was necessary to socially construct, or reconstruct, a form of wedding ritual. In the absence of the Shinto shrines the majority of the young *Nisei* now chose to formalize their marriages in the Buddhist temples. Therefore, some N2 *Nisei* and numerous N3 *Nisei* were some of the first Japanese in Kona to utilize Buddhist practices in a wedding ceremony.

In the beginning, because of their novelty, these new Buddhist weddings were quite confusing for the *Nisei*. Masa Morimoto (Morimoto, interview 2007), an N3 *Nisei*, remembered:

It was confusing because we didn't know what to expect, especially our parents, because they were married in a shrine (Shinto). Because my parents kept saying that in Japan temples are only for when people die, not weddings. So we were like what do we have to do, or is the ceremony long or like is it gonna be in Japanese because the priest can't really speak English. So, you know, it was interesting.



Picture 6.7 Wedding ceremony held at Buddhist temple (1985)

Why then did young N3 *Nisei* couples decide to wed at a Japanese Buddhist temple? The answer seems to be that doing so developed, or fulfilled, their sense of their religious and ethnic identity, and that of their parents. The majority of the *Nisei* participants confirmed that performing their wedding at a Japanese Buddhist temple played a pivotal role in the formation of their Japanese ethnic identity. The majority of *Nisei* believed that formalizing their marriages at the Japanese Buddhist temples created a sense of happiness and fulfillment for their *Issei* parents. Many *Nisei* also spoke about how weddings at the Japanese Buddhist temples altered how they viewed the temple and their own identity. For instance, Masa Morimoto (Morimoto, interview 2007), an N3 *Nisei*, grew up thinking that the temple was a dark and eerie place. However, his attitude changed once he participated in his cousin's wedding ceremony: he realized that the Buddhist temple was not at all scary. He stated:

Because of that experience I had at my cousin's wedding, I too decided to marry at the Buddhist temple. I am not a hard core Buddhist member but because of the weddings and other events that the church (temple) was involved in I think the temple did many good things for the community. ...

As far as my parents, they didn't say much but you could see it in their faces that they were happy that it was at the church (Japanese temple).

The actual form of the Buddhist weddings in Kona District was quite unique, with Buddhist elements mixed with certain Christian wedding traditions. Most of the N2 *Nisei* women wore the traditional Japanese *kimono*, but some women chose white Western-style wedding dresses, while the men wore Western-style suits and ties. The N3 *Nisei* women, on the other hand, tended more toward Western-style white wedding dresses. The wedding ceremony itself involved a wedding band or a ring, similar to a traditional Christian wedding. In a few cases the Buddhist temple was decorated with beautiful Hawaiian flowers along the aisle, representing happiness for the bride, groom, and the families.

One element that numerous *Nisei* participants agreed was different from a Christian wedding, however, was the length of the Buddhist ceremony. As Kazu Hayakawa (Hayakawa, interview 2010) stated: "The wedding ceremony was really long in comparison to a Christian wedding. Before in our days, the priest read the *okyo* (sutra) over and over four or five times and then read the vows, and after reading the *okyo* again three or four times. And the worst part about the wedding was that it was all in Japanese—we couldn't understand a thing."

Although most weddings at this time took place in Buddhist temples, interestingly, in cases of exogamous marriages or where the family disputed the marriage, the Buddhist priest was asked to perform the wedding ceremony in different locations: for instance, on a beach, in a hotel, or at a public recreational center. The usual reason for this was because family members refused to attend such wedding ceremonies. As the number of weddings being held outside of the temple increased, it became popular for couples to choose to get married in different locations other than the temple. Public recreational centers along the beach were particularly popular wedding locations for many interracial couples. As time went on, the beautiful nature of Hawaii and the low cost of renting recreational centers tempted some Japanese couples to break with Japanese Buddhist wedding protocols and it became popular to hold weddings outside of the temple.

In regard to the wedding reception party, in many cases this was held several months after the marriage—or even later if the wedding had taken place during the coffee-picking season, when leisure time was limited. The



Picture 6.8 Buddhist wedding ceremony at a hotel (1999)

actual legal marriage contract was in many cases signed weeks before the actual wedding reception.

