

The Japanese Shinto Shrines in Early Issei: A Case Study in the Kona Coffee Belt Japanese Community

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Introduction

This is an ethnographic study analyzing religious aspects of the first Japanese immigrants to America, the Issei. To that extent, the research examines the historical content of the Issei community in Kona, Hawaii and to what degree non-secular characteristics existed in the individual daily lives of Issei as well as the collective cohesive community. Religious beliefs in these particular Japanese immigrants entail the construction of Japanese Buddhist temples and the formation of Japanese Shintoism. For the purpose of this study, two shrines will be discussed. These stories present detailed and insightful experiences and understanding of the research participants who live and interact in the Kona coffee Japanese community. The purpose here is to structure a foundational knowledge of the formation and function of the shrines as they developed into the central symbol of the Japanese Kona coffee community.

Background

Little remains of the shrines in the Kona District and their documentation therefore, I relied heavily on in-depth interviewing from the Nisei community.¹ This study took approximately two years, from 2010-2012. About 45 day intervals were spent in the field. During the fieldwork data collection, I resided at my mother's residence. Contact access was established at this residence.

According to the old maps, there were at least five shrines of both Shinto and Inari in Kona; four were located in the northern district and one in the southern area along the Kona Coffee Belt Road. The majority of the original priests at these shrines were most likely amateurs because there were only a few Shinto priests sent from Japan. With inadequate financial support from the headquarters in Japan, these priests worked exceedingly hard to offer their services at Shinto rituals and marriages.

The Buddhist temples in the Kona coffee farming community co-existed with the Shinto and Inari

1) Real names are utilized in this study. However, the author used pseudonyms in lieu of the real names of the subject that preferred to protect their identity.

Shrines. Shinto and Inari Shrines appeared in Hawaii with the Japanese migrant workers employed at the sugar plantations and, in the case of Kona, the coffee fields. Many Japanese migrant workers and “picture brides,” practiced the Japanese Shinto religion as soon as they arrived. Some Nisei informants said their parents arranged marriages with families in Japan resulting in boatloads of “picture brides” landing in Honolulu. Although marriages had been meticulously planned, the missionary-educated Hawaiians had qualms about their legality. Hasty weddings were arranged in order to satisfy the public outcry.

There were as many as 100 weddings a day at the *Izumo Taishi* Shrine in downtown Honolulu. A similar experience occurred with my great grandparents. My grandfather told me a few times that his parents got married in a Shinto shrine just after arriving in Honolulu harbor. He recalled “*My mother told me about the time she got married. She said that my father travel all the way to Honolulu to pick me up and in those days you had to go to the docks to the immigration office. After we got out of immigration, we were forced to the Kamisama temple (Izumo Taishakyo Shrine) in downtown (Honolulu) and we had a Shinto style wedding. Soon after that he took his new wife back to Kona.*” Numerous marriage ceremonies were performed at the Shinto shrines in the Kona District as well, and various old wedding photos from Nisei informants confirmed that the Issei likewise chose to marry in Kona. From the countless pictures that were presented to me, the majority of the couples chose to wear Japanese Shinto style attire, the women wore junihitoe (traditional Japanese white wedding wear), and the men wore haorihakama (traditional Japanese wedding style).

It is important not to under estimate the complexity of multiple religions among the Japanese community. It was not uncommon to be a follower of for example, Jodo Shin-Shu Hongwanji Buddhism, Inari Shintoism, and perhaps Christianity. Some people in the Japanese community attended all three institutions.² In addition, it was not uncommon for people in the Kona community to practice multi-spiritual non-secular religions. Katsuo Tanaka³ a Nisei 85-years-old indicated that “*When I was little my parents changed (converted) to Christian so I had to attend church every Sunday. So my parents became Christian I became Christian but my friends were all belonging to the Hongwanji. I remembered the pastor said to us we shouldn't go to any Buddhist temples or shrine, especially shrines but my father didn't care about this rule, so on New Year's we went to the shrines and for Obon we went to the bon dance (Obonodori which was held at the temple). Not everyone did what we did, there were many church people that were stronger than my father and refuse to go to the Buddhist events.*”

As to how these shrines were erected, Kihei Ogawa, and several Nisei informants from the Holuloa area recalled, “*My father told me that the shrines were made by everyone round here (community). The (Japanese) community donated money and slowly the shrine was built. Some people gave money while others gave their time and other donated supplies.*”

2) Eileen Tamura. (1994). *Americanization, acculturation, and Ethnic Identity: The Nisei Generation in Hawaii*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

3) Katsuo Tanaka, a Nisei, grew up on a coffee farm in the Holuloa area on the Kona coffee farm belt. He worked as a salesman and farmed coffee part-time. He is an active member of the Kona Daishi Shingon-Shu Temple, the Kumamoto Kenjinkai, and the local kumi group. He had an eighth grade education but later returned to graduate with a high school diploma. Katsuo Tanaka wears an omamori around his neck that he purchased from a trip he made to Japan.

