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Thursday, September 21, 1978

The Case for Redress—Part 4

(The following is a continuation of the text of "Japanese American Incarceration: A Case for Redress," a booklet issued by the National Committee for Redress of the JACL.)

EXPULSION, DETENTION (Cont'd)

Japanese Americans were known for their pride in rarely having been on welfare or locked up in prisons, but the camps relegated them into wards of the government guarded by armed soldiers. Fathers were no longer the family breadwinners; parents lost control of their children, and families rarely ate meals together. Many were terrified because of the unpredictable future and the hopelessness of the situation. Many did not expect to come out alive.

Overwhelming despair caused some detainees to commit suicide. Many more died prematurely due to inadequate medical facilities and the harsh environment.

All incoming and outgoing communications were censored, including personal letters and newspapers. All internal communications were strictly controlled by the camp administration. The Japanese language was banned at public meetings, and the Buddhist and Shinto religions were suppressed.

While the Japanese Americans were incarcerated, and unknown to them at the time, some members of Congress and the State Department proposed legislation or executive action to strip all native-born Americans of Japanese ancestry of their citizenship and deport them to Japan after the war. Other elected officials demanded that the imprisoned Japanese Americans be used as reprisal targets for the mistreatment of American prisoners of war. One member of Congress even proposed a mandatory sterilization program. Fortunately, none of these extreme measures was taken.

However, another form of indignity was imposed on the detainees in February 1943. After being imprisoned for nearly a year, all detainees 17 years of age and older were required to answer a questionnaire indicating their loyalty to the United States and their willingness to serve in the U.S. armed forces. It was an audacious act for the government to require such an oath from people already locked up.

Due to the insensitive wording, Japanese nationals were asked, in effect, to renounce the only citizenship they could have (since they were prohibited from becoming U.S. citizens) and render themselves stateless. American citizens were asked to falsely incriminate themselves by "foreswearing" an allegiance to Japan—an allegiance they never had. Women and elderly persons were asked to serve on "combat duty whenever ordered."

Despite all the confusion, fear, anger, bitterness and incongruity, the majority of detainees affirmatively signed the oath. This did not mean, however, that the minority who refused to cooperate were any less loyal or patriotic. Some highly principled individuals felt their fundamental constitutional rights should be restored before signing. Under the circumstances of a prison

camp environment, the loyalty questionnaire did not measure a person's true loyalty.

The detainees tried to make the dreary camps halfway tolerable by foraging scrap materials to make furniture and room partitions. They used indigenous plants to make gardens, and surplus materials or adobe to build schools and recreation facilities. Detainees also operated their own camp farms, and many camps became self-supporting in food.

Detainees volunteered to relieve the critical farm labor shortage in the Mountain Plains area and were granted seasonal work leaves. Other were given leaves to fill labor shortage in Midwest and East Coast factories, and college students were granted educational leaves. But these leaves were a form of parole: they were not free to go or do anything they wanted, and had to periodically report to government officials. During 1943 and 1944, about 33% of the detainees, mostly young single men and women, were conditionally released on various forms of leave or for military duty. The other 67% remained in the camps

(Continued on page 2)

Street Fair With a Message in Chelsea

Chelsea, a west-side Manhattan neighborhood which extends north of the Village through the twenties, will be host to a street fair on 17th Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues this Sunday, Sept. 24, from 1 to 5 p.m.

The purpose of the fair is to point out how the area is hurt by racism as it relates to housing, health and education. Scheduled performers include singer Barbara Dane and Teatro Quatro. There will also be speakers, a rummage sale, sales booths and ethnic foods.

The Union of Activists, formerly Asian Americans for Action, is among the event's sponsors.

Urge Applicants For "Classroom" Program

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Declaring that there is no substitute for the kind of first-hand experience provided by the annual Presidential Classroom for Young Americans program for high school juniors and seniors, the JACL's Washington representative, Ron Ikejiri, has announced that the JACL will again sponsor participants through its chapters.

The Classroom enables students to take part in formal seminars, discussion groups, visits to sites of historical and cultural interest in the nation's capital, and to meet with government officials for a one-week period.

The deadline for submission of applications for the 1979 series of Classrooms is Nov. 15. Chapters are being encouraged to sponsor students for the program. Additional information may be obtained from Ronald K. Ikejiri, Washington Representative JACL, 1730 Rhode Island Ave., N.W., No. 204, Washington, D.C. 20036.

JA Church's 25th To Be Marked By 3-Day Observance

More than 50 members who are 75 years of age or older will be honored at a special luncheon on Sunday, Sept. 24, during the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Japanese American United Church at 255 Seventh Avenue.

The luncheon is but one of a number of special events which will take place for three days, beginning tomorrow evening, to mark the church's silver anniversary.

