

History and Features of My Locations

1. MILILANI

In Pre-Contact Hawai'i, records show that Mililani has been a significant location. These lands' fertility and cool temperatures made them exceedingly attractive. This resulted in local chiefs occasionally warring to control this area. The armies of O'ahu also trained for war here in preparation for the invasions from other islands. One of the most significant battles in Pre-Kamehameha Hawai'i took place in 1410 when the chiefs of Maui and Hawai'i Island attacked O'ahu. The decisive battle took place in Kīpapa Gulch, located below Mililani Town. O'ahu's forces, under their leader Mā'ilikāhahi, were ultimately victorious ("Mililani Mauka History: From Farmland to Modern Real Estate").

A Hawai'i Island chief's son, John Papa 'Ī'i, was born in 1800 and became a personal attendant at age 10 to Prince Liholiho (Kamehameha II, age seven) growing up in Mililani. His services were repaid by Kamehameha III in 1850, who granted him the entire ahupua'a, including his childhood home. It is said that John Papa 'Ī'i first called the area above Kīpapa Gulch "Mililani" (to look skyward) over a century before the name became official. After his death in 1870, the lands were bought by Castle & Cooke. Their plantations lasted for about a century, and would later become the site to a 16,000-home master-planned project ("Mililani Mauka History: From Farmland to Modern Real Estate").

Although Mililani is mainly a bedroom community for Honolulu, it has its own commercial shopping centers, schools, parks, recreation centers, and golf course ("Mililani, Hawaii"). Mililani resembles a modern American suburban town, and even was named an All-America City in 1986 after Samuel Lee led a crusade to purify the community's drinking water. Castle & Cooke succeeded in attracting buyers with their detailed planning, lush greenery, and all of the aforementioned amenities (Schaefers).

"Mililani, Hawaii." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 6 Dec. 2017, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mililani,_Hawaii. Accessed 7 Dec. 2017.

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2. PEARL CITY & PEARL HARBOR

Many records of Pearl City do not exist, perhaps because other locations on O'ahu were more prominent. However, the history of Pearl Harbor is known. The ends of the Ko'olau and Wai'anae mountain ranges formed the area of Pearl Harbor. The mountains caused heavy rainfall that created rivers and cut deep canyons in the island. As O'ahu sank and the sea level rose, sea water filled these ravines, exposing only the highest land. Today, these plateaus are Waipi'o Peninsula, Pearl City Peninsula, and Ford Island. The body of water surrounding these high points is Hawai'i's largest estuary, Pearl Harbor. Ancient Hawaiians named this estuary Wai Momi, meaning "the river of pearls" (Scott).

The Hawaiians didn't value the oyster pearls greatly until the Europeans arrived in 1778. They sought after the pearls, and by 1788, the Hawaiians sought them out too, including the Europeans' wealth. King Kamehameha declared all of the oysters his, and prohibited oyster fishing by death. A European explorer noted in 1818 that there were many oyster divers at the time, and that he presented Kamehameha with an oyster dredge. By the 1840s, most of the oysters disappeared, and upland deforestation had caused massive mud runoff, smothering any chance of recovery. Nowadays, finding oysters is a rare occurrence (Scott).

It was said that the area around Pearl Harbor had brackish waterways, freshwater springs, beaches, and banana and sugarcane plantations (Leong). The Pearl City area had rice paddies and fields that were plowed by water buffalo that hauled two-wheeled carts. Pearl City was the final stop for Benjamin Dillingham's Oahu Railway and Land Company (OR&L), which opened in 1889 and dissolved in 1947. Lots for Pearl City, which had yet to be built, also went on sale in 1889 after the rail line was completed ("Pearl City, Hawaii").

"Pearl City, Hawaii." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 6 Dec. 2017, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pearl_City,_Hawaii. Accessed 8 Dec. 2017.

