



Okinawan Genealogical Society of Hawaii
c/o HUOA
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Waipahu, Hawaii 96797

OGSHnews@gmail.com

Zoom Meeting
Saturday, 9AM
September 18, 2021

e-Newsletter
2021
September



Agenda:

Guest Speaker:
Jeffrey Higa “Calabash Stories: Remembering and Writing Muliwai Lane

Treasurer’s Report
OGSH Taikai JTB Tour
Elections
Serikaku/ Yonamine Projects
HUOA 70th Anniversary
Yuntaku Live – OGS

Joy’s Word of the Month
“wakasa”
(n) Youth; Youthfulness

President’s Message:
Haitai OGS Members!

We are fortunate to have Jeffrey Higa as guest speaker this month. Jeffrey is an award winning writer whose latest book, “Calabash Stories”, won the Robert C. Jones Prize For Short Prose. Also, join us next month for Reverend Shindo Nishiyama of Jikoen Hongwanji Mission. Reverend Nishiyama will address the numerous issues concerning cemetery plots, urns and butsudan that often arise when family members pass on.

Also, please remember that we are still accepting nominations for the following positions on the Board of Directors:

1. President
2. 2nd Vice President
3. Corresponding Secretary
4. Treasurer

If you have a nomination or if you would like to volunteer to run, contact Dorothy Nakama at: dnn1997@gmail.com.

Take care and stay safe.

Ippee Nifee Deebiru,
Joy Schoonover

2021 Upcoming Events:

September:
20-15 October Canceled
HUOA Clubs’ Poster Display at the Chaya

October:
16- Speaker: Rev. Shindo Nishiyama,
Jikoen Hongwanji Mission

30-7 January 2022 HUOA Club Fundraiser



Jeffrey J. Higa “Calabash Stories and Writing Muliwai Lane”

“Jeffrey Higa’s *Calabash Stories* is not only a delight to read, it is a fond remembrance of local culture and society that fostered us as we grew, with avidity or reluctance, into the globalized and metropolitan identities of postmodern times. To read this wonderful book is like gathering with elders at a family reunion, hearing their recollections as they confirm our common affections, calling up the items and events of former times, sharing anecdotal treasures and secrets we realize, just in their telling, are our true legacy. Higa’s writing flows beautifully from precise descriptions of Honolulu’s working class neighborhoods and its characters, through narratives both raucous and tender of childhood and receiving lessons from elders, to the spark of dialogues in *pidgin*, our common vernacular. The stories are loving, tributary, and priceless.”

—Garrett Hongo, author of *Coral Road*

HUOA FUNDRAISER
\$9 per Zippy’s ticket
Sell: Oct 30-31 Dec
Redeem: Nov 1 – 7 Jan 2022
Choice of one (1)
1.5 lbs of chili, meat sauce or
Portuguese Bean Soup; Meat &
Egg Breakfast, small drink;
or 5 pieces cornbread.



"To forget one's ancestors is to be a brook without a source, a tree without a root." – Chinese Proverb



When I started writing this story, I said to myself that I never "forgot" my ancestors, I just never knew them, and I have always felt sad about that. However, as I worked on this presentation, I have

come to realize that I in fact have known them all these years. I have known them in ways that differ from how most people "know" someone. I've come to know them through their acts of lovingkindness and sacrifice for me even though they have been gone for decades now.

Haitai gusuyo chuuganabira. Wanne, Fujie Gwen yaibin. Yutasarugutu Unigee sabira. Doozo yoroshiku onegai itashimasu. Thank you for joining me today for this very personal story (slightly modified for this newsletter). "Finding my Uchinanchu Identity" is just that, a story. It may not appeal to some of you, but it is a true story.

It all begins with my mother, of course.

Kimiko Higa was born on June 28, 1920, in Hakalau, Hilo, Hawaii. She lived to age 95. She chose the English name Beatrice and received her birth certificate at the age of 10. Her mother was Ushi Uehara Higa of Oroku and her father was Torasuke Higa of Yomitan Village, 18 years her senior.

I remember mom talked about how each evening after dinner she and her sister had to pick up slop from the homes of her classmates and they would tease her the next day at school, "Okinawa ken ken, buta kau kau." The boys made pig sounds as she walked by. They were both very pretty girls and very sensitive at that age. I don't think she ever got over that deep shame after years of being made fun of. She longed for the day when she didn't have to pick up slop anymore.