The Inari Shrine

The Inari Shrine stood in the Central Kona District. *Inari Okami*⁴ is a significant God of the Shinto religion and is basically a Japanese God of fertility, rice, and agriculture. The shrine was erected in 1885, much earlier than the Buddhist temples.⁵ The Inari Shrine was popular in Kona for its mystical powers, for the God Inari would bring to the hopeful Kona coffee farmer a good crop for the year. Many farmers utilized the Inari Shrine for healing and attended services during New Years for good fortune. The Inari Shrine survived financially by performing New Year's purifications, house blessings, healings, and on the sales of talismans and charms (*omamori*).

In the Kona District, the Inari Shrine was also known for its mystical healing powers. At the time, numerous Japanese farmers relied on the Inari faith for healing. The local Issei physician Dr. Harvey Saburo Hayashi stated in his autobiography, "Kona Echo," that many farmers called upon Japanese healers or sorcerers to cure their sickness.⁶ During difficult times when coffee prices were low, farmers had little money to spend on medical expenses and therefore relied on the Inari Shrine healers to drive out their illnesses. Many people relied and trusted the Japanese sorcerers from the Inari Shrine to exorcise hexes from enemies in the community. One informant spoke of two farmers disputing the purchase of some land. When one farmer suddenly became ill, he was sure that the other farmer put some sort of curse or spell on him. He went to the Jinja who performed a "Japanese exorcism" that set him free of all unwanted spells.

The Japanese Buddhist community trusted the *ofuda* (*talisman*) to aid in protecting a house from any mayhem or shortcomings by inscribing the name of a Kami or representative of a Kami and the name of the Shinto shrine on the *ofuda*. The Japanese community purchased it at the shrine yearly, typically before the end of the year, and attached it to a door, pillar, or ceiling. In some cases, it was placed inside a private shrine (*kamidana*). When I interviewed several Nisei, they all claimed to have purchased the *ofuda* every year because they truly believed that a piece of paper could save their homes from any sort of disaster.

Charms (*omamori*) were commonly relied on for protection from any evil spirits. In many cases, the *omamori* were claimed to have mystical powers that would ensure safety. Another reason one might carry an *omamori* was to bring upon good luck, which in many cases, was well needed at the time. These *omamori* were quite popular among the Kona community, and most likely the majority of the farmers wore one. In fact these *omamori* were so popular that when a person visited a famous shrine on a trip to Japan, the *omamori* became a popular *omiyage* (souvenir) given to friends and family.

According to old photographs, the Inari Shrines were plain and simple with the *mon* (gate) at the entrance, similar to Jinjas in Japan. According to Yoshie Fukushima⁷ a Nisei resident, "*the shrine was*

4) Worship of Inari spread across Japan in the Edo period, and by the 16th century Inari had become the patron of blacksmiths and the protector of warriors. Inari is a popular figure in both Shinto and Buddhist beliefs in Japan. More than one-third (32,000) of the Shinto shrines in Japan are dedicated to Inari.

5) Andrew Lind. (1939).

6) Kona Echo; John Embree, (1941); and several Nisei informants.

7) Yoshie Fukushima, a Nisei, grew up on a coffee farm in the Holualoa area on the Kona Coffee farming belt road. She

always empty, so when we were little we used to go up there and play in the rooms at that time there was an old man that used to let us play there anytime. Except for the New Years, the old man used to spend a couple weeks preparing for oshogatsu. He used to paint the gate red and make all those kinds of white long fancy paper, and when the New Year's came the place filled with so many people I remember the ladies wore their beautiful kimonos."