Leong, Lavonne. "Honolulu in 1888: The City That Made the Magazine." *Honolulu Magazine*, 20 Nov. 2012, 2:12 PM, www.honolulumagazine.com/Honolulu-Magazine/November-2012/Honolulu-in-1888-The-City-That-Made-the-Magazine/?cparticle=4. Accessed 8 Dec. 2017.

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3. HONPA HONGWANJI HAWAI'I BETSUIN

In December 1899, the first Bishop, Hoji Satomi, completed the first Honolulu temple on Fort Lane, which was located behind the Central Honolulu Fire Station. However, its first services and dedication were delayed because of the bubonic plague epidemic in Honolulu and the Chinatown district fire. The temple was offered as a relief center to the citizens of Honolulu. The first service was able to be held later on April 1, 1900, and the temple was formally dedicated on November 20, 1900 ("Temple History").

Mary Foster donated a large portion of land and a large monetary donation to the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawai'i. Today, that land is site to Hongwanji Mission School and the Fort Gakuen Japanese Language School ("About Hongwanji Mission School"). The current Betsuin's design was created by the architectural firm Emory and Webb with help from the second Bishop, Yemyo Imamura. It blended Indian architectural elements with features found in Japanese temples, as well as elements of western architecture. Striving to create a pan-Asian Buddhist design with India as its origin, the temple would be more inclusive than with a traditional Japanese design. Completed in 1918, the construction highlighted the loyalty of Hawai'i's Japanese-Americans and facilitated the acceptance of Buddhism in America during the critical years of World War I ("Temple History").

The layout of this temple, combined with how services are run and how temples in general are largely community-based in Hawai'i, might surprise newcomers by how similar or comparable this religion is to other traditions. People sit in pews (rows of benches), sing hymns (gathas), listen to sermons (Dharma talks), and the congregation (sangha) gathers over refreshments after the service ends. Lectures, workshops, and cultural events are held throughout the year. Programs like Dharma School and the Young Buddhist Association (YBA), in addition to schools like Hongwanji Mission School (HMS) and Pacific Buddhist Academy (PBA), allow children to get involved as well ("Welcome"). Therefore, there are many ways newcomers—and their kids—can participate and benefit from the various offerings.

"About Hongwanji Mission School." Hongwanji Mission School, www.hongwanjimissionschool.com/about-us. Accessed 14 Dec. 2017.

"Welcome." *Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii*, hongwanjihawaii.com/welcome/. Accessed 14 Dec. 2017.

"Temple History." *Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin*, hawaiibetsuin.org/temple-history/. Accessed 14 Dec. 2017.

4. PACIFIC BUDDHIST ACADEMY

In the early 1900s, the second Bishop of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawai'i, Yemyo Imamura, first wrote about developing a Buddhist private school. Imamura believed that the Buddhist teachings of peace should be transmitted in the United States through education ("History"). The Honpa Hongwanji Mission fulfilled this vision partly by adopting a proposal for Hongwanji Mission School (HMS) in 1949, which currently teaches preschool to eight grade. Imamura's vision was further advanced in 2001 when Bishop Chikai Yosemite encouraged the Honpa Hongwanji Mission to create a Buddhist college preparatory high school (Lee et al. 237).

A \$1.5 million donation from Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha made it possible to renovate two buildings into classrooms and office facilities ("History"). The presenter of the donation, Bishop Itoku Takeno, explained that the gift was a reflection of his administration's slogan of "Hiraku Dentou," which roughly means to expand the religion to as many people as possible (Asato). Pacific Buddhist Academy (PBA) opened in August 2003 to its first class of 17 students ("History").

The school opened as Buddhism was faltering in Hawai'i; Honpa Hongwanji Hawai'i Betsuin, one of the largest temples in the state, saw its membership drop 40% from 1992 to 2003. Bishop Yosemite hoped that Buddhism would be revitalized through opening PBA. In many ways, PBA operates like a regular high school with rigorous academics—and that's what attracted some of their first students. But through the school's Buddhist education and peace curriculum, students think critically and are aware of the interconnectedness of everything (Kayal).