She had two sisters and two brothers. She and her younger sister were needed to help out at home so they both left school at the 8th grade. She grew up on a pig farm in Waialae on Oili Road and then later on Kam IV Road in Kalihi near to where the Sakimas and many other Urukunchu lived.

Finding my Uchinanchu Identity

- OGSB – August 21, 2021
- By Gwen Fujie

"To forget one's ancestors is to be a brook without a source, a tree without a root."
– Chinese Proverb



She was a beautiful young lady who worked many jobs in her life time. My sister and I always thought that it was too bad she had to leave school at such a young age. Mottainai - because she was extremely smart, curious, practical minded, and a very hard worker, interested in many things. She could have been a teacher, a lawyer, or perhaps an entrepreneur as she was meticulous with paying the bills, saving money and balancing the checking account. Up until her nineties she read the morning newspaper from front to back and was an avid reader of all kinds of books. She read with a dictionary and later added a thesaurus by her side and read books word for word. She read all of President Obama's books and many historical novels. She knew all current affairs and anyone who was anybody in Hawaii, on the mainland, and even the world. She read People magazine and kept up with the latest social news. She knew which celebrity was getting married and which ones were divorcing. If she were alive now she would be talking about how sad it is for the Afghan people and she would say, "Akishamiyo the people who no get vaccinated in America!"

As smart as she was, though, she lacked confidence and always seemed to have an underlying sadness about her. As I grew up I learned why.

Because the family was from Oroku it wasn't hard for her to get a job at one of the many restaurants owned by Urukunchu. Mom worked at several Okinawan owned restaurants such as Sierra Café, Honolulu Café, and Smile Café.



She met my birth father at Smile Café, and they married in 1941. Which turned out an unfortunate match.

She had a very difficult life after giving birth to my sister in 1942 and then my brother in 1944, with a husband who was hardly around and certainly not when I entered the world. This is a ripped photo of her as a bride with the groom cut away. All photos that had my father in it were cut in half. I did not know what he looked like until I became an adult.



Fast forward to me – born October 12, 1946. Parents divorced October 6, 1946, and father remarried on October 8, 1946, moved to the mainland and was never heard from until I reached out when I was old enough to travel on my own, unbeknownst to my mother.

Ushi Uehara Higa September 17, 1898 – November 16, 1952 was my primary caregiver from the time I came home from the hospital until I was 3-4 years old. My best recollections of Babasan was her call out to us when it was time for a bath. “Come bocha bocha. Mo osoi desu yo. Cacaroachu come out and centipede come bite you, you no hari uppu.”

It was an old furo outside with cement flooring and no lighting. I so feared the creatures that came out at night and they were certainly a number of them. I also remember often eating just rice with catsup and a little bit of vegetables. It was little but I loved being with Babasan and playing with the piglets and the chickens in the yard. There’s nothing to feel sorry for as I didn’t know what I was missing. There was a lot of love from Babasan. Even though no time for singing or dancing or going to parties.





Here's a priceless photo of Babasan's pig farm. She is here with her father, my great grandfather, and a hired hand.

The other memory I have as a very young child was when Babasan died suddenly of a heart attack at the age of 54.

Her women friends about ten to 15 of them came from around the neighborhood to sit in the house and they wailed and wailed for what seemed like hours. It frightened me. Everyone was so sad, most of all, us kids. I didn't know at that time that we were experiencing something that was customary in Okinawa but not so much in Hawaii – wailing.

Even at that young age, I remember her funeral at Nuuanu Mortuary and giving her the last bath. My mother held my hand to raise the bamboo ladle and we dipped it into the bucket of water and dripped it on her body from head to toe. Of course, I didn't understand but I just remember doing that and watching my mother cry sometimes uncontrollably.



As luck would have it, in 1947 a handsome young Nisei soldier of the 442nd RCT just returning from the war in Europe strolled into the restaurant where mom was working (Denver Grill) and he was smitten. They dated but when he proposed marriage she said if after 2 years he still wanted to marry her, she would. She wanted him to consider the fact that she was not only a divorcee and with 3 children, she was Okinawan. He was Yamatunchu. She knew that those 3 factors would not sit well with his family.



