

The Japanese American Centennial in Hawai'i: A Critical Look at Ethnic Celebration

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In 1985, the Japanese American community in Hawai'i celebrated the 100th anniversary of the arrival of Japanese contract laborers under direct government auspices to Hawai'i for work on the sugar plantations. Well over 100 separate events were planned for what was probably the largest display of ethnic immigrant celebration in Hawai'i's history. The centennial highlighted the history of an ethnic group which, because of its size and roles, played a crucial part in the development of contemporary race relations in Hawai'i. It is appropriate, therefore, to subject that century of experience and the celebrations that attempt to honor it to critical review. The fact that Japanese Americans in Hawai'i are facing unusual and difficult times makes such a review even more imperative.¹ There are, to be sure, many crucial issues that transcend ethnic boundaries. Among them we include the threat of nuclear war, demographic shifts, uneven economic development, and ecological dangers. And it would be safe to say that every ethnic group confronts particular stresses more than others. This examination of the celebrations of one such group—Japanese Americans in Hawai'i—may reveal something of the nature of change in race relations, the direction and speed of those changes, and, more particularly, internal dynamics of ethnic minority experience in the U.S. and Hawai'i.

Previous studies of the Japanese in Hawai'i have emphasized the dramatic shift in their fortunes from the oppression of the pre-WW II period, symbolized by the sugar plantation *luna* (overseer) and his whip, to the American Dream-like demonstration of loyalty to the U.S. on WW II battlefronts, and, finally, to the subsequent rewards

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in the form of educational, economic, political, and occupational mobility.² There is no doubt that considerable changes occurred between the 1930s and the 1950s, but the fact of ethnic stereotyping appears to be alive and well. The old stereotypes depicted the Japanese as sneaky, clannish, disloyal, and arrogant.³ The newer versions, sometimes helped along by the Japanese themselves, emphasize the near-miraculous rise from their position as down-trodden, patient, farsighted, and determined, to new heights as a successful, monolithic, and arrogant power. Some things do not change. The pre-WW II stereotype has been challenged elsewhere, so this account will focus on the more recent stereotypes by examining the centennial.⁴

The basic observation derived from this review of the centennial year is that previous notions of the relative harmony of race relations in Hawai'i, the security of the status of Japanese Americans in Hawai'i, and the image of the local Japanese Americans as a monolithic community must be revised. Indeed, it may be that such images, including alleged harmony or clannishness which are the same quality given different values, are due to older interpretations of vertical structured relationships and the importance of group harmony imputed to Japan itself rather than observation of the ethnic group in Hawai'i. Recent scholarship has effectively questioned overly simplistic notions of harmony in Japanese society.⁵ We are left, however, the task of similar reexamination of the Japanese in Hawai'i, although some important steps have been taken.⁶

BACKGROUND

Although the Japanese wrote early and often about their arrival and experiences as immigrants in Hawai'i, the first major celebration took place only in 1935 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the *kanyaku imin* or government contract laborers.⁷ The *Nippu Fiji* (Japan Hawaii Times), until recently one of the two major Japanese language dailies in Hawai'i, marked the occasion with a special edition which included dozens of articles as well as profiles of successful immigrants.

The next major celebration did not take place until 1968 when the community noted the centennial of the arrival of the *gannenmono*, the ill-suited first group of laborers recruited from the streets of Yokohama. Kenji Goto, who chaired one of the contending committees for the 1985 celebrations, was general chairman for the 1968 centennial. He and members of the Centennial Celebration Committee agreed that

both the *gannenmono* and the *kanyaku imin* had been “pioneer immigrants who, as laborers on plantations toiling under unspeakable hardships, contributed with indomitable diligence to the establishment of a viable, successful sugar industry in Hawaii.” Thus, their overriding motivation to have a celebration was “to pay tribute to and commemorate the priceless contributions and sacrifices made by the first group of immigrants and subsequent arrivals.”⁸ While there were the obligatory luncheons, tree plantings, and memorial services, the highlight was clearly the royal visit by Prince Hitachi and Princess Hanako of Japan’s imperial family. On 16 June 1968, the centennial banquet honored the Prince and Princess who entered the Ilikai Hotel’s Pacific Ballroom “accompanied by kahili bearers and royal retinue, signaled by the blowing of a conch shell and a native chant. Hula dancers on a side platform danced for the royal couple.”⁹ At this time, the major input for planning and implementation of the events came from first generation *issei* and prominent second generation *nisei* like Chairman Goto.

