



OIDEYASU!

## LESSONS OF WAR

### War Taught Kyōto Professor the Importance of Peace

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**Hawai'i Herald Columnist**

In a class that I teach at Kyōto's Ritsumeikan University titled "Minorities in Japan" my students and I have been engaging in an interesting conversation: In this circular world of globalization, transnational migration and re-migration, and immigration and emigration, do nation, ethnicity, and citizenship continue to play a central role in our identities? Who are we, not as citizens of a particular country, but as peoples?

Recently, I had an opportunity to speak with Dr. Kazuyo Yamane, an associate professor of Peace Studies at Ritsumeikan University. Professor Yamane is also the editor of MUSE, a bilingual newsletter of the Japanese Citizens' Network of Museum for Peace, and a board member of the International Network of Museums for Peace. We met in her office above the Kyōto Museum for World Peace at Ritsumeikan University.

Professor Yamane explained that her interest in Peace Studies started as a young woman. She grew up on Ōshima Island in Yamaguchi Prefecture. Many Japanese from her hometown emigrated to Hawai'i to work on the sugar plantations in the early 1900s. Her own great-grandfather emigrated to Hawai'i in 1886 and her grandfather later moved to Tacoma, Wash., where her mother Nobuyo Yamane was born. Although Nobuyo moved to Ōshima, Japan, when she was 13 years old to take care of her sick aunt, she told her daughter many nostalgic stories about growing up in America. Professor Yamane pointed out that her mother always felt a bit different as a Nikkei (a Japanese born outside of Japan) living in Japan. During World War II, Nobuyo and other Nikkei living in Ōshima were interrogated by the police who viewed them with suspicion of spying on Japan for America, the enemy.

Nobuyo graduated from college and later worked as a home economics and English teacher at a local junior high school. Although she became accustomed to her life in Japan, Nobuyo often experienced the hardships and conflict of being of Japanese ancestry but not quite Japanese, due to her free-spirited and independent ways.

As a result of her mother's stories of being Nikkei, Professor Yamane said that even as a child, she also felt a part of America. But her feeling of familiarity and closeness was not without its complexities. Although her mother was in Japan during the war between the U.S. and Japan, she heard about the hardships that her own relatives went through, being confined in internment camps by the U.S. government.

At the same time, her father, who is a Hiroshima atomic bomb survivor, spoke of his horrific experience the day the bomb changed his whole world. Professor Yamane said she grew up hearing both parents' experiences of pain, anguish, tragedy, and destruction brought on by war.

Even as a young girl, she understood the consequences of a world without peace. Her parents, each born in the "enemy's country," were the greatest testimony of a world torn apart by the destructive nature of war that could be healed through love, endurance, and hope. She said that she herself, her children, and their children are witnesses to the consequences of war and the possibilities of peace. This has set her on her path of making peace her lifelong journey and work.

Professor Yamane writes of her father's experience:

My father was about 2.5 km away from the epicenter of the atomic bomb when it was dropped

on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. He seldom talked about his experience when I was a child. I wanted to know what really happened to him and I asked him to write an article of his experience in 1977 when I was a high school teacher in Hiroshima. He agreed and wrote an article called "To Kazuyo from Father." He was a teacher at that time and his article was published in a book titled "Record of Teachers as Atomic Bomb Survivors in Hiroshima



**Dr. Kazuyo Yamane, who has witnessed the consequences of war and the possibilities of peace, is making peace her lifelong journey and work.** (Photo courtesy Dr. Kazuyo Yamane)

for Children." His experience was so horrible that it seemed that he did not want to remember it and talk about it to his children.

At the time, my father was in a hospital in Mitaki, Hiroshima, which was in the north of Yokogawa Station. He had been sick, but he was getting well at the end of July. He was a soldier and the hospital belonged to the army. He was in charge of taking care of rabbits that were kept at the hospital. There was no alarm for an air raid by U.S. bombers in the morning on August 6 and he was mowing grass for the rabbits with two other soldiers. When he heard the roar of the bomber, he thought that the sound was strange, because there was no siren for warning. When he looked up at the sky, he saw something flashing high above. He said, "There it is!"

