

Japanese Americans from Hawai`i

Reverend Tamasaku Watanabe (1882-1968)

Tamasaku Watanabe immigrated from Hiroshima to Seattle in February 1905. The devastation of the 1906 earthquake in San Francisco inspired him to become a Christian minister, and he enrolled in the San Francisco Theological Seminary.

After serving at Japanese Christian churches in California, he became the first permanent minister at the Wailuku Japanese Christian Church in 1922. Later, he transferred to the Ōla`a Japanese Christian Church on the island of Hawai`i.

Rev. Watanabe was taken into custody on December 7, 1941, the same day as the attack on Pearl Harbor. He was on an FBI list because he helped immigrants communicate with the Japanese government on affairs concerning their citizenship. He also helped reunite American-born children with their families in Japan.



Watanabe family in California, 1919.
Rev. Watanabe is on the right, with his
wife Yuki holding Shinichi; Sumi;
Michiro; and an unknown man at left.

Courtesy of Gail Okawa, Tamasaku
Watanabe collection.

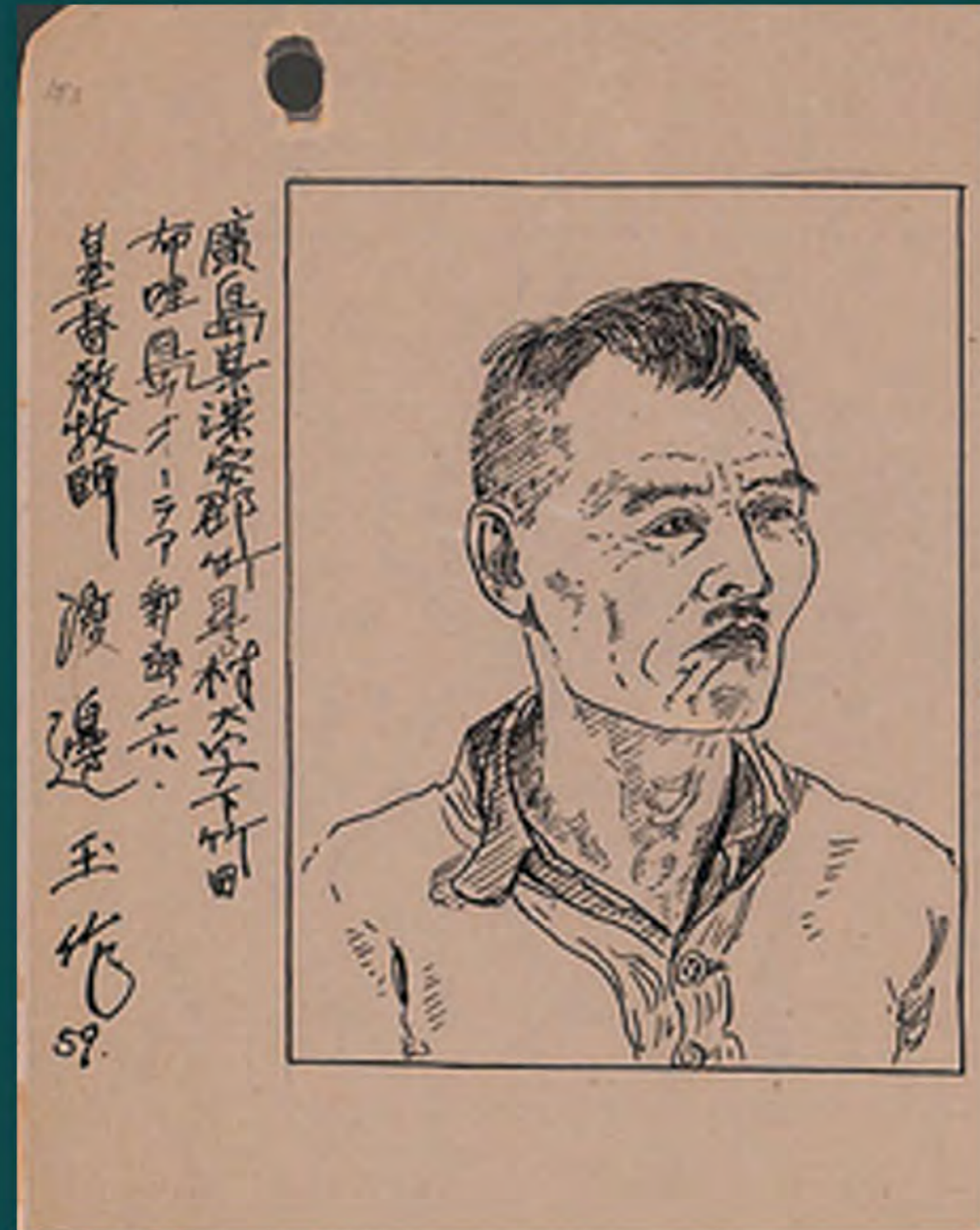


Japanese Americans from Hawai`i

Reverend Tamasaku Watanabe (continued)

According to his granddaughter Gail Okawa, despite Rev. Watanabe having over 25 years of service to the church, he was repeatedly questioned by the civilian hearing board. They asked about his perspective as a Christian minister regarding wartime events and insinuated his faith was insincere.

