



Okinawan Genealogical Society of Hawaii
 c/o HUOA
 94-587 Ukee Street
 Waipahu, Hawaii 96797

OGSHnews@gmail.com

Zoom Meeting
 Saturday, May 15, 2021
 9AM



e-Newsletter
 2021
 May



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Joy's Word of the Month
Ufujimuu(noun)
 a generous person

President's Message:

May's word of the month is ufujimuu, meaning, a generous person. This word applies to so many OGS members, who give so much of their time, talent, and money to our organization. Our members make contributions by serving on various committees, by serving as officers and advisors and by making substantial cash contributions.

Thank you to all of you who help OGS fulfill its mission, which is to promote, preserve and perpetuate our Okinawa family heritage through education, research, and networking.

Joy Schoonover

About guest speaker Charlene Gima

Charlene Gima was born in Kailua, O'ahu, but grew up on the windy slopes of upcountry Maui in Pukalani and Makawao. After graduating from UH Mānoa with her bachelor's, she went on as a Mellon Fellow to receive her M.A. and Ph.D. in English literature at Cornell University. She knew a lot about English literature, but she got interested in her Okinawan heritage only when she returned to Maui in 1998 and began studying Okinawan dance with Cheryl Nakasone Sensei in 2002. Currently, she is an assistant professor of English at Honolulu Community College, where she teaches many different classes, including a course in Okinawan literature that she created.
 cg

April Reports
 Treasurer's Report: Income-Dues and Donations;
 Expense-Ancestry.com
 Secretary's Report: Newsletter
 Transcription: David R, edited by Eric W

May's Agenda

Guest Speaker:
 Charlene Gima on Okinawan Literature
 Treasurer's Report
 Announcements
 Resource Center Project
 Committee Reports
 Adjournment



UNIVERSITY of HAWAII
HONOLULU
 COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ENG 2570 OKINAWAN LITERATURE (3) (DL)

Prerequisite: "C" or higher in ENG 100 OR Placement in ENG 201-296

Course explores the world of Okinawan literature from translations of early poems to contemporary works by Okinawan writers in Okinawa and around the world. Students will learn how literature expresses the culture, history, values, and conflicts of the Okinawan people. The course also discusses how literature expresses, contests, and develops Okinawan identity. May be taken on a CR/N basis. (3 hrs. lect. per week)

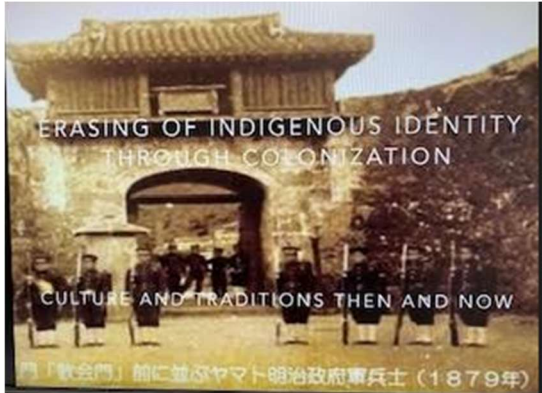
FACULTY AND STAFF

GIMA, Charlene S., Asst Prof, CC, Language Arts;
 Ph.D., Cornell University

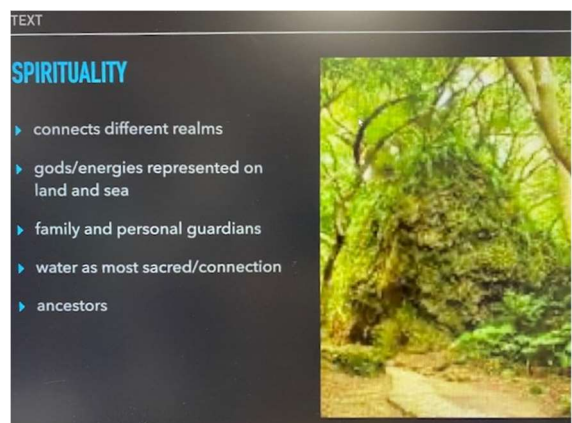
June Upcoming Activities
 19 OGS Zoom Meeting
 Kupuna Safe Falling Program
 22 Irei No Hi



