



Okinawan Genealogical Society of
Hawaii c/o HUOA
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e-Newsletter
2021
February

Joy's Word of the Month

"ushi"

ox

Year of the Ox

Born in 1925, 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985,
1997, 2009, 2021



Patrick Miyashiro

OGSH Monthly Zoom Meeting 2021
February 20, 2021, Saturday, 10AM

Guest Speakers

Karen Oshiro – Talk Story Project
Patrick Miyashiro – HUOA President
Mark Higa-Update on the OGSH Library Expansion

- I. Guest Speakers
- II. January's Treasurer's Report
Income-dues and donations
Expense-postage stamps
- III. Old Business
- IV. New Business

Next Zoom Meeting March 2021

2021 HUOA President's Message

Hai Sai gusuyo, li Soogwachi Deebiru. What an auspicious beginning to a new Year, the first ever virtual Installation & Uchinanchu of the Year (UOY) Celebration and bento sales were an exceptional success. There were 30 persons recognized from 26 clubs that selected their UOY. Thank you for your support to your own clubs and to the HUOA. Your dedication and hard work are most graciously appreciated.

I want to thank Lynn Miyahira for her outstanding leadership in navigating the HUOA through a different Year in 2020 with all the diversions of the COVID restrictions.

We learned the benefits of doing meetings in the Zoom format, a great benefit to allow the neighbor islands to join in on the meetings without inter island travel. Another benefit is that once the meeting is over you are already home. There is no travel time to and from the meeting. Turn on the computer, get your snacks, log-in to Zoom, attend the meeting, and turn off the computer.

To David Jones who is our president-elect for 2022 and all the current officers and advisors, a great big mahalo for continuing to serve and support the HUOA.

We will still be on alert on the restrictions of what is allowed during this COVID pandemic for 2021. On a positive note; there will be a Sun Noodle, with Central Pacific Bank Foundation as a partner, distribution of 500 boxes of noodles to our 50 member clubs of the HUOA. Each club will be getting 10 boxes containing 12 packets of noodles in each box. It will be distributed to an elderly person or a family member affected by the COVID pandemic.

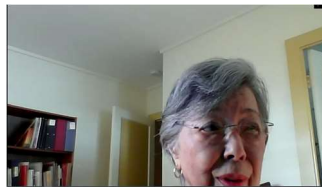
In anticipation of the 20th year Ehime Maru memorial service on February 9, 2021, some of the officers of HUOA did a community service by cleaning the memorial. Officers who helped clean were Clarisse Kobashigawa, Chikako Nago, Terry Goya, Aolani Yamasato Gragas, Dave Arakawa, Eric Nitta, Roy Arakaki, Jon Itomura, and myself.

The Officers and committee chairpersons are planning various programs throughout the year to promote, perpetuate, and preserve the Okinawan Culture in Hawaii. Details will be provided in the *Purple Blast* as programs are put in place.

As always please stay safe and maintain your health, and CHIMUGUKURU TIICHI.



Lynn Miyahira, Patrick Miyashiro, David Jones



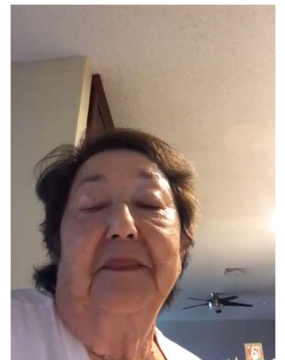
Short Story Book XIII

Have a story to share?

The Shorty Story Book committee is accepting stories for OGSB's Short Story Book XIII.

Email to: fyteruya@gmail.com

Nifee Debiru

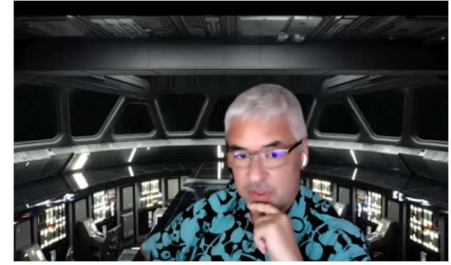


A motion was made and passed to donate \$200 annually to HUOA to honor OGSB members and their family who have passed in the previous year. January 30, 2021

OKINAWA'S JAPANESE DESCENT: FROM COMMONERS OR KINGS?