In regard to the location of the reception party, the N1 and N2 *Nisei* wedding receptions had usually taken place first at the bride's home and then a week later at the groom's home. These parties signified that both parents approved of the marriage. (Where wedding parties were not conducted in the family home, this indicated that the parents did not approve of the marriage.) The majority of the N3 *Nisei*, however, chose not to continue this tradition, but rather to hold their wedding ceremonies and post-wedding receptions at the Buddhist temples. They did so for a number



Picture 6.9 Wedding ceremony held at a hotel

of reasons: the Buddhist temples possessed the facilities to accommodate large weddings (cooking utensils, tables and chairs, and other reception equipment necessary for large parties); they were also located in central Kona District, and thus were easier to access than the couple's home; finally, they were also clean, and reasonably priced. A majority of the *Nisei* stated that they preferred the environment of the Japanese Buddhist temples as a venue for their wedding receptions, in comparison to their homes.

The entertainment and food provided at the *Nisei* wedding receptions after the war were different to those provided during the *Issei* period, due to the availability of more diverse Japanese ingredients. The buffet table displayed rice, *nishime* (a *Kyushu* dish similar to *chikuzenni* stir fry), *namasu* (pickled vegetable), *inarizushi* (cone *sushi*), *hijiki* (a black seaweed dish), sashimi (raw fish), salad, *makizushi* (*sushi* rolls), chicken *hekka*,³⁰ and *teriyaki* beef, alongside some local Hawaiian dishes. Other non-Japanese dishes used Japanese ingredients, such as *kamaboko* (fish cake) and *dashi* (Japanese fish stock). Beer and sake were standard drinks, with soda pop for the children and adults who did not drink alcohol. Photographs of wedding receptions from this period show large wedding

cakes on tables in front of the bride and groom, mirroring the Western tradition of the married couple cutting the wedding cake. The reception party ended with the traditional *banzai* cheer from a designated member of the family.

In conclusion, it can be said that by utilizing the Japanese Buddhist temples to conduct wedding rituals the *Nisei* were choosing to retain or confirm their Japanese cultural heritage. In doing so, many *Nisei* argued that this in turn established a stronger sense of Japanese ethnic identity. One *Nisei*, who asked me not to reveal his identity (Anonymous 19, interview 2007), said: “We could enjoy all of our Japanese culture because there were no haoles or white people to tell us how to conduct our business. All of my children had their wedding at the church [Japanese Buddhist temple], this made us more Japanese, which was important to me and my kids.”

Shinto: *The Lost Religion*

As mentioned in Chap. 5, at the beginning of World War II FBI agents destroyed both the Shinto shrine and the Inari shrine. Before the destruction of the shrines, Shintoism was practiced in two places: individually within the home and as a community at the shrines themselves. The community events that had taken place at the shrines were important in teaching children about Shinto practices. In the absence of the shrines, and the community events that occurred at them, a significant portion of the Shinto religion was lost. This section examines the aftermath of the elimination of a Japanese national religion.

According to the Japanese constitution of 1889, the Japanese Emperor had a divine power over his country, which was derived from the Shinto belief that the Japanese Imperial Family was the offspring of the sun goddess Amaterasu. As has been described, at the time it entered the Pacific War against the Japanese, after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the US government demolished the shrines in the Kona District. Unfortunately, neither the US government nor the Japanese community rebuilt the shrines.

Chie Honda³¹ (Honda, interview 2008), a 96-year-old N2 *Nisei* living with her daughter in the Holualoa area, was excited about talking about the Japanese Shinto shrines. She mentioned several times that she was saddened when the shrines were destroyed during World War II: “It was sad because no one could say anything about the shrine after the war because people would think of you as un-American. So I suppose

that after so many years I guess everybody just gave up.” Chie Honda explained that for years no one really discussed the shrines: “I think that it is really sad because it is a true Japanese culture that is lost. I don’t think young people know really what the religion is all about. As for me, when I was little it was so much fun to visit the *jinja* (shrine) every year.”