The observance will open with a supper meeting at 6 o'clock tomorrow evening when the Rev. Paul Nagano will address the youth. Rev. Nagano will also speak after a pot luck supper scheduled for 6 p.m. Saturday, and again at 11 a.m. Sunday during the service of celebration and rededication.

The Rev. Dr. Nagano is pastor of the Japanese Baptist Church of Seattle, Wash., and the National Director of Asian American Ministries for the American Baptist Churches/USA. Ordained in Tempe, Ariz., in 1943, he served as pastor to Japanese American servicemen attending the Military Intelligence School in Camp Savage and Fort Snelling, Minn., then went on to establish the Evergreen Baptist Church in Los Angeles. He has also served as pastor of the Makiki Christian Church in Honolulu, and as executive secretary of the Japanese Evangelical Missionary Society for two terms.

Other highlights of the weekend include a multi-media presentation of the history of the church, the unveiling of a commemorative painting by Henry Sugimoto, special music by the choir, the reading of a message from the Tokyo Ginza Church, a sister church, and an exhibit of old photographs.

Co-chairpersons of the anniversary committee are Emi Akiyama and Fujio Saito.

Osaka Troupe Presents Bugaku, Gagaku Oct. 4

Seventeen musicians and dancers from the Osaka Gakko-Kai, on a month-long tour of the United States, will bring their presentation of Bugaku, the ceremonial court dance of the Japanese Imperial household, to Carnegie Hall on Oct. 4 under the auspices of the Performing Arts Program of the Asia Society.

The archaic flavor of Bugaku and of Gagaku, the music which accompanies the movements, is accounted for by the fact that their origins go back a thousand years when its elements were imported from the Asian continent to the islands of Japan, there to be gradually modified and preserved through the continual support of the Imperial household.

The rich costumes and masks used today are exact replicas of originals which have been designated national treasures in Japan.

Tickets for the only performance are available at the Carnegie Hall box office, 154 W. 57 St., for \$4, \$5, \$6, \$7.50 and \$9.

JAHAFA Receives \$20,000 Survey Grant

A \$20,000 grant from the New York Community Trust has been received by JAHAFA (Japanese American Help for the Aging, Inc.) it was announced this week by Gregg Yoshida, chairman of the Grant Proposals Committee. The grant provides funding for a six-month Research Project, a bilingual survey among the Japanese American elderly residing in the New York metropolitan area that was initiated

on Sept. 15 and will be completed by March 15, 1979. The results of the study will formulate recommendations identifying program priorities for the elderly.

The research project, written by Terushi Tomita, assistant professor, School of Social Welfare, State University of New York (SUNY) at Stony Brook, and members of the Grant Proposals Committee, will be conducted by bilingual social work professionals and trained volunteers. Person-to-person interviews, as well as telephone interviews, and a survey-by-mail are methods that will be utilized to gather information. Interviews will also be held at the New York Buddhist Church, the Japanese American United Church, and offices of the Japanese American Association, Inc.

To further community participation a conference-meeting on the subject, "Needs of the Elderly," will be held and a fund-raising initiative will be made.

Since JAHAFA's initial contact in February 1976 with the New York Community Trust, several meetings have taken place. Grant Proposals Committee members who are involved are Aiko Abe, Martha Kaihatsu, Stanley Kanazaki, Tami Ogata, June Shimokawa, Terushi Tomita, Cora Yamamoto, George Yuzawa, and Gregg Yoshida, chairman. Continuing active support was also received from the members of the Committee on Community Services of JAHAFA, namely Haru Kishi, Oki Kitazono, Magdalena Kobayashi, Kerry Kubo, Dr. Yorihiro Kumasaka, Grace Matsunaga, Michi Onodera, Asaye Takagi, Yaye Togsaki, Takako Kusunoki, and Amy Yoshinaga, chairman. Active support also came from JAHAFA Board members, Yoshi Imai, Fujio Saito, Ei Suzuki, George Shimamoto and Ken Yasuda. All are volunteers.

The project is further supported with in-kind contributions by the Japanese American Association of New York, Inc., and the New York Buddhist Church. There is also a pledge of \$1,000 from the Riverside Church.

JAHAFA's survey will be conducted from their new headquarters at 7 W. 44 Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. The telephone number is 840-6899.

JAHAFA is a coalition of five New York organizations—Japanese American Association, Inc., Japanese American United Church, Japanese American Citizens League—New York Chapter, New York Buddhist Church, and the Niko Niko Club.—M.K.

"Roots" in Reverse?

TOKYO—"America Monogatari" (Tale of America), a kind of "Roots" in reverse, will be the subject of a television series to be produced by the Japan Broadcasting Company for showing on its NHK television network in Japan in autumn of 1979.

The drama will focus on the life in America of a Japanese immigrant farmer and his family. Filming will take place in California and Hawaii.