After the war, Rev. Watanabe returned to the Maui church, renamed Iao Congregational Church during the war. He served there until his retirement, at which time the church honored his long service by naming a building "Watanabe Hall," which now houses the church pre-school.



Sketch of Watanabe

Courtesy of the Japanese American National Museum, George Hoshida Collection 97.106.2AU from [Gift of June Hoshida Honma, Sandra Hoshida, and Carole Hoshida Kanada]



Rev. Watanabe in a detail from a group photograph at the Santa Fe Internment Camp.

Courtesy of Kato Family collection





Rev. Watanabe's Incarceration Journey



-  Hilo, Hawai`i
-  Kilauea Military Camp, Hawai`i
-  Sand Island Detention Camp, Hawai`i
-  Transfer Boat #3
-  Angel Island, California (arrived June 1, 1942)
-  Fort Sam Houston, Texas
-  Camp Lordsburg, New Mexico
-  Santa Fe Internment Camp, New Mexico

Japanese Americans from the U.S. West Coast

Kotoharu Inouye (1884-1953)

Kotoharu immigrated to the U.S. from Ioki Mura, Japan, in 1906. He and his wife Sumiye Shimada had two children, Hitosuke and Yonako.

He was a florist in Redwood City. He was an officer of the California Chrysanthemum Growers Association, the California Flower Market in San Francisco, and the Flower Grower's Association and *Heimusha-Kai* (a society of Japanese men in America obligated to military service).

The Attorney General ordered his internment. However, the Alien Enemy Hearing Board were convinced that he was loyal to the U.S. and unanimously recommended his release. They also noted that he was a "florist in Redwood City, active in business associations, and no evidence of dangerous activity."

Kotoharu was considered a dangerous "enemy alien" because he was not a naturalized citizen, even though foreign-born Japanese persons were not allowed to become naturalized until 1952.



Japanese Americans from the U.S. West Coast

Kotoharu Inouye (continued)

Kotoharu was released from the Santa Fe Internment Camp to join his family at the War Relocation Authority camp in Topaz, Utah in early 1944. Later that year, he went to a suburb of Chicago to work at the Premier Rose Gardens.

By early 1945, before war's end, Kotoharu returned to his business in Redwood City, which was held in the name of his American-born son. However, he was unable to work because of a nerve disease.

Kotoharu died in 1953. A year later, his wife Sumiye became a U.S. citizen.