While pointing at it, he was blown by the blast into a rice field. He cried out loud without knowing what had happened to him. He asked the two comrades how they were and stood up and found the wooden hospital completely destroyed. He saw fire starting in Hiroshima City. He heard an explosion and guessed that some kind of bomb was dropped and decided to escape to a mountain nearby. Soon it started raining heavily.

Before long, it stopped raining and they went back to the hospital where he saw bloody nurses and comrades who were helping injured people. Father started to help them and carried heavily injured people on stretchers to a nearby mountain. Bloodstained people in rags and tatters started to escape from Hiroshima City to the countryside. Some people fell down and said, "Soldiers, please give me some water" and "Help!" Others died without drinking the water that father brought. He was busy rescuing injured comrades and people until the sunset.

When father was going to sleep on a blanket under a pine tree, he found his arms and insteps blistering. A nurse said that he got burnt and gave the blister a prick with a pin. He began to have high fever and could not walk. The nape of his neck

was burnt. He began to know the sights of misery listening to his comrades. "It was just like hell, or I don't know what to say . . . it was a terribly cruel sight that is hard to imagine," he expressed.

Father's burnt arms and legs matured and it was very painful when gauze was changed. There were injured people without gauze and the burnt parts were crawling with maggots. His temperature was as high as 40 degree centigrade and it lasted for a week. Some comrades started to die which made my father think that he would also die soon.

On August 15 when Japan was defeated, father was carried to a truck on a stretcher and was taken to Hiroshima Station where he was carried to a train. He could see Hiroshima City destroyed by the bomb and the fire as far as he could see from the window of the train. He was taken to an elementary school in Ibarashi, which was used as a temporary hospital. He had to sleep on a mat all the time, because he could not walk. Others were also in the classroom and father often heard injured people groaning. His comrades looked fine, but some of them began to lose their hair and their gums bled. His burnt arms and legs got better and he began to be able to walk little by little. He felt very good when he had his body washed for the first time in a stream near the school.

Father was released from the army at the end of September. He went to Yokogawa Station by truck and walked along a railway to his home in Koi. His house was half-destroyed and his father was sick. It was said that it would be impossible to live in Hiroshima for 75 years, so his parents decided to move to Ōshima in Yamaguchi Prefecture where his sister married and lived. He became a junior high school teacher and met my mother who was also a teacher, and this is how I was born.

My father wrote the following in his article that he had written for me:

*"The war left many deep scars that cannot be healed by people. The scars are so big that it is inestimable. We can only imagine what really happened at that time seeing various records. I'd like you to help every child understand how important peace is so that the same mistakes will never be repeated in the future."*

The danger of nuclear weapons is not only their incredible power of destruction, but also the influence of radiation upon the future generations. However, it is said that "there is no influence of radiation on the next generation" by the United Nations Science Committee and also "there is no genetic influence of radiation on the next generation" according to an investigation by the Radiation Effects Research Foundation. I am not a doctor or a scientist, but I wonder if there is really no influence of radiation on the future generations.

Atomic bomb survivors and their children have not only physical fear, but also other kinds of anxiety such as marriage and employment. Some atomic bomb survivors could not marry because they were exposed to radiation. Even if they married, some women were told not to give birth to a baby by their parents-in-law. My son has a girlfriend, but I hesitate to mention my fear, because it may break up their relationship. Thus, atomic bomb survivors and their children continue to live with fear. I worry about the influence of radiation on myself and my three children as well as my granddaughter. Radiation damages genes and this is proven after the Chernobyl nuclear accident, though the truth has been covered up by the WHO and the IAEA that works for nuclear energy.