Several other *Nisei* participants had very similar feelings regarding the loss of the Shinto shrines. Kentaro Tanaka³² (Tanaka, interview 2006), a 94-year-old N2 *Nisei*, was eager to share his feelings and viewpoints concerning the destruction of the Japanese Shinto shrines. He explained: “Government broke the first constitutional amendment of the freedom of religion. So basically the government destroyed our religion by shutting down our *jinja*. The government knew that it was the wrong thing to do, but most of all it was the wrong thing of not fixing it (rebuilding), the *jinja*.” He also explained that for many years it was difficult for the Japanese community in Kona to come forward and discuss exactly how they were treated during the war, or to discuss the destruction of the Shinto shrines: “I am old already 94 [years old] so now I can tell you how I really feel about how things were. For many of us I think we don’t talk about these things because I think it was a shameful experience for Japanese or any race.”

While the shrines in Kona were never rebuilt, one Shinto shrine was rebuilt on the other side of the Big Island of Hawaii, in Hilo. Chie Honda confirmed that later in her life she often visited the Hilo shrine. She explained (Honda, interview 2008): “It gave me back something that was lost in my life and my family background. Visiting the *jinja* in Hilo brought back so much good memories. But what was unfortunate was that I didn’t have the chance to share these experiences with my children.” Chie Honda did in fact bring her children to the Shinto shrine in Hilo, “But by that time, it was already too late because my children had no interest in such religion.”

Due to the destruction of the Shinto shrines, the Shinto religion did not become an important aspect in the lives of the majority of the *Sansei*. The main reason for this was that the *Nisei* were divided into two groups: one group who wanted to rebuild the shrines and the other group who wanted to leave things as they were. They believed that rebuilding the shrines would increase the stigma placed on the Japanese community and they wanted to keep this from happening. At the time, avoiding ethnic and racial discrimination was of greater value than resuming the practice

of their Japanese national religion: it can be surmised that the choice not to reconstruct the Shinto shrines was a strategic decision, with the aim of avoiding religious and ethnic discrimination in Kona. Today, though, a larger number of *Nisei* want to rebuild the shrines. Most of them, however, are too old, or lack the energy, to do so.

Even in the absence of the shrines, however, Shintoism was not wholly eradicated among the N1, N2, and some N3, *Nisei* in Kona. After the war, the *Issei* parents of the *Nisei* continued to practice Shinto rituals. The *kamidana* (miniature shrines) and pictures of the Japanese Emperor continued to hang on the walls of the family home, and every morning parents performed the ritual of bowing to the picture of the Emperor. These practices were intimidating for many young *Nisei* when they were growing up but the majority of the *Nisei* participants insisted that they nevertheless brought them closer to their Japanese ethnic identity.

For many *Nisei* the practices of Shintoism were simple and less complicated than Buddhism. For instance, Shintoism required no special religious tools: all that was needed was the *kamidana* and offerings—for example, rice, fruit, water, and flowers. The *ofuda*³³ was placed inside the door of the *kamidana*. Before worshiping at the *kamidana* it was ritually important for family members to cleanse their hands. The early morning appreciation acknowledgment (prayer) involved making two slow hand-claps, followed by a bow of the head toward the hands for about two seconds. Steve Tanaka³⁴ (Tanaka, interview 2007) remembered these rituals: “We were taught by our parents that during prayer we were not to ask for things or good fortunes, but of appreciation and thanks for what we have. We were taught never to ask for anything or give me this, help me or help my brother because he is sick. My parent would say ‘*bachi ga ataru*’ (‘something bad will happen to you’).”

The majority of the *Nisei* interviewed mentioned having similar feelings toward Shintoism and wished they could have shared these experiences with their grandchildren. Shinto is a simple religion that is learned through experience, with very few sacred texts to refer to. Therefore, in the absence of the shrines, and with the stigma placed on openly practicing Shintoism, it became impossible to pass it down. In this regard, the First Amendment rights, guaranteed by the constitution of the United States, of the Japanese in Kona had been infringed on when the shrines were destroyed and the Japanese community was forced to choose between rebuilding their religion and preserving their perceived identity as Americans among the other ethnic groups living

in Kona. If they had chosen to rebuild the shrines and continue to openly practice Shintoism as a community, it would have been difficult to ensure the safety and fair treatment of their families. In the interest of making life simpler and smoother, they ultimately decided not to rebuild—which has led to the loss of Shintoism among future generations.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown that after the war many of the *Nisei* in Kona District gradually reduced their coffee farming operations to part-time and began to supplement their income with other jobs within the community. During the post-war period the *Nisei* gradually obtained higher wages and less strenuous jobs. In order to do so, the majority of the *Nisei* downsized their commercial coffee farms, reducing their farming activities to the level required to obtain a supplementary income. Others kept their farms going on same scale, but relied on hired help during the peak harvest season.