Well, he waited 2 years and they were married. And, she was right. His family disowned him. But he adopted all three of us kids and gave us his name. We all lived at Halawa Housing in a 2 bedroom. 3 kids slept on one double bed side ways. When a new subdivision opened in Kaneohe and dad wanted to buy a home, he didn't have enough down payment money. His buddies chipped in and loan him \$2,000 so he could buy the house. That's the kind of brotherhood those men had. This is the reason I am a devoted member of the Sons and Daughters of the 442nd RCT, the Nisei Veterans Legacy and the Go for Broke National Education Center. These men became our "uncles" and I have known them over 60 years. We could not have had the home we grew up in if it were not for their help.

Photo of "Uncle" Joe Takata, Dad Toshio "Bulldog" Nishizawa, and "Uncle" Larry Nakahara taking a stroll on a street in Italy somewhere. They were best buddies in the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.



My dad's buddies were from all backgrounds, islands, and educational levels. They were blue collar workers and white-collar professionals and they all spoke the same language, pidgin English. There was no class prejudice. In fact, the judges and lawyers got more ribbing from the plumbers and carpenters and they had many fun get togethers in garages to fancy living rooms. Everyone was, as they would say, "same, same."

Seventy years later, while most of these men are gone we try to get together with our “uncles” every other month at Maple Gardens Restaurant and play Bingo! With the pandemic, it couldn’t be worse as they are passing away without us being able to see them for the last time. We owe them so much!

My two younger brothers arrived in 1952 and 53. At their birth all of a sudden, I had Nishizawa grandparents and aunties and uncles. We got along just fine and I think my mother was a very thoughtful daughter-in-law despite the earlier prejudice. I did not grow up with sanshin music, or dance, or Uchinaguchi spoken only the delicious foods which was always our favorite! Mom was a great cook and made the best Shoyu Pork, Okinawan Sparerib Soup and on special occasion, Andagi.



We always called Toshio “Dad” and never considered him a stepfather. We lived an all-American life in Kaneohe with 4-H, Little League, student government and sports. Dad played neighborhood softball and eventually as he aged, he was part of the Makule League. He was quite a sportsman. Mom was a great crafter, seamstress, Hawaiian quilter and cook. She was completely self-taught. She worked in the pineapple cannery during the summers and had other jobs as a seamstress at the Kaneohe Marine Base and local laundromats. Dad worked for the federal government at Ft. Shafter and Tripler Army Hospital as an electrician estimator. Life was good. Still not much Okinawan influence and mom rarely spoke of things Okinawan, though I know she had many Uchinanchu lady friends from her past.

Another fast forward now to 1967, a year that changed my life forever.

Friday, April 7, 1967 PACIFIC CITIZEN—5

First American of Okinawan ancestry crowned 1967 Cherry Blossom queen

(Special to the Pacific Citizen) HONOLULU — Gwen N. Nishizawa, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Toshi Nishizawa of Kaneohe, is the 1967 Miss Cherry Blossom Queen of Honolulu.

She's the first American of Okinawan ancestry to win the coveted crown in 15 years of competition.

including Sandy Shimokawa, the 1966 Cherry Blossom Queen, and Sharon Haraguchi, the 1966 Miss Popularity.

Miss Komai as well as the other beauties are making their first trip to Hawaii. She has been working for So. California Gas Co. for six months, she said. The Long Beach Poly

I must credit Ura Keiko – san for her radio interview of me and in finding out that I was Okinawan and proudly passing the word around. She was completely surprised and delighted to hear my mother’s family was from

Okinawa and she shows her delight and surprise whenever she sees me even until today. I so appreciate her pride in our culture.

It was through this time that I was able to go to Los Angeles which is where I first met my birth father. Without my mother knowing and through my 20 years of curiosity, I looked in the L.A. phonebook and saw his name. It was as simple as picking up the phone and dialing the number. We met for lunch and after that lunch my clearest revelation came to me that your “real” parent is the one that takes care of you when you’re sick. Scolds you, gives you lectures, but also slips you a \$20 bill just because, and the one who backs you 120% through thick and thin. From that day on, Toshio became my “real” father and I learned to forever be grateful to him.



Some of my greatest honors at that time was dancing with Governor John A. Burns and Mayor Neal S. Blaisdell, iconic men of the past in Hawaii, meeting the Crown Prince and Princess of Japan but most of all, meeting my relatives in Okinawa.