Shō Shōken and the Japanese Ancestry of the Ryukyu Kingdom

Mark McNally
Dept. of History
UH Manoa



January 20, 2021

As you can see from the title, the subject I am going to talk about is what is the fundamental connection between Okinawa and Japan. The focus of this presentation is on a particular Ryukyuan government official, Sho Shoken. He wasn't a king, but he was famous. He essentially ran the Ryukyuan kingdom as Prime Minister for seven years.

Some of you probably know that Okinawa was not originally part of Japan. It was a separate political entity as the Ryukyu Kingdom for a few hundred years before it sort of became part of Japan. The same is also true of Hokkaido. Hokkaido was not originally a part of Japan. So both Hokkaido and Okinawa become part of Japan in the 19th century. First, Hokkaido becomes part of Japan in 1855. In those days, Hokkaido was known as Ezo. In 1879, the Ryukyu Kingdom becomes part of Japan and is officially renamed Okinawa Prefecture. The reason I have 1609 (graphic on screen) is that Japan essentially took over the Ryukyu Kingdom. But Ryukyu maintained its autonomy from Japan from 1609 to 1879. In 1879, the Japanese government moved in with their troops and formally annexed the Ryukyu Kingdom and changed its name to Okinawa Prefecture.

BACKGROUND

- Hokkaido and Okinawa: not originally part of Japan
 - 1855: Ezo became part of Japan.
 - 1879 (1609): From the Ryukyu Kingdom to Okinawa Prefecture
- 2007: UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
 - 4/26/2019: Ainu recognition as indigenous
 - What about the Okinawans?
 - No; why? Nichiryū dōsorōn 日琉同祖論
(Japanese-Ryukyuan Common Ancestry Theory)

Now, I'm going to jump ahead to recent history. This is the year 2007. In the year 2007, the United Nations issued its Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People. In the declaration, the Japanese government was urged to recognize the Ainu people as indigenous and the Okinawans also as indigenous. In April 2019, the Japanese government officially recognized the Ainu as indigenous to Hokkaido. However, the Japanese government to this day has not recognize Okinawans as indigenous to Okinawa. Why is that? That is because of this very old concept in Okinawan historiography called Nichiryū dosorōn (Japanese-Ryukyuan Common Ancestry Theory). The reason why the Okinawans to this day have not been recognized as indigenous to Okinawa is because they are Japanese. That is the official reasoning of the Japanese government. It has that position because of Nichiryū dosorōn. So, where does Nichiryū dosorōn come from? It is attributed to a very famous political figure, Sho Shoken. He wasn't a king. He was a sessei. The sessei was the Prime

Minister of the Ryukyu Kingdom. He served from 1666 to 1673. As sessei, he basically ran the government on behalf of the king. By then, the 1600's, after the Japanese took over the Ryukyu Kingdom in 1609, the king became more of a figure head. The Emperor also became a figure head in Japan. Similarly, the King in Ryukyu Kingdom was also a figure head. In 1609, the Prime Minister ran the government in Ryukyu and the Shogun ran the government in Japan.