In 1960, Dr. James Okahata, a *nisei* dentist, chaired the committee to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the *kanyaku imin* arrival. Again, the major event was the entertainment of the Japanese royal family, represented by Prince Takamatsu and his bride. There was the usual tree planting—a rainbow shower selected to represent the colorful “flowering” of the Japanese American community in Hawai‘i. Some of the events also reflected *nisei* concerns. When the royal couple was entertained at a welcome *lū‘au*, for example, Tomiya Sato of the famed 100th Battalion awarded prizes to essay contest winners.

A special song was composed for the celebration by Itsuro Hattori who had been a Japanese language school instructor and on the editorial staff of the *Nippu Fiji* during his stay in Hawai‘i in the 1930s. Hattori had become a famous songwriter after returning to Japan and was visiting Hawai‘i *en route* to Washington, D.C., as a member of the press to celebrate the centennial of the opening of relations between the U.S. and Japan. As a guest of one of his former students, Harry Minoru Urata, who had become one of Hawai‘i’s foremost teachers of Japanese music, Hattori observed preparations for the 75th anniversary events and contributed “An Ode to the Issei”:¹⁰

1. The virility of an Eastern nation
 Transferred to this Southern Paradise
 By our courageous brethren
 Is overflowing the eight islands.
 Oh! Let us not forget the 75 years
 Let us celebrate this memorable day.

2. The forests have their own bounty
The seas harbor fortune
And in this land of tropical paradise
To be treasured is the spirit of our pioneers
Oh! Let us not forget the 75 years
Let us rejoice on this memorable day.

3. The years have sped by as in a dream
Our furrowed brows show the passage of time
But our spirit has been passed on
To leave its mark unto posterity
Oh! Let us not forget the past 75 years
Let us rejoice on this memorable day.

The lyrics themselves are unremarkable but may be seen as something of a cultural benchmark of self-identification. In 1960, the Japanese community is celebrating itself, and while it includes aspects of Hawaiian tradition, it focuses events on Japanese cultural activities including the finale, an amateur song festival sponsored by the giant NHK (Japan Broadcast Corporation) on September 28, the first to be sponsored outside of Japan.

The Japanese are the only ethnic group to distinguish, linguistically, among generations from the immigrant (*issei*), the second (*nisei*, the first generation born in the U.S.), third (*sansei*), and down to the fifth and sixth generations. It is not clear, at this point, how far this particular practice can or will continue.¹¹ What is clear, however, is that the Japanese have a highly developed sense of their collective history as an immigrant group. This quality of self-conscious, deliberate recording of their experiences began very early with the publication of numerous newspapers, journals, and books by the generation of government contract laborers (1885-1894). Indeed, by 1900, only 15 years after the arrival of the first boat, Hidegoro Fujii had published his *Shin Hawaii* (New Hawaii) which chronicled the experiences of his countrymen.¹² *Shin Hawaii* was a massive achievement with nearly 700 pages covering everything from the geography and history of the islands to the latest literary output of the immigrant Japanese. It would be interesting to determine the degree to which this characteristic was shared by other immigrant groups or whether this was unusual.

PARTICIPANTS

There is no tradition of egalitarianism or grass-roots participation in planning and implementing the celebrations of immigrant arrival among the Japanese in Hawai'i. Leadership has come from prominent

business and professional types in the Japanese community and, in the post-WW II period, mainly from the ranks of the United Japanese Society, an umbrella organization comprised largely of older, *issei*-oriented groups. In 1985, however, this leadership, now represented by older, retired *nisei* in their 60s, 70s, and 80s, was challenged by a powerful group of younger *nisei* led by individuals associated with Governor George Ariyoshi and the Hawai'i State government.