Must Reserve Now For Awareness Conference

As only 60 persons can be accommodated at the Stony Point Conference Center, those persons who wish to attend the Japanese American Awareness Conference to be held at the Rockland county center on Sept. 30 and Oct. 1 are urged to send their reservations immediately to the New York chapter of the JACL which is sponsoring the event.

The keynote speaker at the conference will be Judge William Marutani of Philadelphia. In addition to small group workshops, the conference will feature a dramatic reading of "The Unbroken Thread," written especially for the occasion by Philip Nash; and a demonstration of tai-chi by Herman Kauz, who will encourage audience participation.

The fee of \$35 or \$25 for students and retired persons includes all meals, lodgings and workshop expenses. Checks should be made payable to "New York Chapter JACL" and sent to Ruby Schaar, 50 W. 67 St., New York City 10023.

Conference facilitators include Haruko Brown, Mae Kanazawa, Teru Kanazawa, Stanley Kanazaki, Robert Moteiki, Mays Nakashima, Philip Nash, Cyril Nishimoto, Ron Osajima, June Shimokawa, Terry Tomita and B.J. Watanabe.

NJ-PAC Plans Third Awareness Festival

Plans for its third annual Asian Awareness Festival will be made by the New Jersey chapter of the Pacific/Asian Coalition (PAC) at an open executive board meeting to be held from 3 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 24, at the Northland Community Center in Livingston, N.J.

Those who plan to attend this meeting are asked to take a dish for the pot luck supper to follow.

The Asian Awareness Festival will be held from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 12, at Morris County College. According to the planning board, its purposes are "to foster a sense of community among Asian Americans of New Jersey, to highlight our contributions to America, and to increase understanding between Asians and non-Asians."

Those wishing to participate in the Festival as performers or to man a food, art, souvenir or organization booth are asked to call Lillian Ostrin (201-994-1976) or C.S. Yang (201-992-2160).

Redress—

(Continued from page 1)

for the duration of the war.

When the United States entered the war in 1941, there were about 5,000 Japanese Americans in the armed forces, but many were summarily discharged as unsuitable for service. Japanese Americans were classified by the Selective Service System as "enemy" nationals (4C) ineligible for service. Thousands of Japanese Americans volunteered for duty but were refused enlistment.

The armed forces, however, soon discovered the need for Japanese language specialists, and started to recruit Japanese Americans for the Military Intelligence Service and Office of Strategic Services in June 1942. The Selective Service System was bypassed, and the fact that Japanese Americans were serving with the U.S. armed forces in the Pacific Theater was not made public knowledge. Japanese American soldiers in Asia and the Pacific Islands worked primarily as translators, but engaged in combat whenever the need arose. By obtaining crucial military intelligence, the Japanese American soldiers were generally credited with having shortened the Pacific war by two years.

(To be continued)

Photo Contest Bid To Jr. Sr High Students

A photography contest which is open to all students of junior and senior high schools will be sponsored by the Japan Camera Industry Association in conjunction with the 25th annual Japan Camera Show to be held in Madison Square Garden Nov. 16 through 19.

Prizes will be awarded in four categories—Junior High School (a) black and white and (b) color, and High School (a) black and white and (b) color.

Entrants will be limited to one black and white print and one color print. They must measure 8" by 10" and be mounted on white or black boards measuring 11" by 14". On the back of each entry must be typed or printed the entrant's name, address, telephone number, photo title and name of school. Entries by senior high school students must be developed and printed by the students themselves. Photographs by junior high school students may be processed commercially.

Entries must be mailed no later than Oct. 31 to: Japan Light Machinery Information Center, Photography Contest, McGraw-Hill Building, 44th Floor, 1221 Ave. of the Americas, New York City 10020. Winners will be notified by Nov. 30, at which time they must submit negatives of the winning entries. Although the sponsors assume no responsibility for work submitted, they will return entries if a stamped, self-addressed envelope is included at the time of submission.

Winning photographs will be on display during the Camera Show in the exposition rotunda in Madison Square Garden.

Sahomi Tachibana to Chicago Lyric Opera

For the peripatetic Sahomi Tachibana, her two-and-a-half-week stint with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, from Sept. 27 through Oct. 11, marks a return to a hall where she and the late Yoshio Aoyama staged a new production of Madama Butterfly. This year she will be production assistant to Marcus Overton who will restage that production.

It was in 1958 that Sahomi Tachibana first assisted Yoshio Aoyama—also a member of the illustrious Tachibana clan of dancers—in a complete restaging of the Puccini opera at New York's Metropolitan Opera House. They last worked together during the 1969 season at Chicago's Lyric Opera.