The chapter also showed that assimilation to modern conveniences, such as electricity, piped water, and home appliances, was slow for the N1 and N2 *Nisei*—due to their preference for old, more traditional ways: the Japanese-style bath system and the outhouse toilet were used well into the *Sansei* era.

As this chapter has also discussed, the daily diet of the N1 and N2 *Nisei* mainly included Japanese food, but for the N3 *Nisei* Japanese food did not always appeal. For example, the N1 and N2 *Nisei* consumed more traditional foods, such as, *rakkyo*, *tsukemono*, *hijiki*, or *umeboshi*, whereas the N3 *Nisei* preferred *teriyaki* meats and *tempura*. The majority of the N3 *Nisei* did eat most of the Japanese foods, but they were not so fond of them. This assimilation to the local diet in Hawaii took place due to early exposure to canned goods and their introduction to a Westernized lunch at school.

This chapter also analyzed the reorganization of the *kumi* in Kona District. Several *Nisei* informants revealed that the *kumi* were a strong element in their ethnic identity. The chapter showed how the *Nisei* embraced the *kumi* system in order to combat ethnic discrimination, finding in the *kumi* a vehicle for ethnic solidarity.

The chapter did not discuss the *kenjinkai* social groups. This is because, as the years passed, the *kenjinkai* became less prominent in Kona District.

Many of the *Nisei* had never been to their parents' homeland and therefore the *kenjinkai* were less relevant to their interests. Nevertheless, despite this decline in popularity, the *kenjinkai* continue to hold annual meetings/parties today, which are attended by the majority of their members.³⁵

The chapter also examined the religious aspects of the *Nisei* community in the post-war period, and assessed these aspects in relation to identity formation. The analysis revealed that the majority of the *Nisei* community structured their religious identity in accordance with their ethnic identity. The chapter showed that as the N1 and N2 *Nisei*'s religious identity became more prevalent, so aspects of their ethnic identity became more pronounced. In terms of the N3 *Nisei*, religious identity and ethnic identity were situational. Among the Japanese community in Kona, ethnic and religious identities were clearly distinguishable—in contrast to the non-Japanese community, whose ethnic and religious identities were very much detached.

The chapter found that the *Nisei* community, especially the N2 *Nisei*, decided to embrace Buddhism, and to learn about the practices and ideas of their parents' religion. They were taught by the Buddhist priests in Kona, a practice that the majority of the *Nisei* participants suggested was normal. The N1 and N2 *Nisei* demonstrated a strong Buddhist faith in their daily life: *Ohakamai* was practiced on a weekly basis, *butsudan* offerings occurred every night, and the recital of sutra was strictly practiced every morning and night, with much conviction. The contributions of the *Nisei* participants suggested that the process of non-secularization in relation to ethnic identity formation was different for each individual: some participants stated that Japanese ethnic identity stimulated them to strengthen their religious faith to some degree, while others insisted that their religious faith brought them closer to their true Japanese ethnic identification.

The chapter showed that, due to the absence of an established religious culture, learning was central in the *Nisei*'s process of reconstructing lost Japanese religious rituals and cultural heritage during the post-war period. My assessment concluded that the *Nisei*'s religious and cultural acquisition was undoubtedly more successful than it would have been if they had grown up in their homeland, because their educators were professional religious practitioners and because the *Nisei* themselves had a strong desire to learn from the *Issei* community.

Finally, the chapter also examined the loss of the Shinto shrines and the hopes maintained among the community regarding reconstruction. The

majority of the Japanese community hoped to rebuild the shrines; however, most of the community felt that the reconstruction of the shrines would create ethnic stigma and ethnic discrimination. Many *Nisei* were saddened by the status quo but as time passed they gave up hope of ever reconstructing the shrines.

Although the Shinto shrines were destroyed in the 1940s, and although ethnic and religious discrimination continued to exist, the resilience of the Japanese farming community in Kona District grew. This increased resilience of the Japanese community in the face of the challenges it faced enhanced ethnic solidarity and increased ethnic identification.