Some parents saw PBA as a way to return their children to their cultural and religious roots. Alfred Bloom, a professor emeritus at the University of Hawai'i, said "If [PBA] can show this young person that the religion of his grandparents is a modern, viable, meaningful way of thinking and life, [students] will be more apt to participate in it" (Kayal). This intellectual framework will revitalize Buddhism with a base of young members. And if not, PBA's original goal of creating good citizens will still be achieved.

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"History." *Pacific Buddhist Academy*, www.pacificbuddhistacademy.org/about-pba/history. Accessed 9 Dec. 2017.

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Lee, Jonathan H. X., et al., editors. *Asian American Religious Cultures*. Vol. 1, ABC-CLIO, 2015.

5. JAPANESE CULTURAL CENTER OF HAWAII

The Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai'i (JCCH) was first conceptualized in February 1985 by major Japanese groups in the community after the Kanyaku Imin celebration (100 years of Japanese in Hawai'i). In 1986, the Honolulu Japanese Chamber of Commerce (HJCC) initiated the Japan–Hawai'i Cultural Center project, "The Dream," to bring together organizations in Hawai'i to preserve the history and legacy of the pioneers who came to Hawai'i from Japan. On May 28, 1987, JCCH was incorporated under Hawai'i's laws as a non-profit organization. As an independent entity, JCCH plays a critical role in the community by perpetuating the history, heritage, and culture of Hawai'i's Japanese Americans ("History").

JCCH's facilities were built in the early 1990s, and was designed to evoke the Japanese influence on modern Hawai'i. The Phase I building, completed in 1991, houses the Tokioka Heritage Resource Center, the Seikōan Teahouse and adjoining tea garden, and the Cultural Center's main offices. The Phase II structure, completed in 1994, includes the historical gallery exhibit, community gallery, gift shop, banquet hall, meeting rooms, and the Kenshikan dōjō. A landscaped multipurpose courtyard and the skybridge connect the two buildings. The Cultural Center is located in the heart of Mō'ili'ili ("Facilities & JCCH Tenants").

One of the most prominent exhibits is the *Okage Sama De: I am what I am because of you* exhibit. It opened on January 7, 1995, and tells a cultural story that reveals the legacies and values of the first Japanese immigrants carried on to this day. This is a permanent historical exhibition that was renovated in 2012. It now features new artifacts, wall murals and displays, and a video that captures oral testimony about the Japanese-American experience in Hawai'i. JCCH and the Onizuka Memorial Committee presented the *Ellison Onizuka Remembrance* in this exhibit on June 24, 2017. Ellison Onizuka was the first person of Japanese ancestry to become a U.S. astronaut and travel into space. This collection features photos and information about Onizuka, a space suit from astronaut Fred Haise, a model of the Challenger Space Shuttle, the state's only moon rock available for public viewing, Onizuka's NASA flight jacket, and other personal items ("Okage Sama De: I Am What I Am Because of You").

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"History." *Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii*, www.jcch.com/history. Accessed 7 Dec. 2017.

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My Personal Connection to My Significant Locations & Personal Commentary

1. MILILANI

I grew up in Mililani Mauka, and it has been my home for 14 years. Everything that was part of my childhood—good and bad—came from Mililani, so it's very nostalgic looking back on this place.

I went to Mililani 'Ike Elementary School growing up. I remember the campus for having lush greenery and new facilities. After all, it's the newest elementary school in Mililani, and it matched the overall feel of the town. However, I didn't think it was a good experience for me. I didn't really have friends because the school felt overwhelmingly large, so I retreated socially. There were always about 30 students in my class, and at my last all-school assembly, I clearly recall our principal proudly announcing there were 1,100 students attending our pre-K to fifth grade school, which was an astonishing figure. There was really no chance of receiving individual attention with that many people, and to add to that, any clubs or programs I had an interest in was dominated by intense competition, so I gave up on pursuing many things. That's why after graduating, I immediately realized I couldn't have succeeded in that type of environment. After all, I was, and still am, a more introspective person.