A. The Oahu Kanyaku Imin Centennial Committee (OKICC)

Headed by 80 year old *nisei* Kenji Goto, the OKICC was activated in 1983 to begin planning for the 1985 celebration. Goto was also chairman of the 1968 celebration committee. Approximately 20 separate organizations are represented including some recently formed groups like the Honolulu chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League, a national civil rights association boasting about 30,000 members nationwide. The committee also departed from more traditional role designations by including a dynamic younger *nisei* woman, Ruth Ono.

B. The Governor's Coordinating Council (GCC)

Formally chaired by Governor George Ariyoshi, the GCC is actually led by Hideto Kono who recently retired from his state cabinet post as director of the Department of Planning and Economic Development. Perhaps the most widely respected of Ariyoshi's cabinet members, Kono devoted nearly all of his time representing the governor at meetings and events dealing with the Japanese centennial. The GCC includes significantly wider segments of the state's larger community than does the OKICC. Representatives of the four county mayors attend monthly meetings as does someone from the Japanese consulate and from C. Brewer & Co., a major corporation. GCC began in January 1984, well after the OKICC, in order to raise funds for an international conference center to be built in memory of the original contract laborers. Known as the Hawaii Imin Centennial Corporation, it was headed by two prominent non-Japanese businessmen: John Bellinger, chairman of First Hawaiian Bank; and Robert Pfeiffer, chairman of Alexander and Baldwin. This Corporation originally set out to raise approximately ten million dollars for a new center but found that it had problems with appropriate site location and adequate fundraising and eventually scaled its expectations down to four million dollars to renovate Jefferson Hall of the East-West Center.

By mid-1984, it was becoming clear that the centennial year would be marked by potentially damaging competition between the two major groups in the crucial area of fundraising. I remember a meeting of the OKICC when several individuals, including Milton Yanagawa (a *nisei*) of the Japan Travel Bureau made the initial proposal that the GCC coordinate all the fundraising in order to centralize operations, avoid duplication of effort, and avoid a corporate backlash because they anticipated so many different efforts to secure financial support. The OKICC response was less than cordial: it would lose control of the efforts to raise money; how could it wait for the GCC to gear up for the year when some funds were immediately needed to secure rental space, etc.; finally, how could the OKICC rely on the GCC for a fair return on goodwill it had been generating over two years and, in the case of a few individuals like Kenji Goto, over two decades of work on celebrations like the one under consideration? In sum, the GCC was seen as an interloper who should have stuck to his original intention of building one conference center.

According to Hideto Kono, however, "we saw that the project was beginning to take on so many different elements. . . . The only thing that could be done was to bring them all together and try to schedule them in a way that there's no doubling up." The circumscribed objective of the original group was thus enlarged, possibly to allay fears that the OKICC was demonstrating that it was incapable of planning substantial events of sufficient quality to commemorate the century of Japanese American progress in Hawai'i. Kono explained that the 1985 celebration had to be conducted in a far different manner than previous ones when the "governor was non-Japanese. Generally the attitude was: 'This is a local ethnic group's activity; let them do their thing.' But our governor cannot avoid that, so he has to get involved. If he doesn't, he gets dragged into it because of inquiries from Japan. So the situation has changed."¹⁸

The GCC has had a variety of institutional advantages. First, it is clearly the governor's creation and benefits enormously from that relationship. Second, the constituent groups must accord it some respect because of the official support it enjoys. Finally, it commands grudging respect from the OKICC if only because the ideology of the OKICC includes a heavy dose of pride in *nisei* accomplishments, including the rise of George Ariyoshi to the highest office in the state. Further, the GCC has aggressively pursued younger and wider areas of support. Several people serve on both the OKICC and the GCC.