The Shinto Shrine (Izumo Taishi)

The Izumo Taishi Shinto Shrine built in 1879 stood in the northern section of the Kona District in Holualoa. The shrine was built on land that is still owned by the Yokoyama family who operated a large general store at the time. Gladys Fukumitsu (Yokoyama), said, the Shinto shrines had several responsibilities. Several of the main duties were weddings, New Year's festivals, Oharai (purification service), blessings, and yakudoshibarai (Japanese exorcism). From the beginning of the Issei period to the start of World War II, the majority of wedding ceremonies were performed at the Jinja (shrines) in conjunction with a post wedding party at the groom's residence. As for Oshogatsu (New Year), Miki Sato, remembered that as a child she visited the Jinja every year, *"It started in the very early morning on the first of the year, we would get up early in the morning and visit the Jinja. We would go up to the front and put our hands together and pray for the New Year. It was something we had to do and it was part of our culture and it was fun for us. After that the people who lived around this area would make mochi or mochitsuki, and that was the one thing I really missed the most. Because for me I always related the time in my childhood to mochitsuki and Kamisama (Shinto shrine), now that I think about it is really sad, I haven't thought about it for years and now that you mentioned it, it is really sad."*

Some informants recalled the Shinto shrine organizing ancient Japanese sumo wrestling matches during the first month of the year. One participant Alfreida Fujita (Kimura) remembered, *"My father signed up my brother Morris to fight in the Sumo tournament, it was really funny because at the time my brother was only about ten-years-old and he looked so tiny and small at the sumo tournament I was kinda worried that he might get hurt. I still remembered how they threw the salt and prayed to the shrine. So yes, we were I guess Shinto too. Of course we had that kamidana and every morning my father used to pray to the (Shinto) God."*

In accordance with the Shinto religion, Shintoism was practiced in homes in the morning with the offering of water and on occasion food. John Embree and other scholars confirmed that a kamidana altar, a miniaturized Shinto shrine constructed from little pieces of wood and less expensive than a butsudan, was in the homes of the Japanese migrant farmers next to the butsudan. The purpose of this spiritual ritual was to give appreciation to the Gods in hopes of a respectable crop and "no bad luck." Miki Yamanaka⁸ an 87-year-old Nisei said, *"My father used to wake up early in the morning and go*

was a semi active member of the Hongwanji Jodo Shin-Shu Temple. Because she was one of the very few Nisei that farmed Kona Coffee full-time, she had very limited time for additional social activities.

8) Miki Yamanaka a Nisei grew up in the outer area of the Kona coffee belt road in Holualoa. She now resides in the center of the Kona District Keauhou. She was a housewife with several different part-time jobs over the years. One of her main part-time job was picking coffee beans during the coffee season. Mrs. Yamanaka is a semi-active member of the

to the kamidana and clap his hands three times bow and then start his work. Also on the New Year (Hatsumode), we would make and put on the kamidana you know the big mochi, (rice cakes) mikan, (tangerine) surume, (dry squid) and this pretty Japanese paper on the bottom.” During Oshogatsu (New Year’s), double-stacked mochi (kagami) with a large surume (dried squid), dried Kombu, traditional green branches of leaves, mikan, and water were offered to the Gods.

During the time of the Issei, the Shinto shrines performed the traditional Yakudoshi ceremonies as the Issei reached that particular age. Yakudoshi are the years of calamity. This is a Japanese Shinto religious belief that people at the ages of Yakudoshi are likely to experience misfortunes or illness. It is generally believed that men’s yakudoshi ages are 25, 42 and 61, and for women 19, 33 and 37. The ages of 42 for men and 33 for women are considered to be particularly bad years, honyaku (great calamity). This is because the numbers 42 and 33 are phonetically unlucky numbers. The number 42 can be pronounced “*shi-ni*” which is homophonous with the word “to die,” and 33, when pronounced as “*sanzan*” is translated as “hard,” “terrible,” or “disastrous.” When reaching a Yakudoshi age, the majority of the Japanese community performed the exorcism ritual (*yakubarai*) at the Shinto shrines. Numerous Nisei interviewed agreed that their Issei parents believed that Yakudoshi spiritually affected their lives. The Yakubarai exorcism was mainly performed at the *Jinja*. It was a private ceremony that included immediate family members. The Shinto priest (*kannushi*) conducted the short ritual ceremony which lasted approximately ten minutes. The priest would perform a short prayer (*norito*) to the Gods and wave his *goheii* while at the same time casting out any bad and evil spirits. The priest and the person performing the ritual would conclude the ceremony by drinking a tiny cup of sake with the immediate family.