However, I have changed and grown significantly since then. I chose to go to a smaller middle and high school, and by doing so, I developed socially and have made friends. Although I socially retreated back then, I think my current self would have thoroughly enjoyed the landscaping, the openness of the campus, the new facilities, and the programs they offered.

I started out with sports in Mililani, but I wasn't that good at it, so I resented playing some of them. Only golf and possibly swimming stuck with me, while I eventually dropped soccer and baseball. My dad signed me up for all of these sports when I was young, and again, Mililani is fairly large and has intense competition. I didn't really understand or had an interest in team sports like baseball or soccer, but I knew I wasn't adequate or skilled enough to benefit my teams. That's why I chose to drop those two sports. Swimming was an individual sport where I learned how to swim. Swimming is a utilitarian skill, so I still regard it as beneficial. I took lessons from the YMCA from a young age until I was 12, so I don't resent it like I did with team sports. Like swimming, I took golf lessons as an individual from seven years old, so I continue with it to this day.

Even though there were some bad experiences growing up, it's still my hometown and Mililani holds significant memories for me. One of those warm memories was when I learned to ride a bike in third grade after hours of practice. Once I got the hang of it, I often rode around the neighborhood on weekend afternoons. Mililani is such a beautiful community, and I feel really lucky to have grown up here.

2. PEARL CITY

While I grew up in Mililani, I often visited my grandma's house in Pearl City, which was the area where both of my parents grew up. Whenever there was a special occasion like somebody's birthday or a holiday, the whole family would gather at my grandma's house for dinner, and my brother and I would usually sleep over afterwards. How long we stayed over depended on the occasion; sometimes it was only for one night, but when it's the end of the year, we always spend a large part of our winter break there.

During the holiday season, I mainly stayed with my grandma because of all of the things we needed to do to end the year. After Thanksgiving ends, we start baking cookies and other treats to give to other people. My dad and my uncles put together their own lists of people they want to give cookies to—mainly business or work contacts they maintain relationships with. My brother and I also create lists, and we give cookies to teachers, as well as friends and their families. The gift-giving at the end of the year is very hectic, but somehow we make it through every time.

After the cookies and the baking is over, it's Christmas, and onto making mochi for the New Year's. Right after the family Christmas dinner ends, we start washing the mochi rice and soaking it overnight. We use multiple electric mochi makers because it's more convenient than the traditional way to make several pounds for the entire family. First is steaming the rice, then pounding or rolling it until it becomes mochi. I always love eating the steamed mochi rice because its texture and taste is different from regular rice. Mochi rice is also called glutinous rice, so that might explain the difference. The pounding process is usually done by actually pounding the rice with wooden mallets, but with the machine, a small paddle at the bottom of the large steaming bowl rapidly spins to transform the rice into a ball. After the pounding process, we shape the mochi pieces with an interesting machine, the mochi cutter. All of the mochi goes into a bowl on top, and there is a spiral on the bottom, which is connected by a handle. When I turn the handle, the spiral rotates, and the mochi is funneled out to the side. I can control how much mochi comes out before I cut the piece off.

The Japanese tradition of *kagami mochi* is to stack flat pieces of mochi on top of each other with a small tangerine on top, which is a New Year's decoration. On New Year's Day, we also eat a soup called *o-zōni* for good luck, and it requires mochi, a broth or soup, and other ingredients that vary from region to region. Coastal parts of Japan might use clams, and rural areas might add vegetables they grow. I've even heard of a variant that uses pumpkin! However, my grandma's family uses mochi, chicken broth, chicken, mizuna (Japanese mustard greens), carrots, daikon (winter radish), and sometimes gobo (burdock root).