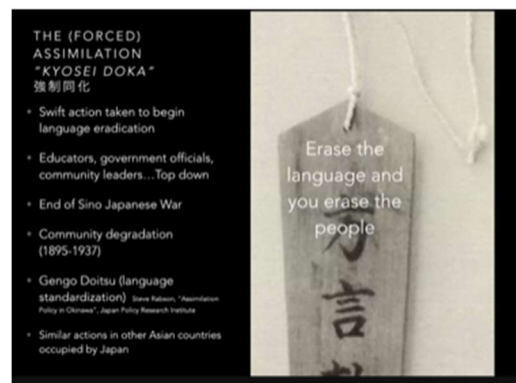
I'd like to honor my ancestors who came from Gushichaa(Gushikawa)-Taaba area and also from the Motobu, Bise area. My father's side is from Hiroshima. Since we live in Hawaii, I would also like to honor the area I am from, the ahupua'a of Kalihi, in the area of Kaluaopalena. Thank you for inviting me to your talk on what pretty much connects to you guys, as far as identity in all the work you do and all the help to those on their journey to find their ancestors to reconnect where they come from. In this presentation today, I'll be doing some reconnection for some of you. It may ruffle a few feathers. But, just to give you some idea of the terminologies that connects to our identity. The theme of my presentation is "Erasing of Indigenous Identities Through Colonization".



The opening slide shows the beginning when In 1879, over 500 soldiers overthrew the Shuri Monarchy by the Meiji government and forced King Sho Tai to give up the throne and leave in 1 day. He moved into the prince's residence. For those of you who know Hawaiian history, this parallels the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy. My first question to all of you is 'what is indigenous'? For me, it is the idea of most of these faces on the screen. We never thought that we were indigenous. We were never taught or told that we were indigenous. We were taught that indigenous people were dark, like the Australian aborigines, Africans, Hawaiians, other Polynesians etc. The indigenous image that many of us were taught, was one of people who were not well educated, exotic, and basically non-White. So, those are the points that we are going to be looking at this morning. Indigenous people are the first people of a place or an island or place. They have a deep connection to the place. They have a separate language, not a dialect. I want to stress "language" because we hear so much about Okinawa "Hogen". That word 'hogen' was given by the Japanese. It wasn't part of our vocabulary. Japanese want to tell us we have a "dialect" which puts us under a "better" language. However, we have a separate language and development of culture.... our separate culture. After the invasion of 1609, Satsuma forced Loochoo's (Okinawa) king to sign 15 edicts, one of which said that Loochoo people were always Japanese.



We now know that this is definitely not true as twice within the last 10 years, bones have been found in Okinawa to be thousands of years older than any bones found in Japan. Another evidence of our indigeneity. The creation stories or myths are something all indigenous people looked at. It is not necessarily something you have to believe in but it kind of gives a connection to where we come from and connects us to the indigenous perspective. There's actually more than 2 stories of the creation but they are similar in way. It starts with Utin (Sky Father) and Jiichin (Earth Mother) and they have a daughter who they send down to Ryugu, which is the sea where all life begins. Amamichu is the daughter who was sent down to create the islands and everything starts to come out from the waters. There is also more hope for the common people that the Sky Father and Earth Mother had a child. Amamichu had a baby that was deformed and died. She buried the baby and from that baby came the sacred grains, taro, and the other things that were needed for sustainability. If you are familiar with Polynesian folklore, this is very close to it. All the Pacific islands have a story of a Sky Father and Earth Mother and everything being born out of the ocean. For Hawaii, it goes into more detail, all the way back to the Big Bang. The kumuipo goes back thousands of years and only now scientist are coming up with the same things saying that this happened, this happened, but it is already in those chants and stories of the beginning, which we connect to. It shows that indigenous knowledge and perspective were far beyond what scientist have now. This is also connected to the sacred springs around Okinawa. Since Okinawa is all coral islands, the water comes from the ocean and filters through the coral and ends up emerging from springs on the islands. So if you notice all the villages where our ancestors come from, are all centered around springs which are considered sacred and all have names. These springs also represent women and water we are all born from which connects us. That is one reason why women have rank and power in the Okinawan society because of the lineage from Amamichu, being born from Sky Father and Earth Mother. Spirituality connects us to the different realms. We have the three realms where the gods are, where our ancestors from way back who we don't know, and ancestors who are recent and are known to us. The god's energies represent the land and the sea. Our ancestors were very connected to this. Nowadays with our technologies we have become disconnected. If you look at our music, our chants, our dances all connect to nature and it is connected to how nature represented certain things like how the ocean and seas move, how the plants grew, how the waters flowed, how the winds came. We also have Sfamily and personal guardians which are mamuigami. In Okinawa too, we have animal guardians or spirit guardians for each family or individual. Another essential part is water as our most sacred connection. It connects all of us. We cannot deny that we are born from water. We're all born from the womb, which is water. We return to the earth in the womb when we go back. That is why bones are so important because it connects us back to the earth when we are buried. This is important to look at the land as our mother also. There is always this connection to our ancestors that we never forget and we'll always continue their legacy. I'd like to reference to it as a continuum. So, in Okinawan thinking, there is a past history and that history is also present in what we do at this time and it is something we will pass on to the next generations. So, it is a continuum and it is something not separate from us.