NOTES

1. Kihei Ogawa, refer to note 70 in Chap. 2.
2. Fumio Okumura, refer to note 31 in Chap. 2.
3. Sam Morimoto, refer to note 35 in Chap. 3.
4. Jane Yonemura, refer to note 50 in Chap. 4.
5. Billy Paris, refer to note 82 in Chap. 2.
6. In Japan for about ten years after the end of the war the situation remained very difficult. Numerous Japanese informants that I spoke to described the hardship in this period: the majority clarified that their family had suffered, having very little to eat. One Nagoya resident who was ten years old at the end of the war said: "We had only one rice ball [for dinner] and if you had an egg you were considered lucky or rich."
7. *Hijiki*: a brown sea vegetable that is simmered in fish or seaweed stock, soy sauce, and sake, and is usually prepared with soybeans and carrots.
8. *Nimono*: vegetables and/or meat simmered in fish or seaweed stock, soy sauce, and sake.
9. Kiku Kubo, refer to note 71 in Chap. 2.
10. Andrew W. Lind, "Assimilation in Rural Hawaii," *The American Journal of Sociology* 45, no. 2 (1939): 203.
Lind states: "Rice was thought to be more common although less palatable in Kona than in Japan."
11. Toshio Nakamoto, refer to note 55 in Chap. 3.
12. Masa Morimoto, refer to note 45 in Chap. 4.
13. Matsuyo Hayakawa, refer to note 71 in Chap. 3.
14. Miki Sato, refer to note 46 in Chap. 2.
15. Toshio Nakamoto, refer to note 55 in Chap. 3.
16. Yumiko Kondo, refer to note 56 in Chap. 3.
17. Ken Sasaki, refer to note 55 in Chap. 4.

18. My grandfather, Chitose Abe, was employed by the telephone company for 42 years. In the early stages of his career, he used jackhammers to install electric poles and telephone poles. As a result of his skill in this area, he became part of the grave-digging team for several *kumi*. He mentioned that this job was extremely troublesome because in Kona for the most part the ground is made of hard volcanic rock.
19. Peter Kawahara, "Peter Kawahara's Research" (Private collection, Kona Historical Society, 1988).
20. A *mokugyo* is a wooden percussion instrument shaped like a fish and used when reciting the sutra, mantra, and other Buddhist texts.
21. Mark Hashimoto, refer to note 12 in Chap. 4.
22. The new system evolved after World War II. As mentioned previously, the method of disposal of the body has changed. Bodies are now cremated in an incinerator at the temple, instead of being buried in a grave.
23. Kazu Hayakawa, refer to note 25 in Chap. 4.
24. Sam Morimoto, refer to note 35 in Chap. 3.
25. Yasu Nakano, refer to note 42 in Chap. 4.
26. Matsuo Matsumoto, refer to note 55 in Chap. 2.
27. The metal box was usually made of bronze and the deceased's name and dates of birth and death were engraved on the front.
28. In the case of smaller Buddhist temples, the *okotsu* (ashes/urn) was placed near the main Buddhist statue.
29. Many old tombstones made of cement and beach rocks still remain: especially the tombstones of the first settlers, who passed away with no family in Kona. Other old uncared for tombstones remain, partly due to families moving away.
30. Chicken *hekka* is an invented Hawaiian slang for a dish that is very similar to *sukiyaki*, but with the substitution of chicken for beef.
31. Chie Honda, refer to note 88 in Chap. 2.
32. Kentaro Tanaka, refer to note 23 in Chap. 2.
33. *Ofuda*: These are pieces of paper or wood that have the name of a *kami* (god) or the name of the shrine inscribed on them. It is typical to place it in the *kamidana* and it is thought to protect the family and house.
34. Yoshio "Steve" Tanaka, refer to note 95 in Chap. 2.
35. In the summer of 2010, I attended the Fukuoka *kenjinkai* annual event. I observed that there were approximately 100 families present, with all generations up to the sixth generation in attendance. They served traditional Japanese food and there was traditional Japanese entertainment.