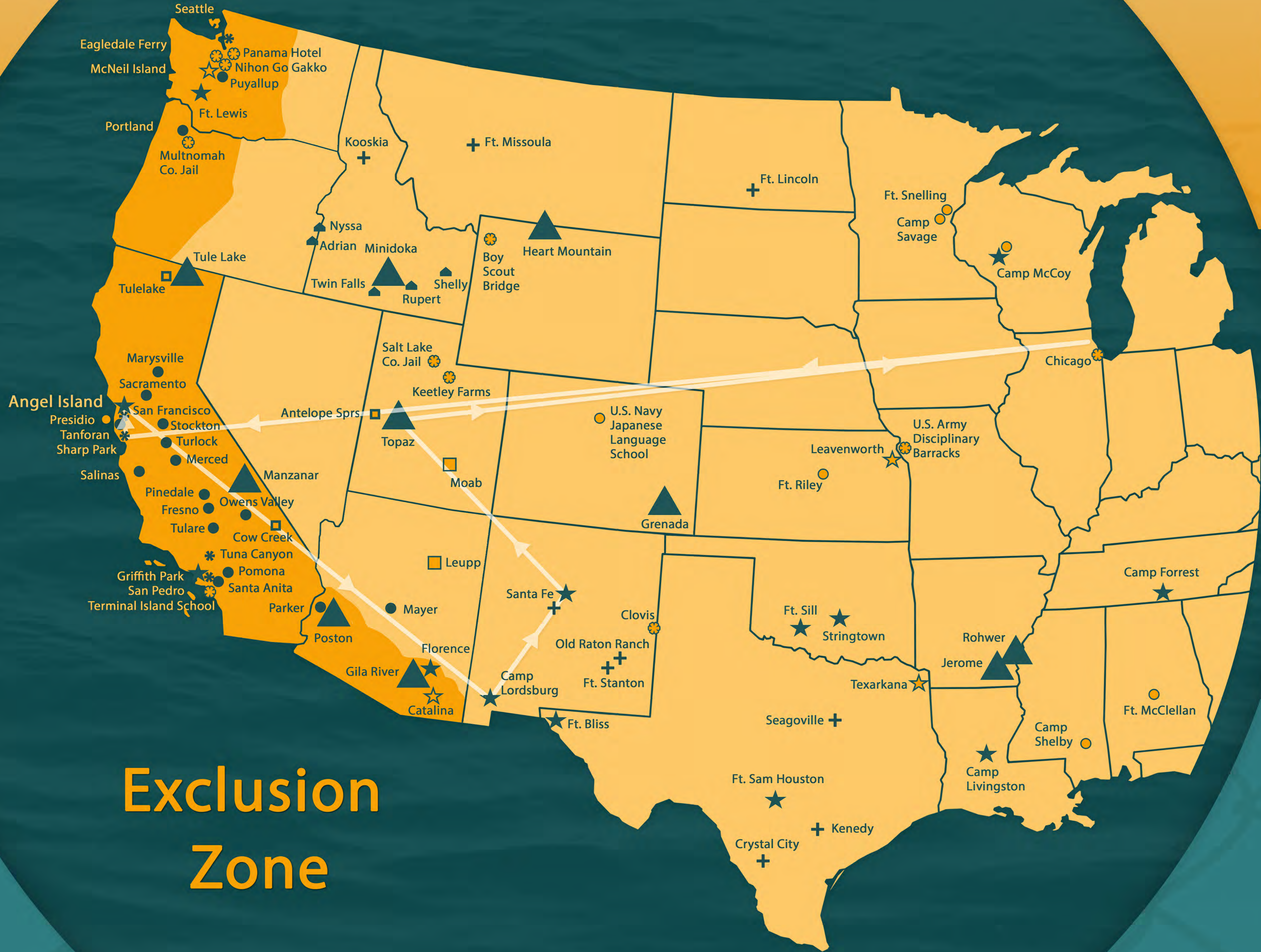
Kotoharu in the Santa Fe Internment Camp, third from the left in the front row.

Courtesy of Jeanette Muzac





Kotoharu Inouye's Incarceration Journey



Exclusion Zone

-  Redwood City, California
-  Sharp Park Internment Camp, California
-  Angel Island, California (arrived: July 1942)
-  Camp Lordsburg, New Mexico
-  Santa Fe Internment Camp, New Mexico
-  Topaz War Relocation Center, Utah
-  Melrose Park, Illinois (released to work)
-  Redwood City, California