After the Fukushima nuclear accident, I am sure



## THROUGH ISSEI EYES

# THE WAIALUA OF OLDEN DAYS

### Tsuneichi "Rakusui" Yamamoto

In celebration of the Hawaii Hochi's 100th anniversary, we continue our series, "Through Issei Eyes," featuring essays by former Hawaii Hochi writer and later company president Tsuneichi Yamamoto, whose pen name was "Rakusui." Yamamoto-san supervised Miyoko Kawamoto's translations of the columns.

A veteran resident of Waialua, Mr. Shotaro Tanabe, founder of the Tanabe Hardware Co., arrived in Honolulu on Sept. 2, 1898, as a free immigrant through the Morioka Immigration Company. He was born in Nada Village, Kuga County, Yamaguchi Prefecture, on Nov. 10, 1880, and was 18 years old when he arrived in Hawaii. After about a week in Honolulu, he was put aboard a cattle train with 53 others, including four married couples, and sent to Waialua. By then the railroad had been extended to Kahuku, but passenger trains were not yet in operation.

At the time, Waialua had a population of about 400 — about 200 of whom were Chinese with the rest being Hawaiian and Japanese. The area was covered with rice fields, with only small patches of sugar cane fields here and there. The Chinese were engaged in rice growing. Joe Matsugoro was the only Japanese with his own farm, raising rice and taro.

The 54 Japanese worked for the Frank Ecker brothers, who operated a large ranch where they raised horses and cattle besides managing a small sugar plantation and mill. This sugar plantation later developed into the Waialua Agricultural Company, which was managed by W.W. Goodel, bringing prosperity to the Waialua area. Tanabe's group worked both in the cane fields and on the ranch. This was before a whistle was installed in the mill. A native blew a large conch shell to wake up the workers at 5 a.m., to start work at 6 a.m., and announce "kau-kau time" at 11 a.m. and "pau hana" time at 4:40 p.m.

The Chinese worked under a big boss who owned

five large rice paddies. They were housed in a large two-story barracks and slept in tiered bunks with the boss furnishing all food and clothing. Rice was threshed on a cement floor by making horses trample on the rice stalks. Matsugoro, however, used the Japanese method of threshing rice by hand. Tanabe said he and his friends often went to help Matsugoro with the threshing.

At the time, the Matsugoro couple had three sons and two daughters. The oldest son was 17 or 18 years and became a policeman. Matsugoro's wife bore him three more sons and two daughters — he had 10 children in all. They spoke Hawaiian at home and hardly any Japanese at all.

There were only two stores in Waialua operated by Chinese then — Akina Store and Ah Kee Store. At times, Tanabe and his group craved for things Japanese. Matsugoro and his wife were very kind-hearted and not only looked after the Japanese youths but always welcomed them into their home. When certain things were unavailable in Waialua, they went through the trouble of sending for them from Honolulu. Matsugoro also used to pound rice and make mochi for the Japanese and then watched happily as the youths enjoyed the delicacy.

All of the plantation lunas were Hawaiians, except for one Japanese named Shinjo, who was originally from Yamaguchi Prefecture. The head carpenter was Hashimoto and the old-timers at the mill were Yoshioka and Yamashita. Hashimoto also acted as an interpreter — they were all either *gannenmono* (who arrived in Hawaii in 1868 and were the first Japanese settlers) or those who had arrived on the first immigration vessel. The mill's chemist was a Portuguese named Antone Robello. There was also Ichiro Sagara, who had come from Honolulu to take charge of the water pump when it was first installed in Waialua. Sagara was originally from Hiroshima Prefecture and had worked at a shipyard in Kobe before arriving in Hawaii. He started out as an ordinary laborer, but his abilities were soon recognized and he was promoted to work on important projects. Sagara also had a hand in building the chimney that stands today at the Waialua mill.