After my parents separated in 2016, my mom immediately found and moved into an apartment that's very close to the Honpa Hongwanji Hawai'i Betsuin temple. My dad moved into my grandma's house as an intermediate step while he searched for a good place for himself, my brother, and I. The moving process was very abrupt for me, having only one morning to dismantle and pack up my room; I misplaced a few personal items in the chaos. Even after I moved, dealing with two locations was difficult. I regularly moved from each location, and it was hard keeping track of my things. I kept forgetting where I left specific items, and whenever I needed something, it was always at the wrong place. That problem became worse when my dad finally bought his townhouse in Mililani, which became a third location. Even after my dad found a place of his own, we still stay at our grandma's house often, so I still have my "living areas" set up in all three houses. However, I learned to manage moving between houses more effectively by always bringing a plastic bag of necessities with me.

The past few years have been turbulent, but at my grandma's house, the homeyness makes me feel calm and comfortable. I enjoy going into my grandma's garden, which is very green and lush. She has many orchids that bloom in spring, which transforms the rows of pots into bursts of color. There's a Nintendo Wii that my uncle bought, and it still works well. My grandma's rule is that it always stays at her house for us to enjoy. I play Pokémon and Wii Fit on it, which are things that are probably part of my classmates' childhood too. Whenever I have some time to kill at her house, I would play those games and feel a rush of nostalgia—or maybe a tight muscle while with the Wii Fit Trainer's yoga.

3. HONPA HONGWANJI HAWAI'I BETSUIN & THE HONOLULU AREA

This is the site of PBA and the Honpa Hongwanji Hawai'i Betsuin temple, but it is also the site to my mom's apartment. When we moved from our Mililani house, she was able to immediately rent an apartment from the building located right next to the temple parking lot; it's located on Pali Highway, right below the ministers' housing.

Although there are only two bedrooms, the living room was more spacious than I had imagined. But again, there are only two bedrooms, which meant that I have to share a bedroom with my brother, and I never shared rooms with Justin before. I thought the room would be too small for both of us, but somehow two beds and two bookshelves were able to fit, in addition to all of our other things that somehow fit in the closet.

Although my mom has to commute every day to Wheeler Elementary School, which is located near Wahiawa, it is very convenient for my brother and I to walk to school. It's also convenient and exciting to have access to the many things that Honolulu offers. In the past, I never really traveled into Honolulu often, but now that I spend the weekdays here, I was delighted to discover the things "city life" offers, unlike the suburban neighborhood I spent my childhood in. In a(n almost) purely residential area like Mililani Mauka, the nearest shopping center is over a mile away, so I rarely went out of my way to visit places like Starbucks, or even a small park. Other than people's houses, everything would be a drive or a lengthy walk away. But in downtown Honolulu, or in Nu'uano at least, many places are within walking distance, so I can often visit the newly opened Starbucks, or easily find good places to eat at. Furthermore, now that I have made friends in school, I'm realizing how fun it is to occasionally go out with them and walk around, or hang out in a café.

Another thing that I was able to do because of our new downtown location was go to the movies more often. Last summer, there was a Studio Ghibli film festival at the theaters in Kahala Mall. Unlike the rest of the class, I haven't seen many of those movies growing up. Realizing that this was a chance to finally experience these well-known movies, as well as some of the lesser-known ones, I wanted to make it to as many showings as I could. Luckily, since I was with my mom and Kahala wasn't too far away, we could go to most of the weekly viewings. I finally understand what the class means when they bring up movies like *Spirited Away*, *Howl's Moving Castle*, *Ponyo*, and more. It really helped out when we were discussing the theme for this year's all-school camp. We visited the Ward area for movies as well, and because of that, we became more accustomed with the Kaka'ako area, which is one of the vibrant centers of Honolulu.

4. PACIFIC BUDDHIST ACADEMY

Even after I graduated elementary school in Mililani and went to middle school at HMS, there was still some of that "teenage angst" within me as I went through the first couple of years at PBA. I also wasn't too committed yet to making friends at the time; I was only complaining about the negative things around me, especially during middle

school. I guess I was very serious about myself and my studies, and I expected everyone else to be serious too. I often recall finding myself very annoyed after our class constantly joked around. However, I started to speak my mind for some reason, probably around my sophomore year. After then, I started to stop being so serious—and I started to “lighten up” or let my inside self show more on the outside. That’s probably why Talissa said I was more “smily” when she visited PBA.