I went to Okinawa for the first time on my award trip to Japan. Meeting my relatives was eye opening. This was in 1967, only 20 years after the Battle of Okinawa. Some of my relatives still lived in shacks and had dirt floors in part of the house. Going to Yomitan village to meet my grandfather’s family was heart wrenching. I remember arriving at the house hearing the sanshin playing a very melancholy song. It was a great uncle who is pictured here. He was sitting on a tatami mat on the dirt floor on a hot and dusty day. I chose to write about my experience in Okinawa in my final farewell message as CBF Queen. I cannot remember what I said, but I got a standing ovation in the Civic Auditorium of 5,000 people.



After that trip and others taken to Okinawa, I became very interested in learning more about the place, people, the culture and the struggles of the Okinawan people throughout their history. I borrowed and bought many books and read them voraciously. I was surprised at how very little I knew about this land of my ancestors.

I was especially touched by the civilian losses in the Battle of Okinawa and I started to read

everything I could about the people in the caves and the extreme suffering they endured.

Then in 2015 I really became a “born-again Uchinachu” after going on the Ukwanshin Kabudan Gakumun tour. My sister, husband and I had an awakening and heartwarming time on this most unique, spiritual, and educational journey. We had all been to Okinawa several times before, however, it seemed like it was for the first time. We had cultural exchanges with real people, masters of their art, owners of restaurants, farms, shops and schools. We went to sacred places and prayed and gave offerings. We experienced some of the rituals of the neighboring islands as we visited Ishigaki, Kohama, Taketomi islands as well as the main island of Okinawa. We met masters and protestors.



Pictured here are Matayoshi-san, a Master Silversmith; National Treasure, Mrs. Toshiko Taira, Bashofu artisan, and Mrs. Shimabukuro, 80 year old anti-base protestor. All remarkable and passionate leaders whom we were privileged to meet.

My message through telling my story is that reflecting and going into your own personal history in a very serious way can be a true awakening to the real meaning of your life. I learned to cherish the hardships and disappointments by recognizing the gifts and amazing rewards bestowed upon me by people I hardly knew. That life is truly a treasure....Nuchi du takara.

My heart opened to so many memories and moments in time that I either forgot about or overlooked out of rushing through life. Thank you OGSB for giving me this great opportunity.

Now, I intend to live the last quarter of my life with Intention, Attention, Inspiration, and tremendous Gratitude. Chibariyo!

“Unji washiririba yaminu yunu kumichi.” – Appreciation for the gifts of the ancestors will light your path through the darkest night. -From a postcard made by Okinawa Hands-On, NPO

Submitted by: Gwen Fujie

“Consciously cultivating thankfulness is a journey of the soul, one that begins when we look around us and see the positive effects that gratitude creates.” - Author unknown



For those who may not know me, I am Brandon Ing. I am half Chinese and half Okinawan, fourth generation on my mom's side from the village of Kitanakagusuku. Locally, we are part of that club, also Young Okinawans of Hawaii and Ukwanshin Kabudan.

I am going to talk about “*Identity and Folksongs.*” Actually, just one folksong in particular. I am going to play a few verses of a song for you. I am assuming most of you know it already.

I will take it apart and some of it will be new information for you. I don't claim to be an expert, but I will share what I do know about it.

“*Kunu utaa wakaimiseemi?*” translates to “Do you know this song?” *Brandon plays a little of the song on his sanshin and sings a few verses.* He asks the Zoom audience if they know or have heard it or sang along to some parts. Some of you know this song as “*Asadoya yunta*”. This is the song I want to talk about in regards to ‘identity’. Its background, where it comes from, and how it can tie into someone's identity. He asks for hands from the Zoom audience if they knew that the words were in the Japanese language. This song is probably one of the most recognizable Okinawan folksong melodies. You will understand later on why I am doing this [makes quotation mark motions with his hands]. If you search on Youtube, you will find so many different variations of it from different people from different parts of the world. We know this as an Okinawan folksong, but the words that most people are familiar with is Japanese. I am going to talk about when that happened and why that happened.