For many others, including Alfreida Fujita, sumo wrestling and the religious rituals that were related to the other events were exceptionally important to their religious cultural heritage. The majority of the respondents revealed that many Issei members regretted doing nothing to save the shrine when it was destroyed at the beginning of World War II. The Issei were afraid to really say anything because they feared that they might be taken to the concentration camps. Even after the war, the Issei didn’t want to have anything to do with the shrine because of fear of discrimination and there was a general feeling that rebuilding the shrine was not the right thing to do at that time.

Shinto Religious Ritual: Wedding Ceremony, the Issei Experience

In the late 1880’s the Japanese migrant workers who migrated to America were predominantly men and a few married couples. With the passing of two decades, the composition of the Japanese community in the Kona District changed after the Gentlemen’s Agreement of 1907. Under the threat of U.S. immigration legislation targeted at the Japanese ethnic group, the Japanese government agreed to limit the migration of Japanese laborers. Although Japan stopped issuing passports to new migrant laborers, wives and children or arranged wives of Japanese immigrants in the United States

Kona Hongwanji Jodo Shin-Shu. She was an active member of the fujinkai at the temple where she worshiped.

were permitted to enter. This was the beginning of the time of “picture-brides.”⁹ As mentioned in the previous section, the marriage ceremony for many Japanese women in Hawaii was performed at a Shinto shrine a few hours after they cleared the immigration process. This process was mandatory for the first few extensive waves of Japanese immigrant picture brides. Later, the new couples were allowed to marry at their future husband’s local residence. Issei men that decided to marry in Kona chose to have the ceremony performed in the new Shinto style. The two major shrines in the Kona District were Shinto and Inari, but the majority of the weddings were carried out at the Shinto shrine.

The notion that all Issei migrant workers married a “picture bride” is inaccurate. In many cases, the Issei men possessed knowledge of their brides in their neighborhood before immigrating and conversely the girls knew of the men who went to work aboard. These marriages were indeed arranged in Japan among families in the same area. It was important for both families to realize that the married couples were from the same place. Choosing a bride was determined on whether the woman would be mentally and physically strong enough to live in Kona under extremely hard working conditions. Older men, widows, and widowers were often married quietly by a nakodo (go-between). In the Kona District, an average of at least two or three bachelors within a kumi group were viewed as possible candidates for marriage. A few Nisei women who could clearly remember these unhappy stories stated, “*Among the older people in Kona, there were many unhappy married women as a result of arranged marriage.*” Several Nisei participants said their parents were unhappy; the age difference was the biggest concern. Miki Yamanaka said, “*My mother was 18 (years-old) and my father was 40 (years-old) so I think the age gap and the generation period was way too much. In the beginning of the marriage I think they had a little trouble but as they got older, I guess they got used to each other.*”

Locating any Nisei who possessed knowledge of a complete Issei wedding was almost impossible. Wedding data was taken from fragments of several Nisei that shared a close relationship with their parents. During numerous interviews, many Nisei informants had no knowledge of their parents’ past. Several informants had asked their parents several times about Japan and family matters which resulted in, “*no answer,*” or as Sam Morimoto remembered, “*I think that’s the way our parents were, they didn’t say much, they were really Japanese, you know straight face and really serious. Sometimes I was so scared, you just don’t ask stupid question.*” Numerous scholars¹⁰ label this behavior as Meiji era values.

Marriages in Kona were similar to weddings in Japan but with some added American customs and resourcefulness. As you would expect, the women wore a traditional Japanese kimono, which the bride’s parents prepared and brought with her on the journey to Hawaii. The groom paid for the entire wedding attire, as was the custom in Japan. The groom presented the bride’s family with a monetary gift (*yuinokin*), and a formal wedding kimono. In return, the bride’s family furnished the home with a *tansu* (dresser), and other Japanese furniture, which was taken to the house on the day of the wedding. I had little success in obtaining data from the Nisei concerning the actual ceremony until I was shown some

9) Dennis Ogawa, (1978); Ronald Takaki. (1983).

10) Hosokawa, (1969) *Nisei: The Quiet American*. In his book the author on several occasion characterized the Issei and the Nisei as possessing these Meiji era values.

pictures of weddings from several Nisei informants. Those pictures provided invaluable information that was difficult to uncover from any Nisei interviewee. For instance, the pictures confirmed the brides wore a white wedding style kimono (*shiomuku*) with long sleeves. The brides wore a traditional white *tsumokakushi* (Japanese wedding headwear), and a white obi belt with the kimono. They wore special Japanese white toe shocks (*tabi*) with white Japanese sandals (*zouri*). The grooms wore a traditional Japanese *montsuki* (Japanese style mid-length coat). In the background of the photographs stood the Shinto shrine and one informant could clearly identify friends who attended the wedding.