This change of self led me to “join” Shala, Raine, and Aya’s group during camp in junior year, but I originally felt like I was invading, given my more serious personality. However, all three of them reassured me it was perfectly fine. Our class’s social dynamics constantly change, so I’m more skillful at navigating our class’s many groups and strong individuals. It’s actually nice to just go up to someone and talk with them about something casual. I didn’t realize I could do that until I was in third grade when I asked someone what they thought about another classmate. That was an isolated incident, however, and I didn’t think about casual conversations until I made the connection in my head about my childhood self and my “transformation at the time.”

Although I socially changed for the better, I still have to watch myself and be serious at the appropriate time. Before, I used to be serious almost all of the time. Now, I’m more awkward and casual, and that comes from letting my inside self show. I get embarrassed and flustered more often when I try to strike a balance between filtering what I’m about to say while I try to show my real self. So that means there’s room for self improvement, which will reflect back on my outside. Since I show what’s on my mind more often, I sometimes act casually at inappropriate times, or I tend to instinctually react to something. When Daniel was offering incense, he was improper, and my reaction was highly visible and audible. Afterwards, Otake Sensei took both of us to the side and showed us how we were both wrong. And then, he turned that into a learning moment where we learned how we should have acted. This embarrassing lesson showed me that I still have to act properly at the right moment with the right mindset, and that my “default” mindset led me astray when the situation became something other than casual. I’m still a work in progress and still sometimes need to be reminded.

PBA offered me more than just strong academics; I was given the flexibility to discover my strengths, develop my weaker points, and realize my passions. Even before I entered PBA, I knew Japanese was already a strong point for me, and that I was interested in the Japanese culture. PBA helped me refine and develop my Japanese to the point where I could function well as an exchange student in Japan. However, my interests in career probably won’t involve using Japanese, so I predict my usage of the

language and involvement in the culture will be driven by personal interest in the future. Photography was one of the things that I didn't really have an interest in when I entered PBA, but through Mr. Kubota's course, I learned many skills and gained a stronger interest in the subject. I even bought my own camera, and my ability in taking photos currently serve me well in projects and presentations.

Somehow, my visual taste in fonts, typography, colors, and graphics developed during my years at PBA. I don't exactly remember how it started, but I became interested in fonts to the point I could identify the name of typeface families upon sight. After typefaces came typography, as well as a focus in good grammar from spending time on Apple's website. At first, I could apply my taste in type to my daily homework, which was mainly word-processed. Then I believe I started applying color, typography, and other graphics in my visual presentations, which became more common as a project than essays. Other people have noticed my usage of typography, and some even joke with me on my personal thoughts about certain fonts' appearances. Currently, the yearbook benefits the most from the effort I put into typesetting and layout.

My grandma's side of the family used to be active with the Hilo Betsuin when they first arrived in Hawai'i. However, when my grandma's father moved to Honolulu, their involvement with Hongwanji started to die out. My parents weren't involved with the Hongwanji at all, but they chose HMS for me, and I chose PBA after that. I was exposed to Buddhism and am now able to participate in it more than my family did. I participated in the Young Buddhist International Cultural Study Exchange (YBICSE), and represented PBA in Ryukoku Sogo Gakuen's yearly religious seminar. Like the parents of PBA's first class hoped for their own children, I returned to my cultural and religious roots.

5. JAPANESE CULTURAL CENTER OF HAWAI'I

I first became involved in chadō after enrolling in Tamayo Sensei's Japanese culture elective class when I was an eight grader at HMS. Some of the things we did included flower arranging, pottery, ink painting, calligraphy, chadō, and lots of cooking. Out of everything that we were exposed to, chadō intrigued me the most. I wanted to be able to move precisely and elegantly like our demonstrator, and I knew there was a vast amount of knowledge to always keep me on my toes. Adding up all of my reasons, which were that (1) it's beautiful and impressive, (2) it's a part of my culture, (3) there will always be something new to learn, and (4) I'll be happy no matter what with tea and sweets, I decided to start taking chadō.