The version that I just played, a lot of people will refer it as “(Shin) *Asadoya yunta*” The ‘Shin’ refers to ‘New’, so it is “‘New’ *Asadoya Yunta*”. In Japanese, ‘shin’ means ‘new’, a Japanese prefix. So, to put it in front of a word is to make it ‘new’. So, what is the ‘old *Asadoya Yunta*?’ The original song was adapted in 1934 by Nippon Columbia Records when they decided to take some songs from Okinawa and to make them popular by spreading them around Japan. But, to do that, they had to adapt it. The melody was “modernized”. The lyrics were changed to Japanese. This happened in the 1930s. It then became a cute, happy “love song”. It kind of lost its original meaning when it was adapted. This is the version most people are familiar with today, the version with Japanese lyrics. I found a Youtube recording from 1954 that sounded like this. *Brandon proceeds to play that video.* If you notice, there is no sanshin in the music, just a piano, violin, and singing. Nippon Columbia decided, for lack of a better word, to ‘*Japanize*’ it. It didn't have any Okinawan instruments in it. When I look at the names on this recording, seems like there were Okinawan names. There were Okinawan musicians on this recording. So now, if that is the adapted, modernized version, let's talk about the original version.

安里屋ゆんた



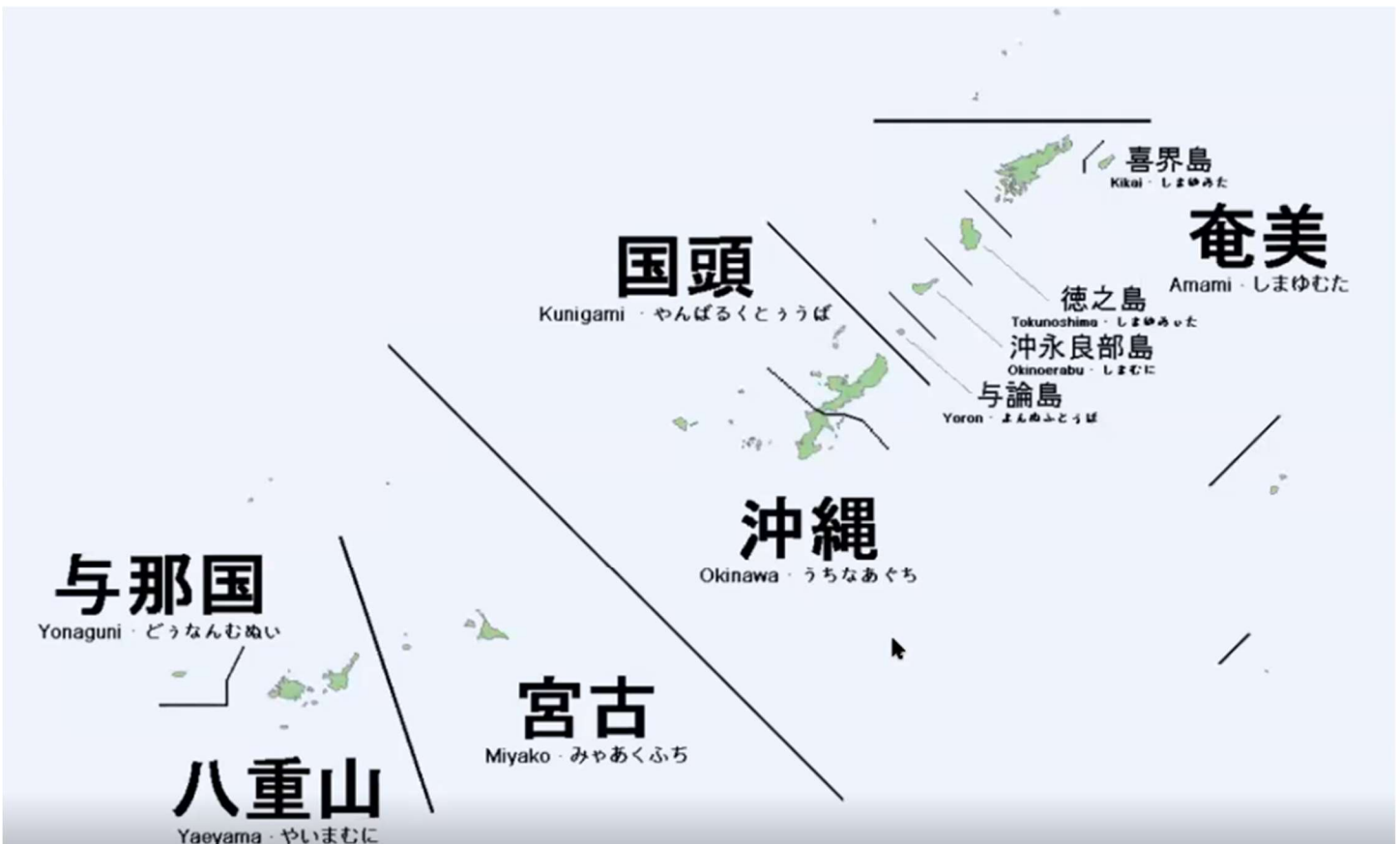
Some of you may be familiar with this information on “*Asadoya yunta*”. The song comes from Taketomi island, part of the Yaeyama island group. A classic image of this island is the image of a water buffalo pulling a carriage with tourists on it. It really is a small island that is flat with no mountains and is a popular tourist destination. If you get to go on the water buffalo tour, it will pass the house of the person that this song was written for. Who was it written for? That person is Asato Kuyama. The version we sing now has 4 or 5 verses. But the original version supposedly had 23 verses. It was not sung in Japanese but in ‘*Teedun Muni*’, the native language of Taketomi island, a variant of Yaeyama language, which is different from Okinawan language. If you were to listen to the 2 languages side-by-side, ‘Okinawan’ and ‘Yaeyama’ language you will hear some similarity, but as someone who has studied Okinawan language for a long time, I hear a very