Conclusion

This book has sought to examine the unique community established in Kona by the Japanese immigrants, and how the isolation of Kona and demographic factors contributed to the continuation of that community and the social and religious organizations brought by the *Issei* from Japan. To understand the environment in which the *Nisei* were and its effect on their identity, the second chapter examined the beginnings of the Japanese community in Kona. As the *Issei* came to the Kona area they used their *kenjinkai* connections to obtain jobs, as well as to break into the coffee farming business. As more *Issei* came, many started families, which led to the creation of the *kumi* system. This system gave them a social community on which to rely in order for each family to survive the hardships that came with immigrating to a new country, the instability of coffee farming, racial stigmatism, and unexpected twists of fate. The *Issei* also brought with them their religions. To assist with the spiritual needs of the Japanese community, Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples were funded by the *Issei*. The shrines played an essential role in weddings, daily rituals, and New Year's celebrations, while the temples were key when it came to funeral ceremonies and proper ancestor worship, in the form of *butsudan*, and *ohakamairi* practices. Temples also played an important role in the lives of the women in the community, through *fujinkai*, which organized social, cultural, and community events.

It was within this community fostered by the *Issei* that the *Nisei* were raised. Because of the closeness of the Japanese community, and the strength of the social and religious practices which they enacted, the *Nisei*

of Kona had a strong Japanese cultural identity. Throughout the research for this book it became apparent that *Nisei* could have very different experiences, depending on when they born, and therefore for the purpose of this study the *Nisei* were split into three groups: the early *Nisei* (N1), born between the late 1880s and 1906; the middle *Nisei* (N2), born between 1907 and 1924; and the late *Nisei* (N3), born between 1925 and the 1960s. The early *Nisei* were raised by parents who believed they would eventually return to Japan, and therefore they received rigorous training in the Japanese language. By contrast, the late *Nisei* were raised in a time when Japanese were considered to be the enemy of America and to speak Japanese was stigmatized. Another difference between the *Nisei* groups is that the late *Nisei* had better educational opportunities than the early *Nisei*. Despite these differences between the *Nisei* groups, there was an overarching sense that those raised in Kona, even during the harsh conditions placed on the community during World War II, were raised in such a way that they retained many aspects of their Japanese cultural heritage, compared to those raised in other parts of the country.

The war period saw the destruction of the shrines in Kona and the Japanese community turned in upon themselves in order to deflect suspicion and scrutiny. Many *Nisei* volunteered to join the military to prove their loyalty to the United States, yet at the same time there were those who felt negatively about the idea of being expected to fight for a country that suspected them to be enemies and treated them like second-class citizens. During the war, the leadership of the Japanese community shifted from the *Isei* to the *Nisei*, who had a better command of American ways of doing things and of the English language. In these ways the Japanese community in Kona survived the war.

After the end of the war, several things changed: the *Nisei* began to move away from full-time coffee farming and began to take jobs elsewhere within the greater Kona community. Lifestyles also changed: the standard of living increased due to the advent of electricity and piped water. In some cases the *Nisei* also had the opportunity to buy their coffee farms from the landowners. The *Nisei* also placed a great deal of importance on education when it came to their children, whom they sent to the best schools they could afford. Despite these changes the *Nisei* continued to rely on the *kumi* system their parents had established, and while the shrines had been destroyed, they continued those religious practices within their homes. Due to the destruction of the shrines, the Buddhist temples took on the role of hosting wedding ceremonies for the community, in

addition to continuing to provide for the spiritual needs of families and helping to guide them through the funeral process.

The children and grandchildren of the *Nisei* have gradually spread out from Kona, moving to different parts of Hawaii and the country more widely. Those who stayed in Kona, however, have been raised in the close-knit Japanese society the *Issei* created and they exhibit more “Japanese qualities” than those living in other parts of the country, who have been influenced to a greater degree by mainstream American culture. An example of the difference between a Japanese from Kona and one from other parts of the country is nicely illustrated in the following story about a visit to my relatives living in Los Angeles.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s those who lived in the bigger cities of Hawaii or on the mainland tended to regard the Japanese from Kona as being backward, conservative country people. On my visit to Los Angeles I could sense this general air of being looked down upon by my more liberal relatives. This was before the Japanese economy boomed, after which people became more interested in Japan and Japanese culture. In 1982, I left Kona to move to Portland, Oregon, for college and stopped by to visit my relatives in Los Angeles on the way. During my stay there, I remember talking to my cousin Carol, who mentioned to me that she was engaged to a white American. Without even thinking I said, “You’re going to marry a white guy?” In Kona the Japanese community was quite large and most people would not, even at that time, consider marrying someone who was not Japanese. In my family’s Los Angeles living room, however, what I assumed was a harmless question was met by silence. After several seconds Carol replied in an icy voice: “I might expect something like that from my parents, but not you.”