Ruth Ono is one of them. Although there are few women on the Council, both Ono and Dr. Margaret Oda, Deputy Superintendent of the state's Department of Education, are articulate and valued members of the GCC. Oda, representing the Japanese Womens Society, heads an effort to transmit traditional values brought by the *issei* to the younger generations. There are others: Robert Masuda, Executive Director of the YMCA in Hawai'i, has played an active role; and the Council was not reluctant to include me in its deliberations despite the fact that some of my work, after assuming the post of Ethnic Studies Program Director, involved confrontations with the state government. Finally, the staff of the Hawaii International Services Agency has provided clerical, logistic, and other support work for the GCC. HISA is part of the state's Department of Planning and Economic Development.

C. The Government of Japan

The official Japanese Government positions and actions have been an important problematique for analyzing the history of the Japanese in America from the very beginnings of immigration to the present. On the one hand, Tokyo has always made it clear that its first obligation and priority lay with the advancement of Japan's national goals and that constituents, including its overseas subjects or citizens, were only a small part of the overall picture. To the American public, however, there has always been a relationship assumed to exist between the Japanese minority in the U.S. and the Japanese government. This assumption continues to exist, albeit in attenuated form, in the present context. The immigrant *issei* fully expected the Japanese government to support their efforts to secure equal treatment from the Hawaiian Kingdom and the U.S. Government—expectations that fell dramatically short of the reality of support so many times that some referred to themselves not as *imin* (immigrants) but as *kimin* (abandoned people).

Japan is usually represented by the local Consul General, although there are occasions when higher ranking dignitaries are involved. Ceremonially, the peak came with the royal visit of Prince Hitachi and Princess Hanako in June 1985. The same couple represented the imperial household in the 1968 centennial celebration. At the luncheon sponsored by the GCC on 6 January to "kick-off" the year's festivities, Shintaro Abe, Japanese Foreign Minister, and Yoshio Okawara, Japan's ambassador to the U.S., were both present. Local Consul Generals have been most closely connected to the

Japanese community in Hawai'i, and they, too, have a long and sometimes stormy history including incidents where they appeared to the immigrants to be collaborating far too closely with American officials or Hawaiian plantation owners in labor or civil rights disputes.¹⁴

More recently, outgoing Consul General Mitsuro Donowaki noted at his farewell reception that 1985 would mark the centennial of Japanese government contract labor arrival but that "this centennial is going to be the last such anniversary. There will be no 110th or 120th or 150th anniversaries. They (the Japanese in Hawaii) will be all lost as a people. . . ."¹⁵ This casual remark fits well with both academic and popular treatments of the future of Japanese Americans in Hawai'i, especially considering intermarriage rates and the speed of assimilation.¹⁶ Nonetheless, for a community fond of celebrations, it was still another unwelcome and gratuitous annoyance coming from the direction of the consulate. Reizo Watanabe, editor of the *Hawaii Hochi*, prefers a benign interpretation in which Donowaki really means the last such anniversary of the old type in which *issei* and older *nisei* dominate the planning.¹⁷

Whatever the interpretation in this case, there can be little doubt that the abrupt recall of Consul General Taizo Nakamura in February 1985 was a reflection of Tokyo's apprehensions about the centennial. It is widely rumored that Nakamura was rotated out of the consulate well before his normal tour of duty should have ended because the Japanese government, perhaps the Kunaicho representing the Imperial Household in particular, was apprehensive about the evident split between the GCC and the OKICC.¹⁸ Such disharmony could have marred the visit of Prince Hitachi and, at the very least, endangered the purpose of the trip—to promote goodwill between the U.S. and Japan. One major task of the new Consul General, therefore, was to resolve the differences sufficiently to ensure a smooth royal tour.

D. Others

There are a variety of other groups involved in the centennial. Every major corporation has been asked to contribute in one form or other. Several donated \$100,000 each to the conference center built in the East-West Center's Jefferson Hall. Hawai'i based businesses have been besieged by requests for funds from a host of directions including special publications or media presentations which need advertisers. Because this was the Japanese centennial,

the local Japanese American business community became a particularly inviting target. The Hawaii Visitors Bureau, Japan Travel Bureau, and Japanese National Travel Organization were keenly interested because of visitor traffic from Japan; indeed, the public relations activities in Japan touting the centennial matched the level of work being done in Hawai'i. Prefectural governors were visited by delegations from Hawai'i, and several, especially those from areas which sent considerable numbers of immigrants to Hawaii, did send official delegations. Martial arts and cultural organizations such as the Urasenke tea association sent groups and incorporated informative tours or lectures dealing with the centennial. In Hawai'i, the ripple effect reached smaller arts and culture organizations and individuals who became inspired to treat the themes of the celebration in their work. In short, the planning and direction were provided by relatively small groups, but the participation was broadly based and assumed many forms.