different language. I don't know what they are saying, but you can pick up a few vocabularies here and there. The original song is about a beautiful woman who refused the proposal of a Ryukyuan government official. He was probably someone who came from

Shuri on the island of Okinawa. He wanted to take her back with him and get married. But she refused because she wanted to stay loyal to her home island, down to her home village.

Referring to a graphic of the Ryukyuan archipelago, he shows the location of Okinawa in relationship to the other islands and the division of the different language groups. Even though the islands are small and relatively close to each other, they have completely different languages.



Going back to the song, thinking about the fact that this woman, Asato Kuyama, was not interested in going with this Ryukyuan official, it kind of gives insight that not everyone was happy to be “united” under the Ryukyu Kingdom. They felt they were forced into it. The Yaeyama islands were incorporated into the Ryukyu Kingdom in the early 1500s.


Referring back to his visual presentation, he plays 3 verses of the original version of what ‘Asaduya yunta’ sounded like. On one side he has the ‘Teedun Muni’ lyrics, the ‘Taketomi’ lyrics and on the other, the English translation. He has never heard a recording of all 23 lyrics. Again, in the video, there is no sanshin. In a lot of the Yaeyama videos of songs, it is sung acapella or just with drums. The addition of sanshin came later. Possibly influenced from Okinawa after becoming part of the Ryukyu Kingdom. So very different from the recording I

played earlier. This was probably as close to the original song. This video recording can be found on Youtube. Type ‘asadoya yunta’ in the search box. You can also search for ‘okinawan folk songs’.

So, with everything being said so far, we can think of Asadoya yunta as a song of resistance to oppression, as Asato Kuyama said to her suitor you may be a big Ryukyuan official, but I do not want to be a part of this. You could also think of this as female strength. She resisted. She wanted to do what she wanted to do. She wanted to stay. She did not want to go off with him. It also a song of identity. This is where I am going to tie into identity. I’ve been told by someone from Taketomi island that it should be “Asaduya yunta”. That one syllable, one vowel, you can see the difference between Asato a Japanized reading of the name verses Asaduya which is from the native language.

Asaduya yunta

<p><i>Hiya, Asaduya nu Kuyama ni yoo</i> <i>Mizashishu nu Kuyu tara yoo</i> <i>[Hari nu tsindara kanushama yoo]</i></p>	<p>An official from Ryukyu proposed to Kuyama of the Asato family.</p>
<p><i>Hiya, Mizashi shu ya bana Nnpayo</i> <i>Ataru shu ya Ku-rya Oisu-yo</i> <i>[Hari nu tsindara kanushama yoo]</i></p>	<p>Not wanting to, Kuyama declined Mizashishu’s proposal. Village chief, please take care of the situation.</p>
<p><i>Hiya, Nnpati kara Misasami yoo</i> <i>Beeruti kara Yukusami yoo</i> <i>[Hari nu tsindara kanushama yoo]</i> <i>[Mata hari nu tsindara kanushama yoo]</i></p>	<p>Having been refused, Mizashishu got and said, “You refuse?? Fine!”</p>