Some aspects of a traditional wedding in Japan were lacking in weddings in the Kona District. For instance, John Embree's analysis showed that in a traditional Japanese ceremony prior to the wedding party at the groom's house, a farewell party at the bride's house was practiced. The groom was present at the bride's house during the farewell party but he returned separately to the party at his house. This custom and a few others were sadly not possible for the Issei's traditional weddings because there were no extended families.

Several photographs described the post wedding party as having 100 or more invited guests, which would have cost approximately 600 dollars. Records recovered from my great-grandfather's¹¹ post wedding party appeared to show that most of the wedding expenses were recovered from gifts of five dollars or a five-dollar bag of rice depending on the relationship with the couple. These records were carefully kept so that an equal monetary gift was returned at other weddings. The post wedding party was usually celebrated at the groom's home. As was expected, photographs reveal that the weddings were held outside during mid-day. Long tables and long benches were laid out similar to a post funeral party although there was more décor at a wedding. The style was not Japanese in terms of trays and traditional dishware and it had more of an outdoor picnic atmosphere. The food was mostly Japanese with additional American and Hawaiian dishes. One particular centerpiece that surprised two Nisei informants consisted of a ten pound Onaga (red tail snapper) wrapped in a daikon net that represented a Japanese Tai fish. Placed in this centerpiece around the fish, were cut carrots shaped to imitate a flower which was surprising to the focus group because this was one Japanese cultural tradition that could be envisioned at a wedding today. Additional Japanese food that probably would have been served was nishime (Kyushu dish similar to chikuzenni), hijiki, rice, sashimi, for the reason that these dishes are still commonly prepared for parties today. Other non-Japanese dishes that were served at the time were roast chicken with stuffing, Kalua pig, lau-lau and in some cases poi (a very delicious Hawaiian staple dish). Each guest drank from a paper cup filled with plenty of sake or soft drinks. All of these dishes with paper plates and waribashi (disposable chopsticks) were in a long picnic style buffet arrangement..

The Issei became fond of Hawaiian cuisine and quickly acculturated to the majority of Hawaiian cooking due to the fact that Hawaiian cooking utilizes few spices, which was similar to Japanese cooking. The Japanese Issei community quickly took a liking to Kalua pig, laulau, poi, and for dessert haupia (coconut dessert). The Issei took a liking and acculturated to the hospitality of the Hawaiians.

11) As mentioned in the previous, my great-grandfather Otokichi Abe was married at a Shinto shrine in Honolulu and later had a post wedding party in Kona.

Ken Sasaki,¹² a Nisei informant explained, “*The Hawaiians were kind to our family they were always giving us stuff, you know fish, poi, and when they gave, they gave a lot. My father used to have two Hawaiian family friends and they were so nice to my father and our family really got along with them well.*”

Despite the fact that the weddings took place in Kona, and the fact that immediate and extended family were not present, the Issei tried to keep the traditional Japanese wedding customs.

The Destruction of the Shinto Shrines: Japanese Religion, Kamisama

Soon after the attack on Pearl Harbor, two FBI agents arrived at the Yokoyama Store in North Kona, which stood directly below of the Shinto shrine. Gladys (Yokoyama) Fukumitsu, remembered clearly when the FBI arrived at Kunigoro Yokoyama’s General Store and arrested him. Kunigoro Yokoyama owned the property on which the Shinto shrine was built and there was a tremendously high risk of him being accused of being an enemy alien. Kunigoro Yokoyama; however, was one of the few fortunate ones due to his past kindheartedness within the community. Mr. Yokoyama was arrested, interrogated, and remained in the process of being shipped to a concentration camp on the mainland but at the very last minute, Hawaii territorial Senator William Hill stood up for him and he was released.¹³ This is the story of Kunigoro Yokoyama according to his daughter Gladys Fukumitsu.

“William Hill in his younger days this haole guy used to go all around the island peddling reading glasses that is how he got his nickname Doc or Doc Hill. You know in those days (pre-WWII) from Hilo to Kona it used to take up the whole day, and so to save some money instead of staying in a hotel, my father offered him to stay or sleep any place where there was space in the store or I think in the living room. My father was so kind to him and of course to everybody. He used to eat with us and like he was kinda like family. Later I don’t know when but he became like now a State Senator. So when Doc Hill heard about my father was being detained in a Hilo relocation camp, he went down right away and because he was a Senator, got him out of there, and so we were very lucky. And so my father always used to tell us “ongaeshi” if you give good things then something good will always come back, and that is what we learned from our parents.”

