

30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Bonenkai  
 “Uyafaafuji Nu Hanauyi”  
 Tapestry of Our Ancestors  
 Hawaii Okinawa Center-Legacy Ballroom  
 Saturday, November 18, 2023, 10am-2pm

**Forgot to RSVP? Walk-ins are Welcome**  
 Entertainment: Yuttai Kwattai,  
 Ukwanshin Kabudan, Tamagusuku-ryu Shosetsu,  
 Shoshin Dance Company



e-Newsletter  
**2023**  
 November

OGSH  
 PO Box 894779  
 Mililani, Hawaii 96789  
 OGSNews@gmail.com

Donna Nakamura  
*President*

Ken Kamiya  
*First Vice-President*

Jackie Toma  
*Second Vice-President*

Heidi Shimabuku  
*Corresponding Secretary*

Susan Ramelb  
*RecorClliding Secretary*

Clyde Higa  
*Treasurer*

Virginia Tully  
*Assistant Treasurer*

Rodney Kohagura  
*Advisor*

OGSH Annual Meeting  
 November 18, 2023, 10AM  
 Hawaii Okinawa Center  
 Legacy Ballroom 1  
 (The Entrance is next to the restrooms)

**AGENDA**

- I. Call the Meeting to Order
- II. Introduction of Officers
- III. Recognition of Honored Guest
- IV. Invocation
- V. Lunch
- VI. Entertainment
- VII. Members Group Photo
- VIII. Prizes
- IX. Karii
- X. Kachashi

**Upcoming Events**

2023  
 November

18-Sat 10am OGSB Bonenkai  
 Hawaii Okinawa Center  
 Legacy Ballroom

25-Sat 9am HUOA Winter Craft Fair  
 Hawaii Okinawa Center  
 Legacy Ballroom

December

No OGSB Meeting  
 Happy Holidays

06- Wed 5:30pm HUOA Evening Craft Fair  
 Hawaii Okinawa Center

2024

January

OGSB Meeting -4<sup>th</sup> Saturday

20-Sat Uchinanchu of the Year and  
 73<sup>rd</sup> Installation Celebration  
 Hawaii Okinawa Center

27-Sat OGSB Meeting

February

17-Sat OGSB Meeting

March

16-Sat OGSB Meeting

22,23,24 Ukwanshin Kabudan  
 Loochoo Conference  
 Windward Community College

- Treasurer’s Report: Expenses-DNA workshop bentos; Income-Dues, Donations, Bookmarks, Bonenkai, Festival, Short Stories.

- Photos by Curtis, Marcel, and Members

- Elections 2023 Results - Congratulations  
 to the new Officers for the 2024 OGSB Board of Directors  
 Two-year term: Corresponding Secretary – Anne Oshiro  
 Treasurer – Virginia Tully  
 Interim President – VPs Kenneth Kamiya and Jacqueline Toma

Donna’s Word of the Month  
 karii (n); happiness; joyous event

Message from Donna:

As the holidays are approaching and we are on the eve of our most celebratory event for OGSB, I want to extend heartfelt gratitude and thanksgiving for the years I have served as your President! It has been an honor and a privilege and I want to extend to you and your loved ones a holiday season that brings you joy, contentment and many wonderful memories as you gather together to celebrate the season.

With gratitude and karii,  
 Donna Nakamura



# Lahaina A Town in Maui Where Many Uchinanchu Settled

This is the link to the youtube video that Hiroaki Hara, from the Okinawa Prefectural Library, mentioned in the meeting. The video contains English subtitles.



<https://youtu.be/xyzuVqpSgtU?si=IUTGpAqIpSO81nRN>

Or you may google: youtube Lahaina A Town in Maui Where Many Uchinanchu Settled

Look for this listing and click on it.