OBJECTIVES

There were, I believe, two sets of objectives for the 1985 centennial celebration. The first was overt and straightforward and included items such as paying tribute to the *issei* pioneers and increasing appreciation of Japanese contributions to Hawai'i's unique multicultural society; reasonably familiar aspects of ethnic celebration. The second is more difficult to assess. It was not part of any "hidden agenda" but was not openly discussed, in conformity with contemporary reluctance to expose race or ethnic problems. This set of objectives included careful planning of the events and symbols of the centennial so that the generation of ethnic pride in the Japanese American community would not exacerbate some deteriorating relationships between the Japanese Americans and others, especially Native Hawaiians and *haoles*, both of whom are becoming more important as the demography shifts and economic and political changes increase the vulnerability of the Japanese Americans who have become relatively successful.¹⁹

The traditional objectives espoused by the OKICC group follow older patterns and assume the primacy of the ethnic group itself. In an interview, Kenji Goto succinctly summed up the reasons for celebrating the *kanyaku imin*: "First, pay tribute to the *issei* for their hard work and suffering; second, pass this sentiment on to the third and fourth generations of Japanese Americans."²⁰ In his proclamation of 6 January 1985, the Governor articulated a far broader set

of concerns as he designated 1985 "The Centennial Year of Japanese Immigration to Hawaii." Ariyoshi noted that "the early Japanese faced much adversity" but was careful to place that experience in context by comparing it with "other immigrants to Hawai'i and the United States." He made specific mention of the Japanese contributions but insisted that they had been "conjoined with those of the native Hawaiians and many other immigrant groups." Finally, Ariyoshi hoped the year's celebration would encourage people to "reflect on Hawaii's uniqueness" and "perpetuate the special spirit of Hawaiian aloha for future generations."²¹

The media centerpiece of the 6 January kickoff luncheon was an elaborate slide presentation produced by the professional firm, Abraham and Dunn. A \$5,000 production, the three projectors flashed hundreds of images on a giant screen in order to convey the message, explicitly provided in the final segment, to hail the centennial as "more than a Japanese American community event. . . . It is recognition of the sacrifice and hard work of the Issei, who left homeland and family to pioneer alone a new life for themselves and their posterity. And it is a testimony to the ideals of an open society in which *kokoro* [literally, heart or spirit] and aloha have been entwined for the harmony that is Hawaii." "*Kokoro* and Aloha" was the title of the production.²²

The second set of objectives is only rarely openly discussed, but the feeling is strong among older *sansei* (third generation Japanese Americans) and younger *nisei* who are most sensitive to the vulnerability of their ethnic group in the face of political, occupational, and social challenges. Rather than address the total range of ethnic groups with which alliances might be forged or common bonds reestablished or created, there seems to have been a consensus that the *haole* community be included at important levels of planning and fundraising but that the major effort be a symbolic assertion of historical ties with Native Hawaiians.

THE SYMBOLS

The reigning monarch when the first *kanyaku imin* arrived was King David Kalākaua, celebrated as the champion of traditional Hawaiian culture in the face of overwhelming *haole* domination. Kalākaua was an important figure in the long and complex series of negotiations which finally resulted in the Meiji Government's willingness to allow the Japanese to emigrate to Hawai'i. His personal stop in Tokyo in 1881 was the first visit by a head of state to Japan and an extremely

important symbolic gesture to the new government, then only three years into its existence after having toppled the Tokugawas. During that visit, Kalākaua evidently left his entourage for a secret meeting with the Emperor Meiji. The sugar industry was growing so rapidly, especially after the signing of the Reciprocity Treaty with the U.S. in 1876, that the need for cheap labor was becoming acute. Thus, the request for Japanese laborers was neither new nor surprising. Of particular interest to observers of the 1985 Japanese centennial celebration, however, is the Hawaiian monarch's attempt to convince the Japanese that an international alliance between Japan and Hawai'i be forged to help protect their mutual hopes for independence against Western colonialism.²³ The king's experience with Europeans and Americans had convinced him that some countervailing force was necessary.