After my father was released, maybe I think about less than a week the Shinto Shrine problem came up. The FBI agents first started talking to my father asking all kinds of questions and left. Then a few days later the FBI (agents) came for the second time, then my father called my brother and me, and told us to take these two men up to see the Kamisama (shrine). So I was so scared so I let my

12) Ken Sasaki, a Nisei, grew up on a coffee farm in the Kealakekua area along the coffee farm belt road. He graduated from Konawaena High school. Over the years, he worked as a carpenter full time for several different companies, and worked part-time as a carpenter and a part-time farmer with about 3 acres of land. He was an active member of the Kona Hongwanji Jodo Shin-Shu Temple and was well known as a weekend shoreline fisherman and therefore, was an active member of several fishing casting club.

13) Hill, William H. a.k.a. "Doc" of Hilo, Island of Hawaii, Hawaii County, Hawaii. Republican. Member of Hawaii Territorial Senate, 1928-59; delegate to Republican National Convention from Hawaii Territory, 1944; member of Hawaii State Senate, 1959-67.

brother take them up there and I was about twenty or thirty feet behind. In the beginning, the FBI started looking around, and all of a sudden one FBI agent picked up a stick and started wrecking the walls outside. The other FBI agent entered inside and scratched everything inside, tore up all the kakejiku (scrolls) and smashed the glass casing and took all the Shinto precious documents with them. My whole family was shocked and scared. This is something that I will never forget. At the time I was only ten-years-old so I didn't know what to think but I was scared."

During a focus group session at the Daifukuji Zen Temple, the researcher informed the group that he interviewed Gladys Fukumitsu and was told the story about her family and the destruction of the Shinto shrine. The story of the Shinto shrine was well known to the Japanese community, and many participants remembered the destruction of the shrine. The majority of the Japanese Nisei community were disappointed that the shrines were never rebuilt. Many reported that their parents were sad and often brought up the subject of the Shinto shrines. For many Nisei the Shinto shrines were part of their ethnic identity formation, which was lost during the war.

Chie Honda,¹⁴ a 96-years-old Nisei living with her daughter in the Holualoa area, was excited about various conversations concerning the Japanese Shinto shrines. She mentioned several times that when the shrines were destroyed during the Second World War, she was enormously sad, "*It was sad because no one could say anything about the shrine after the war because people would think of you as un-American. So I suppose that after so many years I guess everybody just gave up.*" She explained that for years no one really discussed the Shinto shrines and "*I think that it is really sad because it is a true Japanese culture that is lost. I don't think young people don't know really what the Shinto religion is all about. As for me when I was little it was so much fun to visit the Jinjya every year.*"

Several other Nisei participants had very similar feeling toward the loss of the Shinto shrines. Kentaro Tanaka, a 94-years-old Nisei, was tremendously eager and enthusiastic about sharing his feelings and viewpoints concerning the destruction of the Japanese Shinto shrines. Kentaro Tanaka solidified the fact that the (United States) "*Government broke the first constitutional amendment of the freedom of religion. So basically the government destroyed our religion by shutting down our Shinto shrine. The government knew that it was the wrong thing to do, but most of all it was the wrong thing of not fixing it (rebuild) the Japanese Shinto shrines.*" He spoke more and explained that for many years it was difficult for "us" to come forward and discuss specifically how they were treated during the war, and the destruction of the Shinto shrines. "*I am old already (94-years-old) so now I can tell you how I really feel about how things were. For many of us I think we don't talk about these things because I think it was a shameful experience for Japanese or any race.*"

Pertaining to the Shinto shrines, generational transformation did not transpire to the majority of the Sansei. Other members in the Japanese community that wanted to create ethnic solidarity through

14) Chie Honda, a Nisei, 96-year-old, grew up in the Holualoa area along the Northern Kona coffee belt road. She worked for a General Store and farmed Kona coffee part-time on their four acre farm. She is a member of the Kona Daifukuji Soto-Shu Zen Temple, and is a member of the local kumi group.

peaceful measures often stigmatized members of the Japanese Nisei community that spoke of rebuilding the shrines. At the time, avoiding ethnic, racial discrimination was of greater value than their Japanese national religion. I can only assume that reconstruction of the shrines at that time did not transpire because it was a strategic decision to avoid religious and ethnic discrimination. Today, an even greater number of Nisei want to rebuild the shrines but most of them are too old and lack the energy.

