

Immigration cards and informants: Verifying the mother of Yoshito Tanaka

Language can often be the last barrier when researching a late nineteenth-century immigrant, but when the subject of that research is a woman, new obstacles can appear. Researchers find early on that there are double standards for recording women and men; many documented the eldest son and his progeny.

When Japanese laborers' homeland was unfruitful they could migrate to Hawaii where contracts and land were aplenty and return once their obligations were fulfilled. This caused the mixing of several languages in a record-keeping process where English, Hawaiian, and Japanese merged, creating another hindrance for future researchers. These records were still male-focused, while a woman, wife, sister, or a daughter's name could easily be a small scratch or mark on the record if written in Japanese.

Yoshito Tanaka's parents were no exception. Born in Hiroshima-ken, Japan, they came to Hawaii in the 1890s to seek employment under a three-year contract. Hawaiian territorial

records produced conflicting names, possibly lost in translation between the informant and the person that was recording them, as the native Hawaiian language was often spoken in the Hamakua District of the Big Island. In trying to discover the mother of Yoshito, hurdles were presented early: he lived a short life; had a posthumous child with a native woman; had one of the most common surnames in Japan; and had siblings in Japan and Hawaii who, disconnected by an ocean, provided conflicting names in the records. These are difficulties in asserting parentage that can be overcome by understanding the records, culture, and timelines. By following males, siblings, and immigration trends, and by investigating informants, one can see that the mother of Yoshito Tanaka is Toki "Ito" Ishihara.

Part I: Yoshito Tanaka and siblings

Yoshito first appears in the 1910 census with Jagekichi and Toki Tanaka in the Kepehu Camp of Papaaloa Village on the Big Island

along with his three sisters Kani, 14, Isce, 9, and Chisu, 5. Jagekichi, age 50, and Toki, age 49, state that they are both laborers on a sugar plantation; Toki is the mother of ten children, six living by 1910.¹ Yoshito is next found in the Ito Tanaka household in 1920 in Maulua, which is located within the village area of Papaaloo; Ito is identified as a married female, age 59, born in Japan and immigrated in 1896. A Shizuyo, age 15, is listed in the same household and is identified as the daughter of Ito. A nearly illegible grandchild of the head of household, Asaka Otara, 6, is also included.² Following up on this grandchild establishes that the name of the child is Asako Ahara and that she is the daughter of Kane Tanaka and Matazo Ahara. Asako, born in 1915, is recorded as having traveled to Japan several times between the years of 1923 and 1939, and it appears that by 1915 her father, Matazo, is deceased, which correlates with the 1920 census entry with her grandmother.³

The age of Ito in 1920 matches Toki of 1910, while the immigration year conflicts, but not a lot. The same family unit, minus Yoshito, is located in Hamakua District in 1900 with the immigration year as 1897. Toki, age 37, and born in 1863, lists that she is the mother of four children, four living, but there are only two in the household: Okani, 3 and born 1893, and Maio, 1 and born in April 1899.⁴ The corresponding year of birth and location of Ito points to the possibility that she is the same as Toki in the 1900 and 1910 censuses, but the years of immigration are not exact, suggesting that there may have been multiple port entries. The first child, born Okani/Kane, is identified in 1900 as being born in the Hawaiian Islands in 1893 but with an age of 3; in the 1910 census is said to be born in 1896, which conflicts again with the stated migration year. Researching records created in Hawaii and Japan could verify this multiple port entries hypothesis.

Act 96 of the 1911 Session, Laws of Hawaii required that people born in the Territory register their birth status. In 1912, Jukichi began the paperwork to have Kane, as the eldest child,

registered and documented with a delayed birth record.⁵ Jukichi Tanaka testified that by that year he had four children, that Kane was born 10 February 1894 in Paauhau, Hamakua District, Territory of Hawaii, and that the other three children were younger than Kane. He testified that he married Toki Tanaka at Hiroshima-ken on 5 July 1892 and arrived at the Territory of Hawaii on 2 December 1893. He stated that his other children were Iseo, born 1 December 1902 at Wainaku; Shizuyo, born 4 April 1905 in Papaaloo; and lastly, Yoshito, born 22 April 1907 in Papaaloo, all on the Big Island. Both Jukichi and Toki were employed as cane planters and when asked his wife's name, Jukichi stated "Ito" and that "I think she has been on the Island for 10 years."⁶