Kalākaua also proposed that there be a marriage between his niece, the Princess Ka'iulani, and the young Prince Yamashina (later, Komatsu) whom he had seen on the tour. This, he hoped, would presage the more substantial intermarrying of Japanese with his native Hawaiian peoples whose numbers had been declining rapidly in the 19th Century. The King and his envoys appealed to the Japanese as a "cognate race" to join the Hawaiians in a desperate attempt to prevent *haole* domination.²⁴

While few of the planners of the Japanese centennial understood the historical implications of Kalālaua's desperate moves, it is clear that they were very much taken with the notion that the expression of aloha extended 100 years ago might be rekindled in the troubled world of contemporary race relations. The unstated target of any such contemporary "alliance" may not be the *haoles* of a century ago, but it is difficult to conjure up images of other ethnic groups with as much actual or potential power. This, then, formed the impulse behind the centennial's emphasis on the Hawaiian "connection."

Both the GCC and the OKICC have adopted logos. The Governor's Committee selected a sugar mill and stylized sugar cane motif to symbolize the crucial role played by that industry in the immigration itself and the lives of the *issei* and *nisei*. The OKICC version includes the three numerals making up the number 100 with graphics within each of them. There is a sugar mill in the 1, King Kalākaua in one O, and a stylized cherry blossom in the second O.

The Hawaiian Mint secured GCC approval to sell special coins (gold at about \$700; silver \$40; bronze \$10) commemorating the

centennial. It, too, uses sugar as a theme but includes the notion of family and continuity by using an immigrant couple with their *nisei* son and daughter in a formal portrait on the flip side. Interestingly, the newspaper ads for the coins feature an elderly *nisei* and his *yonsei* (fourth generation) grandchild, illustrating the shift in generations with drastic decrease of *issei*. In several tree plantings to celebrate the year, the *fukugi* was selected. This is a genus native to tropical Asia but widely used as a windbreak in Okinawa where the seeds were provided to Y. Baron Goto who grew the seedlings and who explained that the *fukugi* were sturdy and upright, like the *issei*.²⁵

The OKICC delegated to the Honolulu Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League the task of commissioning a statue of King David Kalākaua to be placed in some park or other appropriate place in Waikīkī, presumably so that both local residents and tourists, especially those from Japan, could appreciate his role in welcoming the immigrants to Hawai'i. The JACL needed to raise \$250,000 for this project. The last time the Japanese community in Hawai'i commissioned a work of art for the public was shortly after the end of World War One. A large fountain in the shape of a phoenix, symbolic of society being rebuilt out of its own ashes, was created and prominently displayed in Kapi'olani Park in Waikīkī. In a fit of anti-Japanese reaction, Hawai'i destroyed the fountain after the attack on Pearl Harbor.²⁶ On Maui, Japanese Americans planned statues of Japanese immigrants, but the selection of Kalākaua seemed particularly significant since it was a major undertaking and fit in with the objective of building stronger ties with the Native Hawaiian population.

There is additional evidence. Palani Vaughn is a composer and musician noted for his research on and depiction of the Kalākaua era as well as of the King himself. Vaughn is, therefore, the preeminent symbol of the Kalākaua connection. On the evening of the banquet sponsored by the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and the GCC to commemorate the arrival of the *City of Tokio*, the first ship bearing the *kanyaku imin*, Palani Vaughn was asked to provide entertainment on the program. On KCCN, the radio station featuring native Hawaiian music and shows, Palani Vaughn hosted a series of one minute vignettes of the Japanese in Hawai'i entitled "A Centennial Celebration."²⁷ Finally, the GCC formally adopted a song for the celebrations. This official centennial song was originally written in Hawaiian by Vaughn and may usefully be compared with

the official song written by Itsuro Hattori for the 1960 celebration of the 75th *kanyaku imin* arrival.