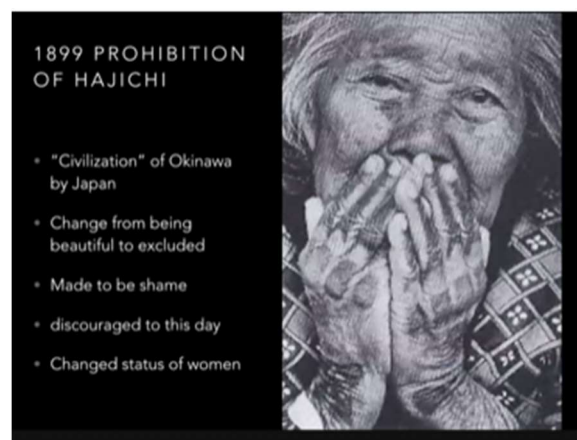


March 27, 1879 is when colonization starts to come in. It is the beginning of forced assimilation, cultural genocide, and brainwashing. There are 2 words that people don't like to talk about but are essential in looking at our identity and also remembering what happened to our ancestors and still happening in Okinawa. These 2 words are colonization and discrimination. Chinese tributary relations never affected the identity of Okinawa. But when the

Japanese took over, there was forced assimilation. During the relationship with China there was never an attack on Loochoo or cultural identity. The Japanese called the forced assimilation Kyosei Doka, which was to eradicate our ancestral languages. This is history that cannot be denied to what happened. We cannot erase it. This was the beginning of the erasure of our identity. As any country that takes over another, the first thing to do to assimilate is to get rid of the native language and assimilate into the dominant. Japan had always claimed that Okinawan language was a form of Japanese, therefore being a dialect. Although being categorized as Japonic, the Loochoo languages are not a Japanese dialect nor language. Japonic also includes Korean. Ryukyu language also have similarities to Southeast Asia if you go to Bali and other areas there. Many of the languages there have the same linguistic references. It's not intelligible to Japanese. Similar to being a subgroup of German or Latin languages. So, there are similarities, but they are separate. People like to say you are from Japan because dah, dah, dah, dah, dah and it's called Japonic but that's false. You are not going to say Italian is French or that English is German. They have similarities but its different. There are six separate language groups within Ryukyu and there are recent findings of similarities to Hawaiian and Polynesian languages.



Native appearance was discouraged and discriminated upon. This was when the Japanese told the people not to dress like this (in reference to photos being shown). Okinawans are too dark. You should stay out of the sun. Your skin should be light. Cut your hair. Don't do this hair style anymore, in reference to a photo of a female. This Ryūkyūan hairstyle is sacred to women. They tie their hair in a knot on top or somewhere on their head to protect that sacred opening at the top of their head. The soft spot when we were babies. It is sacred because it is a connection to the heavenly realm and their ancestors. That's why the women have that role spiritually because their connection is very strong. This was all part of assimilation when they were told how to dress, to look like this was primitive, and to become Japanese, they had to change. Again, in reference to a picture, this is how they began to look like. They changed to Japanese or western style clothing. Later in Japan, when they went there to look for work, they found discrimination in living space, jobs, public facilities.



There were apartments with signs that said 'no Ryukyuans allowed'. Another thing that came out in 1899 was the prohibition and still frowned at by the Japanese government, but is making a comeback with youth is Hajichi or tattoos. This was done to civilize the people because it is not good for society. Our tattoos are connected to Polynesian tattoos. Hawaiians have a similar motif, as well as the Samoans and also in the Miyako area, they have a pattern of Hajichi that is very close to patterns found only in Aotearoa, New Zealand.



In 1903, the Jinruikan was held in Osaka where 2 girls were displayed as human oddities at the Osaka Expo. They were displayed along with Ainu, Koreans, people from India, Malaysian, Javanese, indigenous Taiwanese, and Africans. Assimilation through education where the elite students were sent to mainland Japan to be educated and pretty much brainwashed. A government controlled educational system is still in place today and they have tried many times to erase our history, especially the war history from the education books. Disconnecting indigenous values, culture, and knowledge cuts off sustainability and strengthens dependence on central government. Taking on an outside mind, they tried to change values and morals and to have them think of success as connected to material things, such as money and property. Keerasoon is a term I use to mean “to turn over”.