What do we mean when we say “Uchinanchu”? This is a word from the Okinawan language and that word translates to “person of Okinawa”. Yaeyama is now part of Okinawa “prefecture”, but are they Okinawan? Is it fair to call them “Okinawan” or even “uchinaanchu”? Uchinaanchu means a person from Okinawa Island. A person from Yaeyama is not part of the Okinawa Island group. They have their own language, their songs are different, a separate culture. I have talked to some people about it. Some don’t mind being called uchinaanchu but others do. They say “no”. Look at the history and we are not part of Okinawa, so how can we be called uchinaanchu? A person from Yaeyama would refer to themselves a “Yeema pitu” in Yaeyama language but in Okinawan language a Yaeyama person would be referred as “Yeemanchu”.

“Asadoya yunta” as I’ve learned it, but it should be “Asaduya yunta”. But I am not going to change it because it is ingrained into me. By calling it an “Okinawan folk song”, we are taking away from the place and people who created the song and the true story behind it. The version we sing now is a nice love song in the Japanese language, not even in the Okinawan language. I am not saying to not call it an Okinawan song, but it’s something to think about.

As a reminder, the Yaeyama islands are part of Okinawa “prefecture,” but that’s because Japan overthrew and annexed the Ryukyu Kingdom, which Yaeyama was forced to become a part of. So, you either erase or honor the identity. Keep in mind, when we say uchinaanchu, or ‘Okinawan’, although we may feel like we are being inclusive of other island groups, i.e. Miyako, Yaeyama, some people of those places may not feel the same. They

may feel like they are being forgotten. If you know someone from there, it might be good to check with them how they would like to be identified.

This brings us to Uchinaanchu Taikai which comes next year. When talking about this, does this include all the islands? From our own personal view, it does. We want to include everyone from the island groups. Just by using that word, does it make anyone feel left out? I don't know. Every year in October, we have Uchinaanchu no hi (Uchinaanchu Day). But, are we celebrating only people with roots from Okinawan Island? A possible solution some of us have talked about is Shimanchu meaning a "person of the land". It would be inclusive of all these lands. An issue is the word Shimanchu, which is an Okinawan word. If we call somebody from Yaeyama, Miyako, or Amami Islands, *Shimanchu*, but for us, we are including them but we are still using our language, which to some people may be viewed as an oppressive tactic. So many things to think about with identity in the small space of all these different islands. We're not saying this is the solution, but it is something we have thought about.

The point is: I want to tie this into my own identity. I identify as Okinawan, Uchinaanchu. Depending on the context, sometimes I use Shimanchu, sometimes Ryukuan, indigenous Ryukyuan. What I want to get at with this presentation is, as an *Uchinaanchu*, I myself do not want to be called "nikkei" or "Japanese" or "part of the Japanese community" because it erases my *uchinaanchu* identity, the very thing that Japan has tried to do throughout history. They tried to erase our culture, our language. Referring to a picture of a school age boy wearing a "hogen fuda", a sign worn around the neck that states that he is being punished for speaking his native language instead of Japanese. If you've ever seen a "hogen fuda", it is like a dunce cap. It is humiliating to wear. The sign states in Japanese: "I used the dialect. I used Hogen". They're belittling our language into just a dialect, beneath the umbrella of Japanese, which is something I disagree with strongly. They are punishing kids for it, just a couple of generations ago. Talking about erasure, a lot of young people in Okinawa don't even know this relatively recent history. You say "hogen fuda" and they ask what is that? They don't realize that their own grandparents were punished or beaten for speaking their own language in school because they were only supposed to speak Japanese. It kind of creates this mindset that the older generation didn't pass it down because they were brainwashed. Their language was dirty. It was not something their kids would not benefit from, so let's stop it. So, it is hard to find someone who can teach native languages because it is ingrained in their brain that it is something not to do.



It is important to hold on to our identity to honor our ancestors, our elders. My grandparents are a strong reason for me identifying as *uchinaanchu* because they taught us that we were. By saying this, I am saying, "Grandma, I am not going to forget what you taught me." This is who we are...who I am...and I am going to be proud of it. In that sense, I want people to respect my identity. I myself, also want to be sensitive to those from other islands in the Ryukyus or wherever they may be from, who might not want to be identified as "Okinawan" or *uchinaanchu*.