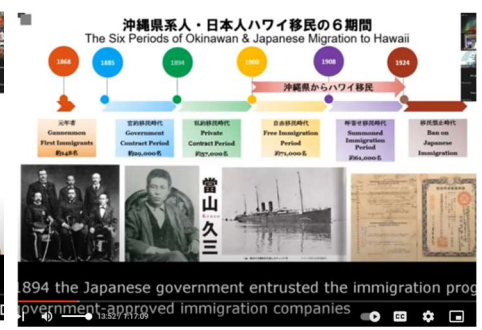
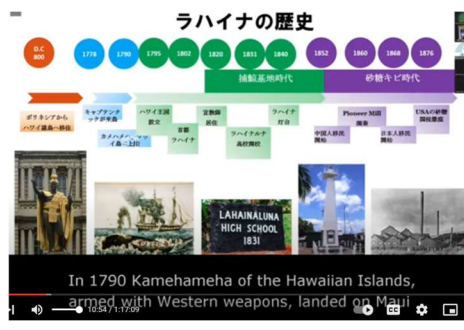
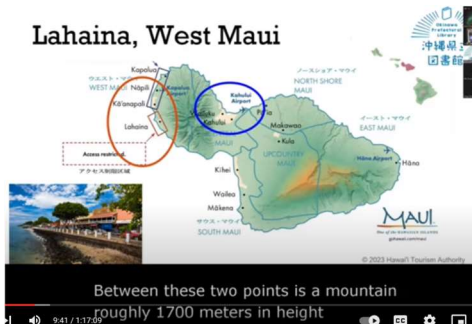
**YouTube**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xyzuVqpSgtU?si=CYli-z6YE6ccXP2Y>

**[English Subtitle] "Lahaina: A Town in Maui where Many ...**

**Web** This webinar was held on September 27th, 2023(JST) to promote fundraising to recover **Lahaina**, hosted by Okinawa Prefectural Library. Donation InfoA. From the...