We need to turn over those layers of colonization to reconnect and recognize and be proud of our identity and even our history of which a lot of it is not so happy. We can look at the discrimination and subjugation and everything that happened to us both in Okinawa and Hawaii and take that and make it a part of who we are. Being an example to others, so that those kind of prejudices and things are not done to anybody else. It actually connects us to other indigenous people and minorities, where we should be standing with them and understanding what happen to them also and supporting them. So that is part of peeling off the layers. We incorporate our native culture and language and that gives us recognition and empowerment and return to our native ways. This is all part of our changing or turning over process. This leaves me with the question is “what kind of Faafuji (grandparent/elder) do you want to be?” As our parent, grandparent or greatgrandparent, what kind of legacy do you want to be remembered as. What can you do to your family to have them look at you and connect you to the Okinawan identity? What do you want to be remembered as? Would you want to be remembered as someone taking that colonized way of thinking and say we are Japanese or you’re going to give them the truth of their background and history. Also, another thing I want to point out is we need to be very careful that there are non-Okinawans teaching our narratives in academia and who do not give the correct narratives. They tell us we are Japanese. They tell us our kings and our lineage are from Japan. If you do the research, you will see that it is all false. There is no credit to them. This book by Sakihara and this other book by Mamoru Akamine sensei are very good references. In Sakihara’s book, a previous narrative presented to you is not a true story. We need to do the research and teach our own history, culture, and language. Side note: To be called Uchinaanchu, is only for the people from the main island of Uchinaa(Okinawa). It being used generally for everybody is kind of a new thing. If we go back to our Issei, they would use the word Shimanchu, which includes Amami all the way down to Yonagoni. If you go to Yayama, Miyako, they don’t like to be called Uchinaanchu because it is a separate language. Saying everyone should go under the same name would be forcing your title or identity upon them. That is not what our ancestors did. People were proud of where they came from, what language they spoke, and so they used those terms and referenced those places. I would like to point out to use our language and reference the places we came from. By saying Uchinanchu, you are connecting yourself to the main island of Okinawa. By saying you are Uchinanchu, that does not connect you to where your ancestors came from if they are not from the main island. To do so would be forced assimilation, a forced identity upon them. As people are becoming more aware and stronger in identity, there are people now changing their last name to the Okinawan pronunciation because that connects you back to your ancestors. It is not the Japanese name the immigration officer gave when they came to Hawaii because the officer could not pronounce your name. Some also felt that they had to Japanize their name to get a better job or be more accepted into mainstream Japan. Places in Okinawa also need to be renamed to the Okinawan pronunciation. It is important to have it as our ancestors did not want it, but that it was what somebody else did.

ASSIMILATION THROUGH EDUCATION

- Elite students sent to mainland Japan
- Government controlled educational system
- Disconnecting indigenous values, culture and knowledge which basically cuts off sustainability and strengthens dependence on central government
- Taking on “outside mind”, eg. value of status, money, success

WHAT KIND OF UYAFĀ DO YOU WANT TO BE?

Ukwanshin Umanchu Suruti Online Series

by D. Yamagusiku

Gusuuyoo, chuu wuganibira,

Hope all of you are faring well during these extraordinary times. We know that like our ancestors we can endure the challenges that face us with the same tenacity, positive strength of mind, and always good humor.

Ukwanshin Kabudan, a Hawaii-based performing arts troupe led by artistic director **Eric Wada**, music director **Norman Kaneshiro** and co-director **Keith Nakaganeku**, inaugurated the **Ukwanshin Umanchu Suruti Online Series** in March 2020 to maintain connection to their students and 'regulars' of their public events. By transitioning to an online platform, Ukwanshin has been able to extend their reach to a wider audience.

We are delighted that these webcasts have been well received by our global community. Participants have joined our weekly sessions from Asia, South America, Europe, US mainland and of course have included our loyal supporters from O`ahu, Kaua`i, Maui, and Hawai`i Island. From frequent feedback, we know that our kupuna (elders) are enjoying these sessions and are thrilled that younger generations are interested in learning more about their Okinawan heritage.

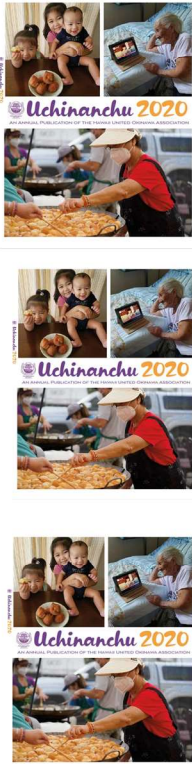
Weekly sessions are offered free-of-charge through the Zoom meeting format. Each of the cultural practitioners hosts an Okinawan themed session that illustrates the culture, music, dance, traditional practices, language, history, food, and current issues of Okinawa. Audience members are encouraged to ask questions and share their own experiences.