SHŌ SHŌKEN 向象賢 (1617-1675)



- *Sessei* 摂政 (Prime Minister): 1666-1673
- Nichiryū Dōsoron: Japanese-Ryukyuan Common Ancestry Theory; 2 sources:
 - *Chūzan seikan* 中山世鑑 (Mirror of Chūzan): 1650
 - Ryukyuan kings: Shunten 舜天 ("first" king)
- *Haneji shioki* 羽地仕置 (Directives of Haneji): 1666
- Ryukyuan people: Culture and Language



Back to Nichiryū dosoron. We attribute this common ancestry theory to Sho Shoken. We see this in different places. The first is this text 'The Chuzan Seikan' which translates to 'Dynastic Mirror of Chuzan'. Chuzan is the name the Ryukyuan themselves called their kingdom. Ryukyu Kingdom is what the Japanese called it. He wrote this text called 'Chuzan Seikan' in 1650. What is important about this, is that this is the very first history of the Ryukyu Kingdom written by Sho Shoken. In the Chuzan Seikan, he says that the very first historical king was a man named Shunten and his father was Japanese. He was a very famous Japanese warrior. Ryukyu had many, many kings before Shunten but no one knew what their names were. Their names have all been lost. In fact, there were skepticism that they were even real people, even mythological. But the very first historical king with a name was Shunten. The second source of this theory is a text called 'Haneji Shioki' which translates to the 'Directives of Haneji'. This is a bunch of government memos that Sho Shoken wrote while he was prime minister. This started in 1666 and ended in 1673 when he stepped down as prime minister. It is in the Haneji Shioki where Sho Shoken makes the argument that the Ryukyuan people were essentially descended from the Japanese. He cited cultural evidence. But, above all, linguistic evidence because he said the Ryukyuan language was similar to the Japanese language, they must have been related. This is evidence that Japanese people came down and settled in Okinawa and became ancestors of the Ryukyuan people. That was his argument.

So how did Tametomo become father of Okinawa's King Shunten? The story goes he was in exile. He was on the losing side of a rebellion. He was arrested and sent into exile. While he was in exile, he was able to procure a ship and sailed to an island called Onigashima. That might sound familiar to some of you as it is like the story of Momotaro, as he also sailed to the island of the ogres, an island called Onigashima. It is essentially the same story as Tametomo goes to the island of Onigashima. That is a true story, we think and the Momotaro story is based on the actual Tametomo story of him going to Onigashima. Now, Sho Shoken says in the Japanese story of Tametomo going to Onigashima was that he actually went to Ryukyu. When they say he went to Ryukyu, what is meant is that he went to the island of Okinawa. When he went to Okinawa, he suppresses a rebellion against the king, whose name is unknown. Tamemoto marries an Okinawan woman. He has a son named Sonton who becomes king, the first historical king named Shunten.

Tamemoto returns to Japan to avenge the death of his lord. His lord was an emperor named Sutoku. His attempt to avenge the emperor's death is unsuccessful and he commits seppuku, the disembowelment of cutting open your

intestines. Some people call it harikari. What is significant about this is that historians believe that this is the first recorded seppuku in Japanese history.

RYUKYU' S "JAPANESE" KINGS

- Minamoto no Tametomo 源為朝 (1139-1170): father of King Shunten (1166-1237)
- Tametomo: Descendant of Emperor Seiwa 清和天皇 (850-881)
- Tametomo's story: Onigashima = Ryukyu (Okinawa); Ryukyuan wife and son (Sonton 尊敦/Shunten); return to Japan (seppuku)
- King Shō En 尚圓 (1415-1476) descended from Tametomo? Maybe (probably not) [1650: Shō Shitsu 尚質 (1629-1668)]

The issue was, the king of the second Sho Dynasty, Sho En. There was a possibility that Sho En was a descendant of Tamemoto. So, does Sho En have Japanese ancestry? In the Chuzan Seikan, Sho Shoken's answer is "maybe". This is important because Sho En is the founder of the second Sho Dynasty. He is the ancestor of the king when Sho Shoken wrote his book, Chuzan Seikan with Sho Shitsu. Sho Shitsu was a descendant of Sho En. So, if Sho En was descendant from Tametomo, that means Sho Shitsu was also a descendant from Tametomo. So Sho Shoken's answer was "maybe". He might be related to Tametomo. What makes this interesting is a Ryukyuan scholar at that time could read between the lines and they could figure out what Sho Shoken meant was "no". To a Japanese reader though, he couldn't read between the lines and read that as "yes". "YES", Sho En was a descendant of Tametomo. Ryukyuan read that as "NO", he wasn't related. This is very controversial.