Later in the delayed birth file, Toki testified in a transcribed record to the accuracy of the information provided and she signed her name with an X, indicating that she was illiterate, whereas Jukichi recorded his name in *kanji*. A neighbor, Isao Kobukada, testified that he had known Jukichi and Toki since their arrival in 1893, resided near them, worked with them and knew the children, providing details as to their residences from 1893 until 1912 and how those corresponded with his residences and employment history.⁷ The same year, Jukichi and Toki testified as to the births of Isao Kobukada's children and Toki again signed her name with an X.⁸ Jukichi did not indicate in either delayed birth file testimony whether he was married more than once; his reference to "Ito" as the name of his wife taken with the fact that she is self-identified as Toki suggests that the two names are the same person.

A search for census records after 1920 fails to produce entries for Jukichi, Ito, or Toki Tanaka.⁹ Yoshito died in 1926; his parents are recorded on his death certificate as Ito Ishihara and Jukichi Tanaka by an informant, Kuichi Tanaka.¹⁰ In 1918, Kane died in Maulua of tuberculosis and the informant, Kenzo Kuramoto, stated that she was the daughter of Kukichi Tanaka and Toki Tanaka, wife of Mataso Tanaka.¹¹ Shizuyo Tanaka registered a delayed birth record in

1955 in which her mother is named as Toki Tsutsutori.¹² When she died in 1973, the obituary identified two sisters residing in Japan.¹³ Iseyo does not seem to be in any further US records after the 1910 census, but there is one passenger manifest that indicates that an Iseyo Tanaka, age 9, departed from Hawaii in 1915 headed to Kobe, Japan.¹⁴

Part 2: Resolving conflicts: Immigration and informants

Understanding period immigration practices and evaluating informants is essential to resolving conflicts. Japan secured an agreement with Hawaii as early as 1868 to send workers for three- to five-year contracts.¹⁵ By 1879, the contract work provided more opportunities: wages were \$10 per month for men and \$6 per month for women; the board would pay half the costs of passage to Hawaii for women and all costs for children and at the end of their contract term, workers could return to Japan at the expense of the Territory of Hawaii government. Laborers, wives, and children with guaranteed employment were granted free passage.¹⁶ Yokohama and Honolulu would be the ports of exchange as stated in the convention between the Empire of Japan and the Kingdom of the Hawaiian Islands in 1886.¹⁷

Investigating the background of informants in this case leads to more unexplained questions. The informant for Kane's vital record is a local doctor that attended her.¹⁸ Shizu provided the information for her 1955 delayed birth record and should have first-hand knowledge of her mother's name, but the record is a transcription and could have been affected by human error or was lost in translation and recording. The Kuichi Tanaka that is the informant for Yoshito's death appears to be a sibling, according to an Ancestry tree found online.¹⁹ Nineteen-year-old "Kyuichi" Tanaka arrived at Honolulu on 14 May 1912 from the port of Kobe, Japan; his former residence was at the household of his grandmother, Kuma Tanaka, at 68 Hera-mura, Saiki-gun, Hiroshima-ken.²⁰ His birth in Japan in 1893 reinforces the possibility that more siblings remained in Japan,

as with the two siblings mentioned in the 1973 obituary of Shizu.

Evaluating port records to Hawaii from Japan and vice versa can be problematic because of gaps in coverage: Hawaii port records were not recorded until 1900 and Japanese port records are spotty. A resource not to be overlooked when dealing with migration to Hawaii from Japan is the immigration card set available at the Consulate General of Japan in Honolulu beginning in 1900.²¹ These cards document a family unit, names, dates of birth and death, locations of death, relatives remaining in Japan, residences, and arrivals in Japanese. After obtaining a copy of the Tanaka family immigration card, evaluating the original and the translation, the conflicting names and information start to come into focus.