Matsugoro passed away in 1925. All of the Japanese in the area helped at the funeral and took part in the Buddhist rites. Tanabe remembers that long paper lanterns were hung from bamboo poles, but he does not remember where the temple was located.

Mr. Tanabe said, "I've lived in Waialua for exactly 70 years. I've had a long life. Some original members of our group returned to Japan, some moved away, many died and I am the sole survivor of that group living in Waialua now. I will, of course, be buried here and my spirit will remain here to look after my descendants and the people of Waialua." He continued, "Well, the subject has turned rather gloomy, so let me tell you about something else."

The Japanese luna Shinjo was originally a samurai and a pretty bold character. One of the places where the water level had to be checked regularly was located near an *akua hale* (ghost field), *mauka* of the present Hongwanji. One day the men assigned to the night shift refused to check this particular spot, saying they were afraid of the thumping sounds that came from the direction of the "ghost field" every morning at about 2 or 3 a.m. The manager became concerned and discussed the matter with Shinjo, who immediately volunteered to investigate the matter personally. He crouched near a ditch in the dark that night, loosely draping a Japanese-style raincoat made with oil paper smeared with oil and persimmon stain over his head. He heard a rustling sound nearing him. He waited until "it" came close, then suddenly pounced on it and covered the "it" with his raincoat.

The next morning, he showed his bundled "catch" to the Japanese workers.

"Don't be scared, I'll show you a living ghost!" He opened the bundle and out came a large skunk, about 2 feet long.

One man immediately countered, jokingly, "Shinjo-san, there is a saying that a skunk lets go a blast of gas before expiring. How big was the blast?"

Not to be outdone, Shinjo remarked, "Well, this is a ghost — his final blast disappeared into nothing." Everyone burst out laughing. ■■

## OIDEYASU! / Continued from page 6

that there are many people who were exposed to radiation, but this is not reported in the media. I think that it is important to be aware of this issue not only for us, but also for the future generations.

I would like to share a poem that I wrote for my son:

### "TO MY DEAR SON"

Do you know what I did when I gave birth to you?  
I counted the number of your fingers first.  
Do you know why?  
I was afraid of the radiation.  
You remember your grandpa who was in Hiroshima in 1945.

He was mowing grass for his rabbits when an atomic bomb was dropped.  
He didn't know what happened and lost consciousness.  
When he recovered his senses, it was like hell.  
He suffered from burns, but other people helped him.  
He was afraid of radiation that might affect his children and grandchildren.

When I met a woman who was a daughter of an atomic bomb survivor in Nagasaki,  
She said that her son had only three fingers.  
We shed tears together.  
Who said there was no influence of radiation on the next generation?  
They must be warmongers rather than scientists and doctors.

You have a kidney problem since you were small.  
You asked me why you couldn't play soccer like your friends.  
Nobody knows if it is because of radiation.  
You started smoking, but your health worries me.  
Your body is yours of course, but it is not only yours.

It's great that you love music and enjoy your life.  
But do you know what's going on in the world?  
Fortunately, the number of nuclear weapons was reduced.  
But there are some people who are making new types of nuclear weapons.  
This is why I want you to know the world situation and think about the future.

Just try to remember one thing.

Your grandpa wished the world where we can live in peace and harmony.

He left this silent will to us.

Let's think what we can do for our future.

We may be small, but it is possible to make a change.

All we need is not weapons but our wisdom and cooperation.

— Kazuyo Yamane, May 2001

Jackie J. Kim lives in Kyōto with her husband. Kim is the author of "Hidden Treasures: Lives of First-Generation Korean Women in Japan." While living in Japan as a JET teacher and later as a graduate student, she interviewed elderly Korean women who had immigrated to Japan. Those interviews led to the publication of "Hidden Treasures." If you're wondering about the title of Kim's column, she explained that "Oideyasu!" means "Welcome!" in Kyōto ben, or dialect. You can share your comments with Kim by e-mailing her at jackiej-kim@hotmail.com.