What People Wrote About Angel Island

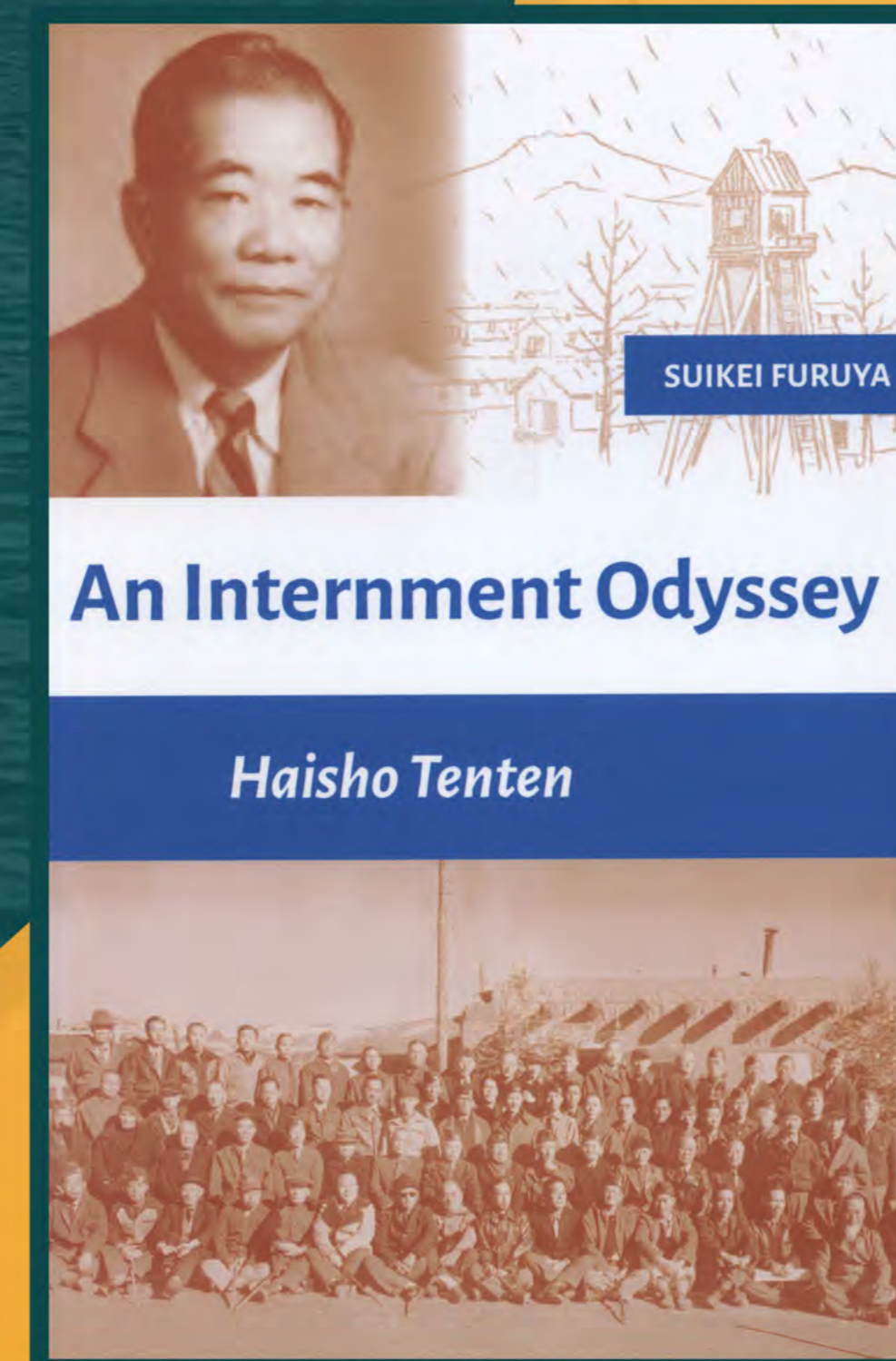
On a small boat
We head to an island
A red moon rises

Moonlight on my back
My shadow lands
On an unknown island

Birds are free and sing at dawn
We feel only envy
In captivity

At long last!
My chance to do laundry
A thorough washing

Under the bright sunlight
I dry my fresh white underwear



Kumaji Furuya

Honolulu businessman Kumaji Furuya wrote the following passage under the pen name Suikei Furuya.

“Although the physical examination was quite severe, the officers, noncommissioned officers, and guards were nice to us. Angel Island turned out to be better than I expected...Behind the building was a small field on a hill. Bushes grew around the field, and I happened to find apricot flowers blooming among the green leaves. Birds were singing, and it felt as if spring were here. Then, I saw a bird hovering among the green leaves. It looked like a hanging *orizuru* [folded paper crane], floating motionless in the air. It reminded me of the hummingbirds I had read about during my school days. I heard the voices of children walking along a road in the middle of the woods beyond. It was the first time I had heard children’s voices since being taken from my home just three months earlier, but it felt as if I had not heard this sound for years.”

From Suikei Furuya's *An Internment Odyssey: Haisho Tenten* (translated by Tatsumi Hayashi).

Courtesy of the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai'i, 2017. Reprinted with permission.

What People Wrote About Angel Island

Kumaji Furuya (continued)

Furuya also wrote about the poetry while on Angel Island.

“Even though I enjoyed the area’s scenery, with nothing much to do, I became bored. I was walking aimlessly around a big hall when I noticed the walls were covered with graffiti. I was surprised to see that the marks had been engraved, most likely with knives. There were many kinds of graffiti, and I assumed they had been made by Chinese immigrants long ago. They were all written in Chinese, and there were many characters that I did not completely understand. I found the following poem [at right] to be in a typical seven-character format.”

“One can deduce from this poem that Chinese immigrants must have been treated inhumanely in the early days. The guards must have humiliated them, ignoring their human rights. But it seemed to me that the poem used exaggeration, as is typical in Chinese writing.”

From Suikei Furuya's *An Internment Odyssey: Haisho Tenten* (translated by Tatsumi Hayashi). Honolulu, Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai'i, 2017, page 53.



A thousand sorrows and a hatred ten-thousand-fold burns between my brows.

Hoping to step ashore the American continent is the most difficult of difficulties.

The barbarians imprison me in this place.