It is clear that the Japanese who moved away from Kona had gained more liberal ways of thinking, and had moved farther away from their Japanese roots, than those who remained in Kona. Another illustration of this can be seen in the relationship my father, Ronald Abe, had with the Kona community. My grandfather, Chitose, was fortunate enough to have a job with the telephone company and therefore did not need to continue to farm coffee. Due to the steady income from this job, he was able to send my father to a private Christian high school, Mid-Pacific Institute, in Honolulu. During his time at Mid-Pacific, my father converted to Christianity and following graduation he continued on to higher education, which led to various jobs across the country, away from Kona. However, when I was in elementary school, my father retired and brought

us back to Kona to settle down. Because he had spent his teenage years in Honolulu and his early working career away from Kona, my father was not fully accepted into the Japanese community in Kona—a fact that was exacerbated by his choosing to live just below the Kona Coffee Belt. However, after returning to Kona my family rejoined the Kona Daifukuji Temple and my brothers and I, and now their children, have all become active members in the temple. While my father did not have shared experiences with many of the Japanese in Kona of his generation, this was not the case for me and my brothers: we went to high school in Kona and participated in temple and *kumi* events. This shows the unique nature and strength of the Japanese community the *Issei* and *Nisei* created in Kona: as the years passed, the social and religious institutions established by these two generations saw some reinvention, but they remained important aspects of life in Kona despite the changes in demographics and industry.

Today, *kumi* still play a central role in the lives of their members. While they no longer consist solely of Japanese family households, they still continue to assist with funerals. Even now, when a member of a household within a *kumi* dies, the family will immediately contact the head of the *kumi*. As was done in the time of the *Issei*, the head of the *kumi* will inform other *kumi* members of the death, and will assist with funeral arrangements. On the day of the funeral the *kumi* members will prepare a meal for the funeral goers, as was done in the past. It is important to note that, because the *kumi* are now made up of families from different ethnic groups and religions, the funerals are no longer exclusively held at Buddhist temples but are held at the religious institution the deceased member was affiliated with. In addition to assisting with funerals, *kumi* also hold fund-raising events for creating a fund that can be used to assist members of the same or other *kumi* who are in need. The roles of fund-raising and funeral assistance were brought by the *Issei* from Japan and carried on by the *Nisei*. Even though today life is much different for Japanese living in Kona, this social organization is still thriving. While *kumi* retain much of their original function, various aspects have been modified over the years to meet the needs of member families, who are increasingly no longer solely Japanese.

Kenjinkai have become less prominent in the everyday lives of the Japanese community living in Kona. However, each *kenjinkai* continues to hold an annual meeting, which is well attended. A centerpiece of each meeting is to recognize elderly members and their milestones, such as birthdays. The meetings are typically followed by a party. The membership

of the *kenjinkai* now includes women and therefore one family could potentially belong to several *kenjinkai*, due to marital ties. As with *kumi*, *kenjinkai* also hold fund-raising events. In the case of *kenjinkai*, it is common for funds to be used in the form of scholarships to support the children of members going off to college. *Kenjinkai* no longer play such an important role in the lives of their members, but they do offer a place for members to reconnect with others who share a common tie with their homeland, Japan.

The Kona Japanese community's religious organizations have seen many changes over the years. As mentioned in Chaps. 5 and 6, the Shinto shrines were destroyed during the war; therefore Shintoism, as a community practice, did not survive past the *Nisei*. However, the *kamidana* still exists within family homes. While the meaning behind the *kamidana* and the practices associated with it are lost, the presence of the *kamidana* still remains. As generations pass away the *kamidana* is typically moved from the parents' home to the home of the oldest son. This happens along with the transfer of the family *butsudan*. Since Buddhism continues to be practiced, the meanings and importance of the family *butsudan* have been passed on to the younger generations.