Even after the war, parents had a huge influence on fixations that were related to the Shinto shrine. For instance, the kamidana (miniature shrine) and the Japanese Emperor's picture hung on the wall. Parents performed the ritual of bowing to the picture of the Emperor every morning. These were intimidating rituals for many young Nisei growing up. The majority of the older Nisei participants insisted that the Emperor's picture ritual brought them closer to their Japanese ethnic identity.

In relation to religious rituals, many believed Shintoism was "*simple and less complicated.*" For instance, Shintoism required no special religious tools. All that was really needed was the kamidana and offerings of for example, rice, fruit, water, and flowers. The kamifuda was placed inside the door of the kamidana. Before worshiping at the kamidana, it was ritually important for family members to cleanse their hands. The early morning appreciation acknowledgment was two slow claps followed by a bow of the head to the hands for about two seconds. Katsuo Tanaka remembered, "*We were taught by our parents that during prayer, we were not to ask for things or good fortunes, but of appreciation and thanks for what we have. We were taught never to ask for anything or give me this, help me or help my brother because he is sick. My parent would say bachigaataru*" (something bad will happen to you). The majority of the Nisei interviewed mentioned similar feelings towards their religion and hoped they could share these experiences with their grandchildren.

The New Japanese Buddhist Kekkon Shiki (Wedding): the Nisei Experience

Wedding rituals were quite confusing, for instance there were no specific religious wedding rituals in Japan during the Issei era. Christian doctrine required God bond a marriage. As the Japanese picture brides arrived in Honolulu, Christians demanded that God bond the Japanese immigrant's marriage. To satisfy the Christians, the Issei Japanese community socially constructed a Shinto marriage ceremony utilizing a Shinto priest, traditional instruments, and sake with some branches and leaves, the ceremony lasted approximately 40 years.

After the destruction of the Shinto shrine at the beginning of the Second World War, the majority of the young Niseicouples onceagain had to socially reconstruct their wedding ritualsat the Buddhist temples. The early Nisei were for the most part the first group of Nisei to utilize Buddhism for their wedding ceremony. The Buddhist wedding was quite confusing. Masa Morimoto, a Nisei remembered, "*It was confusing because we didn't know what to expect, especially our parents, because they were married in a shrine (Shinto). Because my parents kept saying that in Japan temples are only for when people die not weddings. So we were like what do we have to do, or is the ceremony long or like is gonna be in Japanese because the priest can't really speak Japanese. So you know it was interesting.*" Several Nisei participants suggested that the Buddhist weddings were all new to the Issei and the Nisei.

In other words, the Kona Japanese community reconstructed an absolutely new way of binding their marriages utilizing a Japanese Buddhist temple.

For many years prior to the Shinto weddings, marriages in Japan were separated from religion. Young Nisei couples; however, decided to wed at a Japanese Buddhist temple for the reason that Buddhism was their religion. The majority of the Nisei participants confirmed that performing their weddings at a Japanese Buddhist temple played a pivotal role in their Japanese ethnic identity formation. The majority of Nisei believed that the reconstruction of weddings at the Japanese Buddhist temples created a sense of happiness and fulfillment for their Issei parents. Many spoke about how weddings at the Japanese Buddhist temple altered how they viewed the temple and their own identity. For instance, Masa Morimoto grew up thinking that the temple was a dark and eerie place. His attitude changed once he participated in his cousin's wedding ceremony and realized that the Buddhist temple was not at all scary. He mentioned, *"because of that experience I had at my cousin's wedding, I too decided to marry at the Buddhist temple. I am not a hard core Buddhist member but because of the weddings and other events that the church (temple) was involved in I think the temple did many good things for the community...As far as my parents, they didn't say much but, you could see it in their faces that they were happy that it was at the church (Japanese temple)."*

The formation of Buddhist weddings in the Kona District was quite unique in the sense that the Japanese Buddhist temples acculturated a few Christian wedding traditions to formulate a new Japanese Buddhist wedding. Numerous Nisei participants agreed, *"The wedding ceremony was really long in comparison to a Christian wedding. Before in our days, the priest read the okyo (sutra) over and over four or five times and then read the vows, and after reading the okyo again three or four times. And the worst part about the wedding was that it was all in Japanese we couldn't understand a thing."*

Most of the women Nisei wore the traditional Japanese kimono while some women chose the white western style wedding dress. The men wore western style suits and ties. The Nisei women started shifting towards western style white wedding dresses, as white wedding dresses were delightful. The wedding ceremony was performed with a wedding band or a ring similar to a traditional Christian wedding. In a few cases, the Buddhist temple was decorated with beautiful Hawaiian flowers along the aisle representing happiness for the bride, groom, and the families.