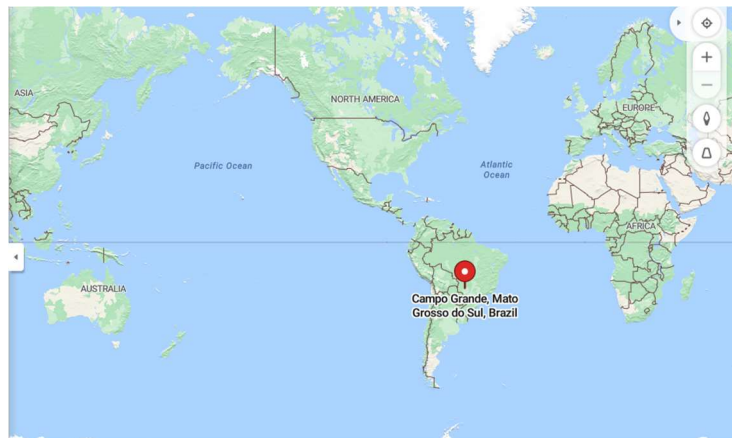
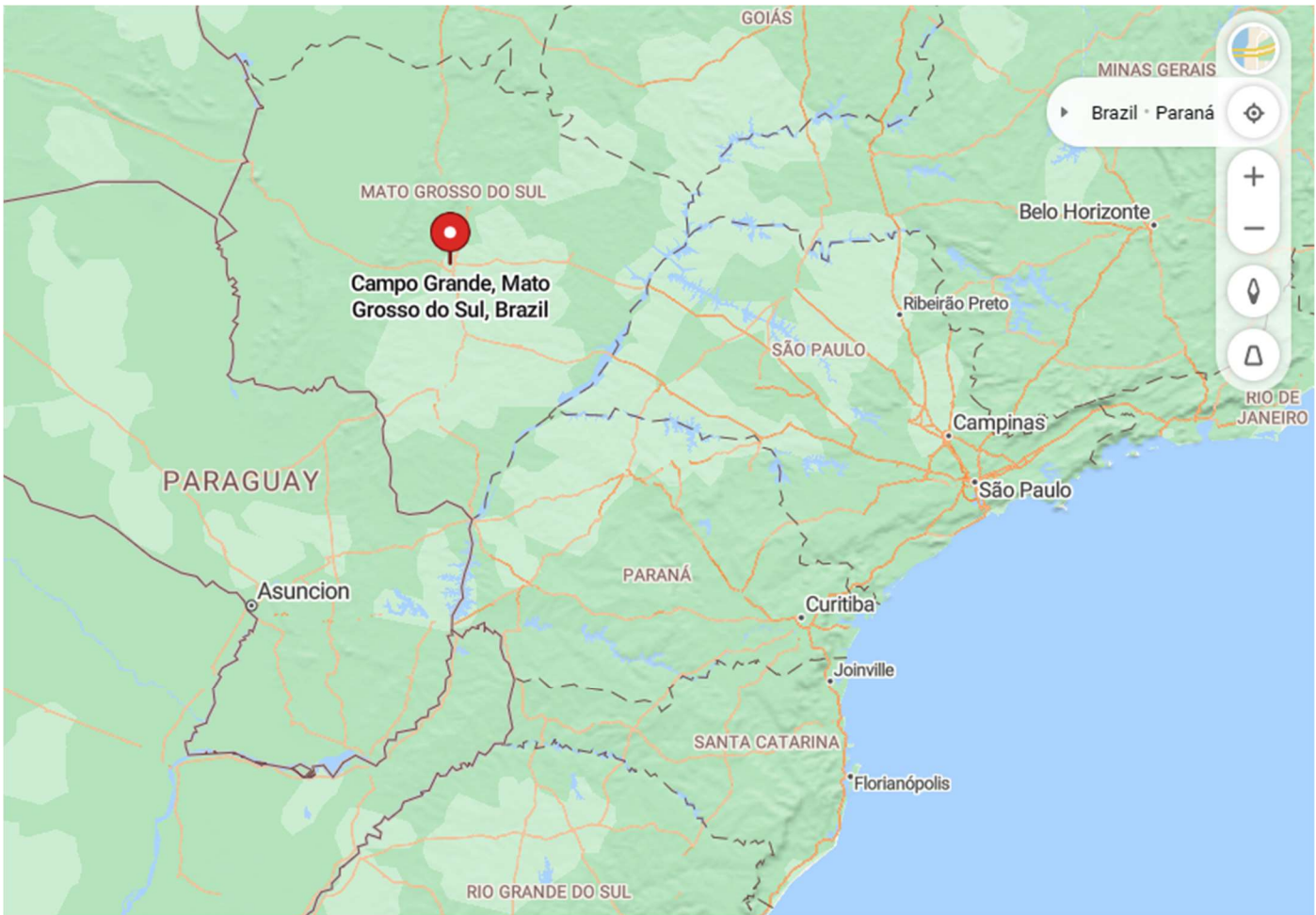
## Webinar Record

by IminRef / 2023-10-31 / No Comments



# Marcel Arakaki Asato

Guest speaker at the October 21, 2023, OGSB Meeting



My name is Marcel Arakaki Asato, a Brazilian and a fourth-generation Okinawan, born and raised in the city of Campo Grande, in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil. I am a pathologist, professor of medicine at Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso do Sul (UFMS) and also serve as the president of the Okinawa Association of Campo Grande (until the end of November). I'd like to share a bit of my story related to Okinawa and genealogy.

Here in Mato Grosso do Sul, we have the third-largest Japanese community in Brazil, and Campo Grande has the second-largest Okinawan community in the country. However, it is likely the city with the highest proportion of Okinawans (about 70% of Japanese descendants here are from Okinawa). Thus, Okinawan culture is very widespread here. For example, Okinawa soba has become the typical dish of the city, and moai (tanomoshi) is practiced by everyone (even among non-descendants). Despite this, few people know about Okinawa, and even among the descendants, not much is discussed.