This is what I want to share for the serious part of my talk. I want to share a few more things about Asadoya Yunta. There is a side connection to southeast Asia. In-between each verse you hear this *heeshi*, "[*mata*] *hari nu tsindara kanu shama yo*". If you ask most Okinawan musicians what it means, they'll say they don't know. It was kind of a filler with nonsense words to fill in the space between verses to keep the rhythm. According to the documentary I showed earlier, in the Yaeyama language, the *heeshi* translates to "Lovely, lovely maiden". The interesting thing about the *heeshi*, according to a friend, Garrett Kam, an expert in Indonesian performing arts, he told us that if you take that phrase and play with the syllables, you can actually make it mean something in Malay. So, you would have, "*Matahari terjun dara ke nusa mayo*". It could have a meaning in Malay being,

“The sun sets, the dove goes to the island.” Poetically speaking: “As she ages, the maiden chooses to stay alone.” If you think about the original meaning of the song, it really fits into what the original song was about. She decided to stay, refuse the proposal of the Ryukyu official, and stay on her own island. I’m just sharing what I’ve heard. I don’t have much more detail of the Malay language and how this might connect.



One more connection I want to share is when we listen to Okinawan music and when we compare it to southeast Asian, especially Indonesian Javanese music, the tones that they use fit nicely together. There is the Okinawa Prefectural Art University Gamelan Club (Gamelan – traditional instrument ensemble of Indonesia). When I was there, I heard many collaborations. You’d hear them play “Asaduya yunta” and some of them playing the sanshin also. I want to share because for me this kind of collaboration highlights the connection between Ryukyu and southeast Asia. Just the way the tones of their instruments are spaced out, it sounds like an Okinawan music scale. I just wanted to show this as an example of the connections.

**Okinawa Prefectural
Art University
Gamelan club**
(Gamelan - traditional
instrument ensemble
of Indonesia)



Comment by John referring to a protest video he viewed of police hauling away protesters and they were singing “Asaduya yunta”. He said now that he understands the meaning of the song, he now knows why they were singing it. Brandon added, “Hey, I am staying here, this our place.”

A question was asked on which Okinawan language to revive, since in Hawaii the Hawaiian language is now thriving because an effort was made to revive it. A major reason why there is no specific Okinawan language education is that the Japanese government controls all aspects of education. That, in turn creates the reasoning that there is just no time for an Okinawan language curriculum.

Ippee nifee deebiru - Okinawan
Shikai tu niifai yuu - Yaeyaman

Thank you very much

<https://www.youtube.com/watch>

HUOA Yuntaku Live! Ep. 48 - Okinawan Genealogical Society ...



Join us for our Yuntaku Live episode 48! A live broadcast talk story with the Okinawan Genealogical Society of ...

3 days ago · Uploaded by Hawaii United Okinawa Association



YUNTAKU LIVE

“Is there a person who, at one time in one’s life, has not yearned for those ancestral ties that bind? What part do I play in the family line started by my forebearers? What can I leave for the generations that come after me? Ultimately, each of our individual genealogies become a valuable foundation for the future of our ethnic population, which today often encompasses a cultural diversity of groups due to successful inter-marriages. But this heritage will disappear unless we do something now. Congratulations on starting!”

Dr. Bernice Hirai





All Hearts Unite As One
Chimugukuru Tiiichi 肝心一ち



ZIPPY'S

HUOA / Zippy's Ticket Fundraiser

In lieu of annual club fundraisers through festival scrip sales, HUOA and Zippy's are teaming up to provide clubs their fundraiser opportunity! Tickets may be purchased through your club representative!

Great gifts for the holidays, for keeping in touch with members, for a favorite meal with the family!!!

Tickets are \$9.00 each.

Redeemable for : Chili (1.5 lb) ; Meat Sauce (1.5 lb), Portuguese Bean Soup; (1.5 lb), NEW!! Meat & Egg Breakfast with small drink; OR cornbread (5 pieces)

REDEEMING TICKETS



Support HUOA Club Fundraiser

Sales : Oct 30- Dec 31, 2021

Redeem : Nov 1, 2021- Jan 7, 2022