The temples today have expanded their services to cater to the ever-evolving community. After the shrines were destroyed, weddings began to be held at the temples. This practice continues today, with the added variation of couples hiring priests to preside over their nuptials at other locations, such as hotels or outdoor venues. The sutra is still read in Japanese; nowadays, however, an English translation also follows. This is now the standard for both weddings and funerals.

As the greater community in Kona has become more multicultural, Kona Daifukuji has welcomed members from different cultural backgrounds, and in recent years even the leadership of this temple has become more diverse, with the president being a white American woman. The Kona Hongwanji is currently a bit more conservative and prefers members to have some connection to the Japanese community. Besides funerals and weddings both temples also continue to hold *Bon Odori* events. This mid-summer festival is one major yearly event that is well attended even by the *Yonsei* (fourth generation) and *Gosei* (fifth generation).

In more recent years it has become popular to participate in traditional Japanese cultural activities—something that *Issei* and *Nisei* would not have a concept of because they were living within a Japanese culture on a daily basis. One popular activity is *taiko* drumming. Another way in which *Gosei*



Picture 7.1 Buddhist temple wedding

interact with Japanese culture is by taking Japanese-language classes in high school. This is different from the language schools the *Issei* created for their children in that it is something they start learning from high school, as a foreign language.

The majority of the Japanese community in Kona no longer farm coffee and those who do are *Nisei* or *Sansei* who are doing so part-time. A major reason behind this shift away from coffee farming is due to education. The *Issei* and *Nisei* put a huge emphasis on education when it came to their children. Coffee farming was not seen as the best way to make a living because it involved a lot of hard manual labor, with little payoff. Parents wanted their children to have better opportunities and comfortable lives; therefore, as the generations progressed fewer people stayed to farm coffee. Those *Nisei* and *Sansei* who continue to do part-time coffee farming do so out of a sense of *oyakoko*, out of respect for their parents and a desire to maintain the family farm. However, this is becoming increasingly rare.



Picture 7.2 Buddhist temple wedding ceremony

What typically happens is that, as the *Nisei* die, their children sell off the coffee land. In the 1990s the price of land in Kona dramatically increased and rich white people began to buy the farms, on which they would build extravagant homes. It is these people who have continued to farm coffee, as a way of lowering property taxes, creating what are known as gentlemen's farms. Even though Kona is becoming more multicultural, the greater community there is still influenced to a high degree by the social and religious systems the *Issei* and the *Nisei* created. There are strong ties to Japan through these systems and organizations—unlike in other places in the country, which have a more “American” feel to them and little connection to the homelands of the different ethnic groups who live there.

Despite the changing demographics, family members moving away from the area, the rise of the tourist industry and the decline of coffee farming among the Japanese population, the Buddhist temples' diversification, and the loss of the Japanese language, the Japanese population in Kona has

still retained the core values (Japanese behavioral norms) brought by the *Issei*. These values include *haji* (shame), *on* (appreciation or obligation), *oyakoko* (filial piety), *tatemae* (the art of hiding your feelings), *enryo* (when to say no), and *bachi* (bad luck), which continue to be passed down to each generation from parents to children. In addition to these behavioral norms, the third, fourth, and fifth generations also continue to value education, and stress the importance of continuing on to higher educational institutes. While the Buddhist temples may have become more diversified, the Japanese in Kona still see their Buddhist religion as an important aspect of their lives and continue to practice within their homes as well as within the community. Recently, within the fifth generation (*Gosei*), a revival of Japanese culture and language has been taking place. Instead of seeing the Japanese language and culture as something to be ashamed of, the *Gosei* view them as something to be proud of—something they wish to learn in order to become closer to their ethnic heritage. Finally, the Japanese in Kona today still identify themselves as Japanese, not Japanese Americans. Within the fourth and fifth generations new terms, such as “pure Japanese” and “half Japanese,” have been used to identify the degree of Japanese roots an individual has. In this case someone who identifies themselves as pure Japanese is stressing the fact that their ancestors were all Japanese, whereas someone who identifies themselves as half Japanese is explaining that one of their parents is not Japanese. The fact that they stress the importance of their parentage in this way, instead of simply calling themselves Japanese Americans, shows that within the community in Kona, despite the changes that have happened, the Japanese identity and the values brought by the *Issei* still have a central role in their lives.

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