Around the age of 12-15, I developed a profound curiosity about my origins, which led me to research and study about the subject of Okinawa. It was a point of no return. I began searching the internet and purchasing books about the history of Okinawa. I also started learning to play the sanshin, initially with my maternal grandfather. Through this process, I realized how much our identity as descendants in Campo Grande was fading. Most of my Okinawan-descendant friends and relatives also knew very little about their heritage. Our parents' and grandparents' generation often remained silent about their past, likely due to past traumas and experiences of discrimination. As a result, many stories, cultural practices, and pieces of information have been lost. In my family, we no longer had information about the hometowns of my great-grandparents.



So throughout my adolescence and into early adulthood, one of my hobbies became researching the history and culture of Okinawa, and I uncovered a fascinating world. I realized that the history of Okinawa, our culture, and our identity must not be lost but rather celebrated and disseminated. The brilliant, rich and often painful history of the Okinawan people must not be forgotten. We, as descendants, have a duty to learn about it and pass it on. I spent many years studying alone, believing that interest in this subject had waned in Campo Grande.



At that time, I wasn't a member in the Okinawa Association due to time constraints. But, I began searching for my ancestors through genealogical research. I decided to start with my paternal lineage, as we had more information available. I knew that my great-grandfather Gison Asato had emigrated to Brazil. His brother Shinki Asato had gone to Argentina, and his sister Nabe Asato had moved to Hawaii. We still had some contact with the Argentinean family, as they had visited Brazil more recently. So, when I traveled with my parents to Argentina in 2015, we took the opportunity to meet them in Buenos Aires. Connecting with the Hawaiian branch was more challenging since we had lost all contact. I let the matter rest until 2018 when I went to San Francisco, CA, for an fellowship in my field at UCSF. During this time, I took the 23andMe genetic test. With this test, I was able to find several relatives in Hawaii.



During this journey, I met many wonderful people who provided me with valuable information, particularly David Asato and Tisha Aragaki, from Hawaii. Tisha introduced me to her friend Hiroaki Hara from the Okinawa Prefectural Library. Hara-san, a great scholar of Okinawan history





and genealogy, conducted research on my family and uncovered extensive information. Using the insights gained from Tisha, David, and Hiroaki Hara, I sought assistance from the Hawaii United Okinawa Association (HUOA), which forwarded my request to the Okinawa Genealogical Society of Hawaii (OGSH). Through Sally Tsuha, I was able to contact my relatives in Hawaii, by social media and email, and we exchanged photos and informations. After my time in the USA, I returned to my city to resume my professional career and decided it was time to devote myself to Okinawan matters in my hometown. At the beginning of 2020, I became a member of the Okinawa Association of Campo Grande, and then, unfortunately, the pandemic hit.

And so begins the story of how I became the president of the Association. During the pandemic, there were no activities or celebrations at the Association. So, I proposed to the then-president, Eduardo Kanashiro, that we hold our celebrations online, particularly those focused on artistic performances (such as the New Year's party, which we call the Festival of the Signs, in accordance with the Chinese/Japanese zodiac). I took the initiative to organize the production of the video for these events. During this process, I met several young people who, to my surprise, were enthusiasts about Okinawan matters, like my current vice-presidents Nelson Oshiro Hokama and Patrícia Nogueira Aguenta, as well as current directors Crystian Proença, Henrique Arakaki, Leonardo Sone, Isabela Shiroma, and Lucas Miyahira. They, too, were vested in the cultural and identity issues concerning Okinawa. We formed a group to discuss various ideas on how to improve the Association and preserve the culture and history of Okinawans, one of the main ideas being the creation of an Okinawan immigration museum in Campo Grande.