It is of note that the handwriting documenting arrivals over a range of times and places is all the same, indicating that the final card for duplication was amassed from several cards over the years and merged into one document, then two separate documents: one for Toki alone and another for Yoshito alone. Kuichi was the first documented, leading the reader to think that he was the informant, and the same address that is on the 1912 ship manifest is provided again, Hera-Mura 68. Kuichi was born 9 November 1893 and died by 1948. He was the son of Jukichi, born 3 October 1861 and Toki born 8 April 1862.²²

J. Tanaka and Mrs. Toki Tanaka are listed in an entry for an immigration recorded on 23 March 1897, which corresponds with the 1900 and 1910 censuses, but conflicts with the 1912 delayed birth testimonies; the later immigration card indicates that Jukichi arrived 10 January 1904 and Toki has two entries for her arrival: March 1898 and 10 November 1904.²³ Their children include Kane, Yoshiyuki, Iseyo, and Shizu, but Kane is referred to as the second daughter. This leads again to the hypothesis that another child, specifically a daughter, remained in Japan.²⁴ There are conflicts with some of the years and months on this card as compared to the vital records, but these are easily resolved through the Japanese calendar systems. Kane's year of birth

姓		本籍		備考	
田中		広島佐伯平良村		68	
名	戸主ノ続柄	職業	着年	生年月日	現住所
(九一)	長男	農	45.5.27	26.11.9	18109 Papeaou
重吉	長男		37.1.10	1.10.9	4
力木	長女		生	38.4.12	5
義行	男			40.4.22	4
他五	女			39.1.1	3
二ツ	女			37.9.22	4
トキ	長女		31.9	25.4.8	Papeaou 1210.2.20

Tanaka immigration card.

Surname		Domicile			
Name	Relationship	Date of Arrival	Date of Birth	Address	Remarks

Blank immigration card.

in Hawaii was of importance because it marked the family's arrival on the Islands.

The immigration card also provides the date of death and location for Toki as 4 October 1923. A reissued, typed death certificate provides that Eto Tanaka, age 62, died 4 October 1923 in Hilo, burial in Papaaloa, wife of Juikichi Tanaka, daughter of Eshihara Matajuro.²⁵ The informant is unknown, but long sounding 'I's are recorded as 'E's in the certificate, reinforcing the idea that the information was reported by a native Japanese speaker while the recorder spoke Hawaiian or English. At the Alea Cemetery in Hilo, there is a Tanaka family headstone where Toki Ishihara died 4 October 1923, is buried with Jukichi, Yoshito, Kuichi and three of Kuichi's children and wife.²⁶

Part 3: Conclusion

Researching Yoshito's siblings can assist in verifying the mother of Yoshito. Jukichi calls her Ito in the 1912 testimony while she records her name as Toki in the same document, asserting that she is one and the same. Ito in Japanese, イト, and Toki in Japanese, トキ, are relatively close, but phonetically in English records appear to be the same person. It could have been a nickname or pet name, for Ito is a noun for thread, string, or yarn and could be used as a term of endearment.²⁷ Unknown informants chose to call her Ito/Eto as did her husband, whereas legally she is recorded as Toki; either way, it is the same person. The mother of Yoshito Tanaka is Toki "Ito" Ishihara. 🌳

Notes

1. The 1910 US census, Hawaii County, Territory of Hawaii, population schedule, North Hilo District, Papaaloa Village, enumeration district (ED) 127, sheet 14B and 15A, dwelling 138, family 173, Jagekichi Tanaka household; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 7 June 2014); citing NARA microfilm publication T624, roll 1751.

2. The 1920 US census, Hawaii County, Territory of Hawaii, population schedule, North Hilo District, Weloka and Maulua, p.59 (stamped), ED 127, sheet 17A, dwelling 210, family 214, Ito Tanaka household; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 8 June 2014); citing NARA microfilm publication T625, roll 2033.

3. "Honolulu, Hawaii, Passenger and Crews Lists, 1900-1959," digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 7 June 2014), manifest, *S.S. President Lincoln*, April 1923, stamped p. 38, line 17, Asako Ahara, age 7. Line 16 has Matazo Ahara "dead" age 40. Matazo is the first name of the spouse on the death certificate of Kane Tanaka.

4. The 1900 US census, Hawaii County, Territory of Hawaii, population schedule, Hamakua District, ED 46, p. 16B, Tanaka household; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 7 June 2014); citing NARA microfilm publication M623, roll 1833.

5. Hawaii, *Laws of the Territory of Hawaii passed by the Legislation at its regular session, 1911* (Honolulu: Bulletin Publishing Company, 1911), 127-29. Available on Google Books.