I first started taking after school classes at HMS once a week. With me as the only guy and the only middle schooler—the rest were first and second grade girls—it was an awkward situation. However, I learned the fundamentals of the complex world of Tea. I started off learning terminology, the names of every item I would frequently encounter, phrases, and *warigeiko*, which means “divided practice” and is a breakdown of the individual components that later form the host’s procedure. I spent the second half of eighth grade learning those things, and by then, I could move on to the older class at JCCH on Sundays.

At JCCH, we practice in the Seikōan tea room on real tatami mats, so I was able to get a real feel for the placement of everything from where I sit to how all of the utensils are arranged. Tamayo Sensei could only use a straw mat to cover her classroom at HMS. There were more older kids there too, which made me feel better knowing I wasn’t standing out too much. The classes were held on a few Sundays in a month, and each class was about two hours long. This differed from after school classes, which were twice a week and 45 minutes long. With the added time, we could learn more advanced things and practice them with more detailed instruction. Soon, I was able to put my fundamentals together into a simple tray procedure and learn the standard set of basic procedures, which will form the basis of every advanced procedure that follows.

Through the years, the dynamics and people around my classes have changed. I learned my school, Urasenke, didn’t really get along with Omotensenke, who also utilized this tea room. I thought it was just about minor things like cleaning up, but I realized was a big issue when I decided to take chadō from PBA, an Omotesenke school, when I already had received instruction from Urasenke. I had to stop taking that elective and join another one, but the news had travelled already. Some people thought I switched and was now Omotesenke. This rivalry contradicts the principals of Sen no Rikyu, the founder of today’s chadō who is often quoted, although we strive to uphold the heart of Tea. In the end, I learned a lesson about human nature.

We had three graduating seniors in our class who left two years ago, and the people who regularly come became unable to after school and other activities ramped up. That left me being one of the few “regulars” who came last year. Furthermore, with the few remaining students and JCCH’s rising rent, my teachers decided to find a new place to practice. There were simply not enough students to cover the cost of the monthly rent. So we’re now in a tatami-matted room in Myohoji Temple on Nu’uanu Avenue. It doesn’t have sliding doors or many other features of a tea room that Seikōan has, but we’re getting by. A few more students joined us, but it’s not enough to move back into

JCCH. The ones who recently joined were third grade girls, so my original uncomfortable situation from HMS is back.

Just last session though, the two boys who used to regularly attend came back for the first time this semester. The Saito family's kids also started to attend more often, which meant they were very busy with other activities—and I was busy with senior work too! Even though we might not move back into Seikōan next semester, with everybody back, I think classes will feel more lively like they used to, with more boys and people closer to my age around. If I can make it through next semester smoothly, I think my graduation chakai (demonstration) will also go without a hitch. As of right now, I studied one of the advanced procedures after the standard set, which will be a series of 16 procedures that you would do under specific conditions. That has been put on hold for practicing for JCCH's New Year event, the Ohana Festival.

Through excelling in Japanese language, culture, and religion, my grandma says her mother would have been very proud of her great-grandson. My grandma's mother came from Japan, but she raised by her family's relatives in Hawai'i's plantations. She excelled in many Japanese cultural activities and eventually earned her instructor's certificate in one of them. Although the Japanese tradition was suppressed for a period of time and was increasingly lost through the generations, I believe that the culture is in a period of revitalization through the creation of organizations, youth programs, and initiatives that promote what was brought to Hawai'i from the first Japanese immigrants. It feels wonderful to learn about where my family came from, to revitalize what used to be so strong in Hawai'i, and to learn about my place in all of this while still being my own person, growing up and creating my own future.