The then-president Eduardo, recognizing our desire and energy to accomplish this, talked to me about the possibility of running for the presidency of the Association the following year. The proposition was somewhat madcap because I had been involved with the community for only a year; my parents were against it, considering it would be a lot of work and require a significant amount of my time. Nevertheless, I embraced the challenge, viewing it as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Consequently, I became the youngest president of the Okinawan associations in Brazil at the age of 31. The two years were marked by hard work and stress, but the experience was ultimately fulfilling. During this time, we celebrated the grand centenary of the Campo Grande Okinawa Association. We also revived the Sister State Treaty between Mato Grosso do Sul and Okinawa and welcomed a delegation from the Okinawan government. Later, we hosted the Vice Governor of Okinawa, Yoshimi Teruya, to discuss the Treaty. And, by a happy coincidence, we received the Okinawa Prefectural Library delegation twice, led by Hiroaki Hara, whom I had previously met and spoken with at length about my genealogy through Tisha Aragaki. Meeting him in person in Campo Grande felt like reuniting with an old friend.



During these visits, they offered consultations for descendants eager to learn more about their ancestors and collected documents, photos, and materials vital for Okinawan history. They even uncovered a Kafu, an original document about 400 years old from the Ryukyu Kingdom, which was in possession of one of our directors and was subsequently donated to the Library.



Now, as my tenure is coming to a close and due to the doctoral program I am pursuing, I had the chance to return to San Francisco. This time, I seized the opportunity and traveled to Hawaii with the intention of meeting my relatives in person. I was warmly welcomed by Tisha Aragaki, who enlightened me about the history of Hawaii and the Okinawans in Hawaii. She was also a gracious companion during all my stay. I had the opportunity to attend an OGS meeting, meet Sally Tsuha in person, and coincidentally, Hiroaki Hara from Okinawa participated online as well. It was also an honor to converse with former president John Tasato, who introduced me to HUOA as well as the story of Kyuzo Toyama and his grave. I witnessed how well-organized and thriving the Okinawan community in Hawaii is, setting a fine example for us in Brazil. I also recognized the significant influence Okinawans have on the broader Hawaiian community. OGS has become an inspiration for us, prompting the creation of our own genealogical study group, which will commence activities soon.



Finally, I had the chance to meet with the Hawaiian family. They prepared a large party in the evening, with over thirty people attending. I had not anticipated such a grand gesture. They welcomed me with multiple lei and gifts, making me feel as though we had known each other for a long time. Despite our different cultures, we share the Uchinanchu spirit, and wherever we go, we feel at home. It was an incredibly special moment, and I was at a loss for words to express my feelings. It was as if I had restored a lost link, an opportunity my great-grandparents never had—to meet and connect with the descendants of my grandfather's cousins. I took this chance to invite them to visit us in Brazil.

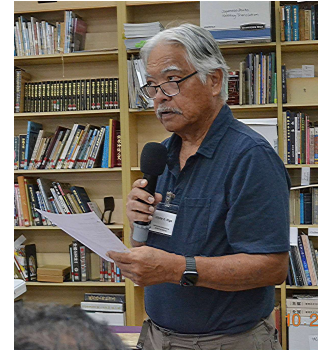


I understand that this story is common among descendants of immigrants, not only Okinawans. But I feel that we Okinawans have something different, special, something indescribable—an exceptional bond with our culture and homeland. After sharing these stories on Instagram, many reached out to me with similar narratives or the desire to embark on the same journey. I am convinced that this quest for our origins opens a significant gateway for young descendants to take more interest in their culture and history and to participate in associations. I increasingly notice that the youth are eager to learn more about themselves, which involves understanding where we come from. The efforts of the HUOA and OGS are incredibly important and inspiring, and I hope they continue their work for many years to come. *By Marcel Arakaki Asato, November 2023*



October 21, 2023 - OGSB Meeting -Food, Fellowship, and Fun





Reminder...

No meeting in December. January's meeting will be the fourth Saturday on January 27, 2024.