Even a martyr or a hero would change countenance.

A poem by a Chinese immigrant was written in the detention barracks between 1910-1940.

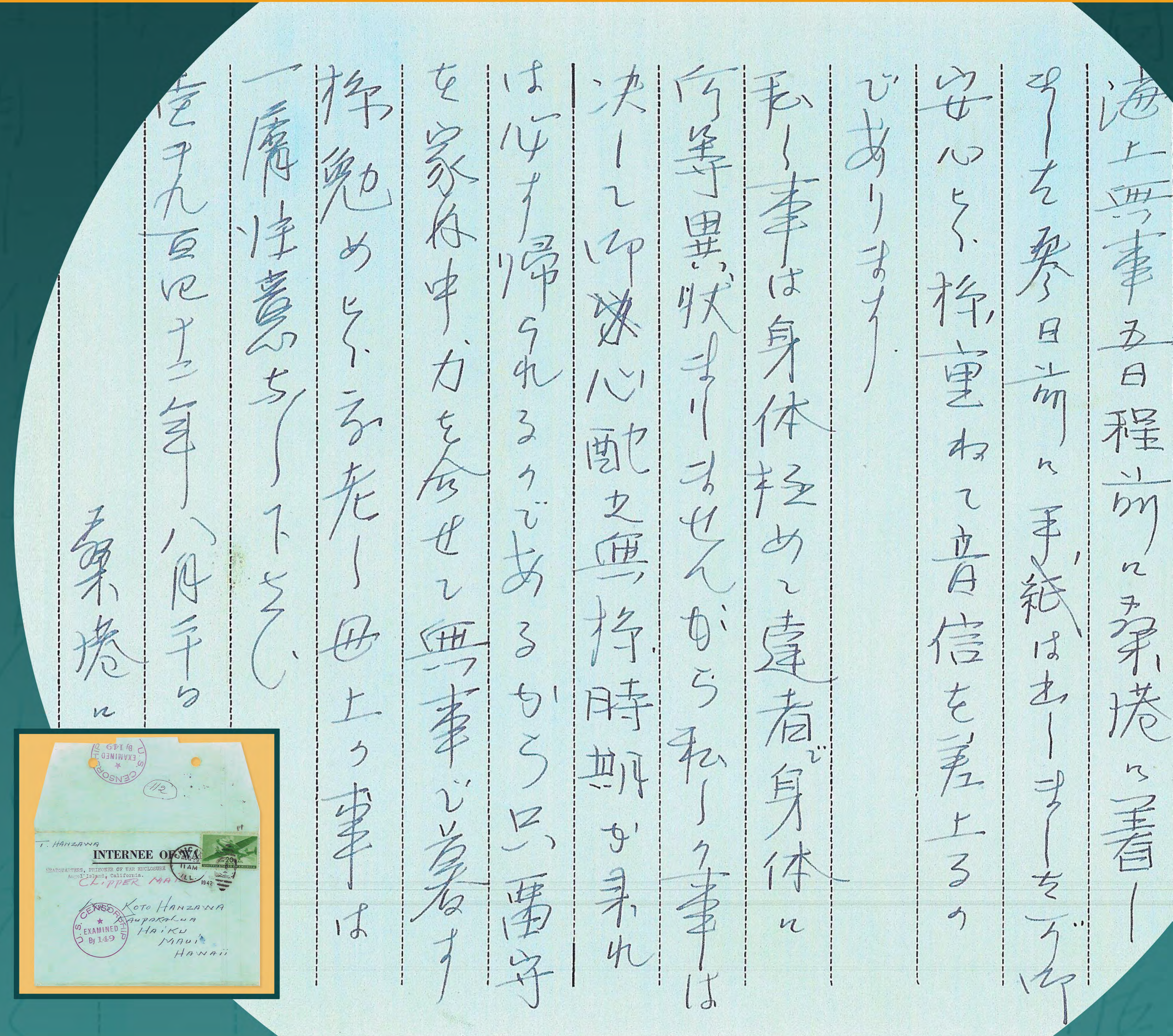
What People Wrote About Angel Island

Taichiro Hanzawa

This is a copy of an aerogramme that Taichiro Hanzawa wrote to his wife in Haiku, Maui, from Angel Island.

Hanzawa and his brother ran a general store in Haiku and the government authorities felt that as a community leader, that he should be interned because of his ties to Japan.

In the letters, he provides details of his daily life and comments that the weather in San Francisco was much colder than in Hawai'i and urges his wife not to worry about him.



Letter from Taichiro Hanzawa, dated August 29, 1942.

Courtesy of Hideo Yokota