In many cases, the wedding reception party was conducted several months after the marriage and probably longer if the marriage was during the coffee-picking season when time was limited. Therefore, the actual legal contractual bindings were in many cases weeks before the actual wedding reception. The early Nisei weddings were usually celebrated at the bride's home and a week later at the groom's home. These parties signified that both parents approved of the marriage. Marriages in which wedding parties were not held indicated that their parents did not approve of the marriage. The majority of the late Nisei chose to conduct their wedding ceremonies, and post wedding receptions at the Buddhist temples due to the fact that the Buddhist temples possessed the facilities to accommodate large weddings,. As mentioned in the previous earlier, in some cases daughters chose not to wear the traditional Japanese kimono. The majority of the women wore their kimono during the reception party to satisfy their parents.

The entertainment and food had changed a bit from the time of the Issei due to the availability of more diverse Japanese ingredients. The buffet style food table displayed, rice, nishime (Kyushu dish similar to chikuzenni), namasu, inarizushi (cone sushi), hijiki, sashimi, salad, makizushi, chicken hekka,¹⁵ and teriyaki beef with some local Hawaiian dishes. Salads and other new dishes that were not Japanese but used Japanese ingredients such as vegetables, kamaboko, and dashi (Japanese fish stock) were also served. Beer and sake were standard drinks with “soda pop” for the children and non-alcohol drinkers. Old photographs displayed a large wedding cake on the table in front of the bride and groom, again simulating a western style cake cutting tradition. The reception party ended with the traditional banzai cheer from a designated member of the family.

The later Nisei set a new a standard by halting wedding receptions at homes and using the Japanese Buddhist temples and their recreation facilities instead. The Japanese Buddhist temples were located in the central Kona District and were easier to access, clean, and reasonably priced. The temples possessed cooking utensils, tables and chairs, and other reception equipment necessary for large parties. A majority of the Nisei mentioned they enjoyed the environment of the Japanese Buddhist temple in comparison to their homes.

The majority of the Nisei participants suggested that the wedding ceremony and the reception food were passed down to the Nisei by their parents. Slight amounts of acculturation to local and western style wedding traditions were discovered. There were small changes in the Japanese food dishes in comparison to the Issei era. As times changed, the Nisei created their own innovative Japanese dishes using Japanese ingredients. For the most part, with the support of their Issei parents, the Nisei maintained their Japanese cultural traditions regarding endogamous marriages and weddings.

Finally, in cases of exogamous marriages and family disputed marriages, the Buddhist priest was asked to perform the wedding ceremonies in different locations, for instance, beaches, hotels, or public recreational centers. The reason, in some cases, was the opposing family members refused to attend the marriage ceremony. Public recreational centers along the beaches were popular wedding locations for many non-Japanese couples. The beautiful nature of Hawaii and the low-cost rental of recreational centers tempted some to break Japanese Buddhist wedding protocols.

Conclusion

This study presented a historiographical framework in which variations in the vitality of the members’ Japanese Shinto religious identity can be recognized. The importance of the framework was that it paid equal attention to who or what was prioritized and the internal disposition for the purpose of accurately gauging the vitality of the Japanese community’s ethnic attachment within the domain of non-secular or secular involvement. The study indicated that the majority of the Issei were deeply involved in spiritual non-secular rituals which were possibly retained by the Nisei community. The study also discussed the destruction of the Japanese Shinto shrines, and briefly touched on the subject of

15) Chicken hekka is an invented Hawaiian slang for a dish that is very similar to sukiyaki but instead of beef chicken was substituted.

Japanese ethnic identity formation. The research also indicated that the Nisei are no longer capable of passing their local knowledge of the Shinto shrines to the next generation due to their destruction and the inability of the community to rebuild them. This tragic incident was extremely heart-wrenching for the Issei and Nisei community. Yet this was not the first time the Japanese community experienced hardship and ethnic stigma and would probably not be the last.

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