6. Hawaii County, Territory of Hawaii, "Delayed birth registrations, ca. 1859–1903," Registrations no. 7409–7625, Kane Tanaka, entry #7919; FHL microfilm 1,031,533.
7. Ibid.
8. Hawaii County, Territory of Hawaii, "Delayed birth registrations, ca. 1859–1903," Registrations no. 7409–7625, Minoru Kobukada, entry #7917; FHL microfilm 1,031,533.
9. There is another Jukichi and Toki Tanaka on the Big Island but this is another couple.
10. Hawaii County, Territory of Hawaii, death certificate no. 4245 (1926), Yoshito Tanaka; Hawaii State Department of Health, Honolulu.
11. Hawaii County, Territory of Hawaii, death certificate no. 532 (1918), Kane Tanaka; Hawaii State Department of Health, Honolulu.
12. Hawaii County, Territory of Hawaii, delayed birth certificate no. 42733 (1904), Mrs. Shizu Tanaka Takeuchi; Hawaii State Department of Health, Honolulu.
13. "Mrs. Shizu Takeguchi," obituary, *Hawaii Tribune-Herald*, 18 July 1973, p. 8, col. A.
14. "Honolulu, Hawaii, Passenger and Crews Lists, 1900–1959," digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 7 June 2014), manifest, S.S. *Tenyo Maru*, August 1915, stamped p. 63, line 19, Iseyo Tanaka, age 9.
15. Katherine Coman, "The History of Contract Labor in the Hawaiian Islands," *Publications of the American Economic Association*, Third Series, Volume IV, 3 (August 1903): 26–27, 42. Available on Google Books.
16. Ibid., 42.
17. Ibid., 44.
18. The 1910 US census, Hawaii County, Territory of Hawaii, population schedule, South Hilo District, Hilo town, ED 116, sheet 6B, dwelling 78, family 97, Kenzo Kuramoto household; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 7 June 2014); citing NARA microfilm publication T624, roll 1751.
19. "Public Member Trees," database, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 7 June 2014), Jukichi Tanaka, public member tree owned by Elsie Tanaka.
20. "Honolulu, Hawaii, Passenger and Crews Lists, 1900–1959," digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 7 June 2014), manifest, S.S. *Chiyo Maru*, May 1912, penned p. 279, line 6, Kyuichi Tanaka, age 19.
21. Hawai'i Hiroshima Heritage Study Group, *Finding your Roots: Genealogy Manual* (Honolulu: Hawaii Hiroshima Heritage Study Group, 2010), 14.
22. "田中 immigration card," Consulate-General of Japan, Honolulu. Translation done by Ami Mulligan, 8 October 2013.
23. "Japanese Passenger Manifests, M–Z," digital image, *Hawaii State Archives Digital Collection* (<http://www.archives1.dags.hawaii.gov>: accessed 7 June 2014), entry Mrs. Toki Tanaka, #2785, 23 March 1897, aboard the S.S. *City of Rio de Janeiro*; "田中 immigration card."
24. "田中 immigration card."
25. Hawaii County, Territory of Hawaii, death certificate no. 151 (1923), Eto Tanaka; Hawaii State Department of Health, Honolulu.
26. Geoff Stafford, compiler, "Alae Cemetery, Section D, Hilo, North Hilo District, Big Island of Hawaii," digital images, *Hawaii County Tombstone Project* (<http://www.usgwarchives.net/hi/hawaii/alaecemsecd.htm>: accessed 7 June 2014), database entry for the Tanaka Family, #176.
27. "Itō (name)," *Wikipedia* ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/It%C5%8D_\(name\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/It%C5%8D_(name)): accessed 7 June 2014).

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NGS MAGAZINE
October–December 2014
Volume 40, Number 4



ON THE COVER

The hospital ship, Nashville, photographed between 1861 and 1865 and printed later. Photograph courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, DC. Read more about hospital ships in the Civil War in Claire Prechtel-Kluskens' article "Compiled Military Service Records Part IV: Carded medical records" on page 37.

NGS Magazine (ISSN 1529-4323) is sent quarterly to all members as a membership benefit of the National Genealogical Society (NGS) and to libraries by subscription. Periodicals postage paid at Arlington, Virginia, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *NGS Magazine*, National Genealogical Society, 3108 Columbia Pike, Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22204-4370.

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