“A Rainbow of Goodwill”

1. A rainbow “appeared in the heavens”
A rainbow born in Hawai’i
A rainbow of goodwill
That extends to Japan in Kahiki
Aloha! Aloha!
2. A tour of goodwill
was undertaken by King Kalakāua
“The torch that burns at mid-day” (King Kalākaua)
Travelled over the seas to Kahiki of the Rising Sun (Japan)
Aloha! Aloha! Aloha mai!
3. The beloved King sought for the kingdom
Immigrant laborers from abroad
The Meiji answered the sacred royal one
The first Japanese (immigrants) arrived in Hawai’i
Aloha! Aloha! Aloha mai!
4. Fondly remember the bond of Aloha
Shared by these two royal ones of a former time
Who formed and shaped the Rainbow of Goodwill
A rainbow for the descendants of those first Japanese immigrants
Aloha! Aloha! Aloha mai!

THE CONFLICTS

The Japanese immigrant community in Hawai’i was never a particularly harmonious and unified one. Unfortunately, it was always convenient and useful from outside the community to depict it as a monolithic whole, from earliest descriptions as good, clean, dependable laborers, to later vilification as agents of the *mikado* and untrustworthy workers, especially during the 1920 sugar strike, to the heroic *nisei* who helped transform Hawai’i from a feudal barony to an open, democratic society. Unfortunately, too, the Japanese community itself has always felt it useful to attempt to portray itself as a united and monolithic unit in order to be protected against attacks from the larger society. There were exceptions, to be sure, including the very public debates over the proper response to Territorial efforts to close the Japanese language schools in the 1920s. That issue badly split the Japanese community, and the two major newspapers, the *Hawaii Hochi* and the *Nippon Jiji*, led opposing camps in a vicious press campaign. Since Pearl Harbor, however, the Japanese American community has rarely allowed its internal differences to surface; indeed, it has been intimidated into a collective

posture which allows little room for discussion or debate. It remains to be seen whether the centennial, after its conclusion will provide a forum for some of the discussion to take place—discussion which could help dispel the unhealthy myth of the Japanese American monolith in Hawai'i and encourage debate among Japanese Americans themselves.

The basic conflict within the Japanese American community appears to be between the GCC and the OKICC, but there are indications that that problem has been resolved. Given the overwhelming institutional advantages held by the GCC, including official relationships with the Japanese consulate, the Oahu Committee was hard put to offer major resistance. But the basic differences between the two groups may be traced back to an observation by *Hawaii Hochi* editor Reizo Watanabe that the traditional form of celebration will disappear with this centennial. It is possible to go further: the substantial role of the Governor's Committee was dictated by the prominence of the *nisei* governor himself within the state public sector. As Hideto Kono put it, "our governor . . . has to get involved."

When the next celebration rolls around, it is highly unlikely that a similar conflict will arise. The more traditional representatives of the United Japanese Society will be gone, and the UJS itself will have either changed or disappeared. But so will the outlook represented by the Governor's Committee because, as I have argued in more detail elsewhere, the *nisei* and later generations are quickly having to learn to live with much less public and political influence.²⁸ Some of the centennial projects have been less than popular. The international conference center being built at the East-West Center has drawn considerable criticism for the manner in which the choice was made, the choice of Jefferson Hall itself, and the highhanded aura of the whole deal. As Agnes Niyekawa, Professor of East Asian Languages at the University of Hawaii Manoa and former staff member of the East-West Center, explained:

. . . it was like taking over the whole building—away from the East-West Center for something different. . . . If it's an international conference center, people are here just for three or five days. They won't give a damn whether it says 'Imin' or doesn't say 'Imin' or what 'Imin' means. They won't appreciate the fact that it's in memory of the centennial celebration or anything. . . . I think the Japanese immigrants really made tremendous strides. It should be in commemoration of that. And somehow it seems so unrelated to the local Japanese, which I think is sad, . . .²⁹