The monthly schedule usually includes the following:

UKWANSHIN KABUDAN ONLINE Schedule				
<small>(subject to change)</small>				
day	time	session	hosted by	link
First Monday	7:00 pm HST	<i>Umanchu Suruti</i> Variety of Interesting topics	Eric Wada	https://bit.ly/3jmb4VoSpecial facebook.com/loochoonukwa
Second Monday	7:30 pm HST	<i>Shimakutuba Gakumun Kai</i> Learn Uchinaaguchi (language)	Brandon Ufugusuku Ing	https://bit.ly/2XkyQHqshimakutuba
Third Friday	7:00 pm HST	<i>Identity nu Ufubushi</i> Music themed	Norman Kaneshiro	https://bit.ly/3iGQz67ufubushi
Fourth Friday	7:00 pm HST	<i>Uchinaa Champuruu</i> Cooking demonstrations Musical guests	Keith Nakaganeku	https://bit.ly/3h1hMPPchampuru

Most of these webcasts have been recorded and available for viewing for those who missed the live sessions. These recordings have been very convenient to those out of the Hawai'i time zone. If you would like to access these sessions and receive event announcements, please request instructions to register for our private Youtube channel by sending an email to events@ukwanshinkabudan.org

Check us out! We'd love to have you join us.



ORDER YOUR UCHINANCHU 2020 TODAY!

The HUOA is pleased to announce the publication of Uchinanchu 2020, a colorful look back at a year filled with unexpected challenges. Not long after the Installation and Uchinanchu of the Year celebration, the global coronavirus pandemic impacted most – if not all – HUOA and club activities. Even the Okinawan Festival and Legacy Awards were cancelled or revised to conform to public health guidelines. Uchinanchu 2020 captures the courage, vision and resilience of HUOA's members and leadership in facing these remarkable circumstances. It will serve as an important keepsake of the people and activities that helped bridge HUOA's journey from past practices towards its even brighter future.

Price is \$10 per book + \$5 shipping and handling. \$3 per book will be donated to a club of your choice. Arrangements can be made for books to be picked up from the HOC. Please send a check with this form to HUOA, memo line: Annual 2020. You can also place your order online. Visit www.shophuoa.com

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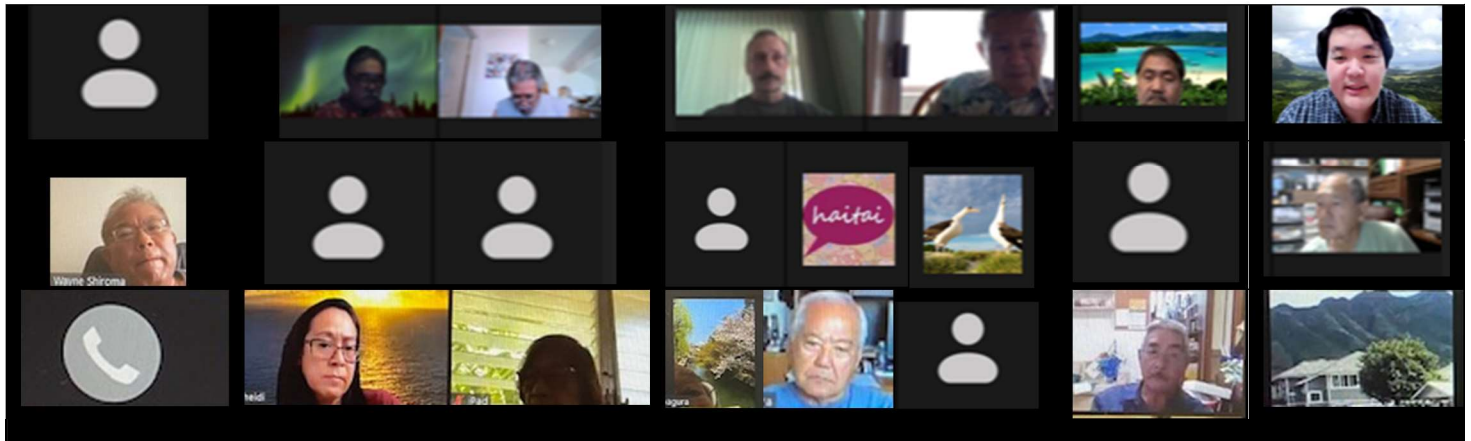
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April 17, 2021