This is the second source of Japanese Common Ancestry Theory, a text called the Haneji Shioki, a compilation of memos of interesting but dry reading. It is noted for its political and economic reforms. Apparently, Okinawan aristocrats like to spend lots of money on weddings, funerals. Sho Shoken said we need to save money and his view of saving money was formed by Neo-Confucianism. Personal frugality was a virtue and he preached that for the Ryukyu Kingdom.


RYUKYU' S JAPANESE COMMONER ANCESTORS

- *Haneji shioki*: Political reforms; economic reforms; Neo-Confucian morality
- Historical ties with Japan: the ancestors of the Ryukyuan were from Japan
- Linguistic ties: the Ryukyuan language is closely related to the Japanese language; differences were the result of distance in time and geographic space

It was in this Haneji Shioki where he said that the ancestors of the Ryukyuan people were from Japan. He said this because of language, which were familiar. He said this had to be evidence of deep historical ties that goes all the way back to pre-recorded history. Sho Shoken was fluent in both Japanese and Ryukyuan. He didn't say the Ryukyuan people were Japanese. He did say their ancestors were Japanese.

THE AFTERMATH: 1879

- The Ryukyu Kingdom was abolished by the Japanese Meiji government in 1879; Okinawa Prefecture was created in its place.
- Meiji government: Kings AND Commoners
 - King Shō Tai 尚泰 (1843-1901): descendant of Tametomo
 - Ryukyuan ancestors were Japanese; evidence of this: Language
 - Ryukyuan = Japanese; Ryukyu belonged to Japan as Okinawa (irredentism)



Fast forward 200 years and the Meiji government in 1879 had troops from the Meiji Imperial Army occupy Shuri Palace. What is interesting is when the Japanese government formally occupied the Ryukyu Kingdom and renamed it Okinawa Prefecture, they issued documents that talked about their justification for doing this. In their justification they said Ryukyuan kings were descended from Japanese emperors via Tamemoto and Ryukyuan people were descended from Japanese. It wasn't an either or kind of thing. It was more for Sho Shoken. Sho Shoken, maybe kings but probably not the kings but the commoners were probably, our people, were related to their people. To the Meiji government, they were both the kings and the commoners. What this meant was the last Ryukyuan king, Sho Tai was a descendant of Tametomo and because he was related to the Meiji emperor. Sho Tai and the Meiji emperor were distantly related, Sho Tai should do the bidding of the emperor. That was the logic. The Okinawan people who had ancestors who were Japanese and the language was similar, this meant that Ryukyuan and Okinawans essentially were Japanese people. Therefore, because the Ryukyuan people were Japanese, the Ryukyu Kingdom belong to Japan as Okinawa. This kind of thinking is where Japan is wherever Japanese people are or in the European case of Germany is wherever German people are. This is called irredentism. The Japanese government made this irredentist appeal to the world community because Okinawans were Japanese, Okinawa belonged to Japan. This did get a sympathetic hearing among the Europeans and Americans because this was something they were coming to grips as well. The example in the European case is Germany. The Germans in the 1870s had also made an argument that wherever German speaking people were, the German nation is. Since there were a community of German speaking people in France, they used that as a justification to seize that and take it away from France. The president at that time, Ulysses S. Grant sided with Germany on that. In the case of Okinawa at this time, an appeal was made to Grant by the Japanese and he sided with the Japanese on what is essentially the same issue. People agreed with him because of him being a Civil War hero and President. They just fell into line. If Grant says Okinawa belongs to Japan than it belongs to Japan. That is why to this day, Okinawa belongs to Japan. This is an issue to some people that this is still not resolved.

OK...that's it.