Ethnic celebrations are likely to be here for a very long time. They change in form and substance as the historical and material contexts

change. They also reflect the changes taking place within the ethnic group itself. Although the Japanese in Hawai'i are one of the most studied groups in Hawai'i, there are serious and interesting gaps in both information and interpretation. One of the more promising approaches may be the rejection of the notion of ethnic solidarity and the use of a conflict model to understand both the internal dynamics of the ethnic group and the relationships it has developed with the rest of society.

NOTES

- ¹ Franklin Odo, "The Rise and Fall of the Nisei," *Hawaii Herald*, 5.16 to 5.21 (17 August–2 November 1984).
- ² See, for examples, Andrew Lind, *Hawaii's Japanese* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1946); United Japanese Society, *A History of Japanese in Hawaii* (Honolulu: United Japanese Society of Hawaii, 1971); Dennis Ogawa, *Kodomo no tame ni* (Honolulu: UP of Hawaii, 1978).
- ³ Stanley Porteus and Marjorie Babcock, *Temperament and Race* (Boston: R.G. Badger, 1926).
- ⁴ Franklin Odo and Kazuko Sinoto, *A Pictorial History of the Japanese in Hawaii, 1885-1924* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum P, 1985).
- ⁵ Ellis Krauss, Thomas Rohlen, and Patricia Steinhoff, *Conflict in Japan* (Honolulu: U of Hawaii P, 1984).
- ⁶ John Stephan, *Hawaii Under the Rising Sun* (Honolulu: U of Hawaii P, 1984).
- ⁷ Kenpu Kawazoe, *Imin hyakunen no nenrin* (Immigrants: One hundred years of history) (Tokyo: Imin hyakunen no nenrin kankokai, 1968) 329-332.
- ⁸ United Japanese Society, *A History of Japanese* 327.
- ⁹ United Japanese Society, *A History of Japanese* 329.
- ¹⁰ United Japanese Society, *A History of the Japanese* 408, originally written in Japanese and translated for the United Japanese Society volume; personal conversation with Harry Urata 10 April 1985.
- ¹¹ Harry Kitano, *Japanese Americans* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1976).
- ¹² Hidegoro Fujii, *Shin Hawaii* (Tokyo: n.p., 1900).
- ¹³ Karleen Chinen, "The Centennial Celebration's 'Friendly Fire,'" *Hawaii Herald*, 6. 3 (1 February 1985): 1.
- ¹⁴ Odo and Sinoto, *A Pictorial History*.
- ¹⁵ *Honolulu Advertiser*, 10 January 1984: A-8.
- ¹⁶ For example, Andrew Lind, *Hawaii: Last of the Magic Isles* (London: Oxford UP, 1969) 120; Ogawa, *Kodomo no tame ni* 547-549.
- ¹⁷ Personal conversation 21 February 1985.
- ¹⁸ A variety of reliable sources have indicated that Nakamura was recalled because he had not been able to resolve the problem.
- ¹⁹ Odo, "Rise and Fall."
- ²⁰ *Hawaii Hochi*, 23 January 1985: 5.
- ²¹ Official GCC Program for 6 January 1985 Luncheon, "Centennial Proclamation and Recognition Day."

- ²² Script, "Kokoro and Aloha" (Honolulu: Governor's Coordinating Council, 1985).
- ²³ Odo and Sinoto, *A Pictorial History*.
- ²⁴ Odo and Sinoto, *A Pictorial History*.
- ²⁵ *Hawaii Hochi*, 19 February 1985: 1.
- ²⁶ Mary Wakayama, "The Phoenix Remains," *Hawaii Herald*, 6. 20 (19 October 1984): 8-9.
- ²⁷ *Hawaii Hochi*, 7 March 1985: 1.
- ²⁸ Odo, "Rise and Fall."
- ²⁹ Chinen. "Celebration's 'Friendly Fire' " 11.