Mme Tachibana earned the right to use the name of the famed dance family in 1941 following years of training in the classical Japanese dance with Saho Tachibana in Tokyo and Fukushima. Since her New York debut performance at La Meri's Ethnological Dance Center in 1948, she has earned a nationwide reputation as a premier performer, teacher and educator.

Third AA Festival is Held in Columbus Park

The threat of rain having been dissipated early in the day, the third annual Asian American Festival was held as scheduled in Columbus Park in Chinatown this past Sunday under the auspices of the New York State Council on the Arts and the sponsorship of a coalition of Asian American organizations.

For the occasion, a representative from his office read a proclamation from Mayor Edward Koch which declared it to be Asian American Day.

The following groups presented costumed performers who ranged in age from sub-teens on up: Bibiana Dance Company, Bibiana Chin, director; Philippine Musical Group of New Jersey, Alicia Espiritu, director; Tachibana Dance Company, Sahomi Tachibana, director; Sahotae Tachibana (Nancy Okada), Ellen Kubo, Bonnie Morihisa, Lisa Tsufura, Eve Tsufura and Sahomi Tachibana, dancers; Korean Cultural Association, John Kim, director, Young Bok Lee, dancer; Vietnamese American Cultural Organization, Rev. Joseph Hien, coordinator, Mary Mai, mistress of ceremonies; East India Academy of Music, Mr. and Mrs. R. Parthasarthy, directors; and Lucky Star Dance Company, Kitty Ko, director.

Coordinators of the event were Alan Chow and Ruby Schaar, who also acted as mistress of ceremonies.

And So It Goes . . .

With McDonald's hamburgers now a firmly-entrenched feature of Japan's fast-foods scene, can pancakes be far behind?

Well, now that you ask, there will be a House of Pancakes coffee house in Tokyo next spring, thanks (that remains to be seen) to an agreement reached between Nagasakiya Company and International House of Pancakes, Inc., of the United States.

The demonstration undertaking will be managed by Choeisha K.K., a subsidiary of Nagasakiya, a chain store company.

THE GALLERIES

Viridian Gallery, 24 W. 57 St.—Group show by gallery artists, including Tazuko Fujii, Oi Sawa, Mizue Sawano. Through Sept. 23.

Bank of Tokyo Trust Co., 5 World Trade Center—"Japanese Artists in New York," includes paintings, sculpture, graphics by Shozo Nagano, Jun Fujihara, Mizue Sawano, Toshiko Uchima, Nanae Momiyama, Ryo Tokita, Takeshi Kawashima, Ken Wakashima, Tadashi Asoma, Shunji Sakuyama, Masaaki Sato, Ansel Uchima, Kenji Nakahashi, Sumiye Okoshi, Masami Kodama, Seiji Saito, Osamu Shimoda, Ushio Shinohara, Hiroshi Kariya, Kunio Izuka. Through Sept. 29.

Azuma Gallery, 142 Greene St.—Gen-yu Masaki Fujimoto. Calligraphy of English words rendered Japanese-style. To Sept. 25.

Ronin Gallery, 605 Madison Ave. (57 & 58 Sts.)—Landscapes of Hiroshige (1797-1858). Through Oct. 7.

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You've Come A Long Way, Basement

The Basement Workshop, whose name puzzles those who are not aware that it really did get its start in a basement on Elizabeth Street, was created eight years ago by a small, earnest group of young Asian Americans who saw the need for a "community information bank," and accordingly established the Asian American Resource Center.

Its tiny headquarters, about ten steps below sidewalk level, was furnished in a style that might be called "early pioneer." Chairs were once packing crates, and there weren't many of them. The stacks of resource materials were growing, but the collection could hardly be described as comprehensive. Then.

What there was no dearth of was excitement and enthusiasm among the founding members of a baby organization whose growth in the past several years is attributable in part to the receipt of grants from a variety of city and state cultural agencies, but mostly to the continuing drive of its staff and growing body of volunteers.

What began as a modest resource center now also serves as a center for visual and performing arts and as a community services source, and is now headquartered in a spacious loft at 199 Lafayette Street.

Last weekend, the Basement held its first Folk History and Arts Festival, calling it ASIANAMERICA CELEBRATES, and the varied program pretty well reflected the broadened scope of the Basement. There was dance, music, poetry, art, crafts, photographs, entertainment for children, and films. The need to fit everything into a two-day schedule meant that on Saturday if you didn't want to miss the music, dance and poetry in one room, you had to skip the screening of some important films, video tapes and filmstrips on the Asian American experience in another.

About the only criticism that can be made of an undertaking that unbelievably was pulled together in a matter of a couple of months is that it needed maybe a separate day for the films alone.

It wasn't billed as an anniversary celebration, but because the timing was right, a happy eighth birthday, Basement!—T.K.

MOVIES

CARNEGIE HALL CINEMA, 7th Ave. near 57 Sts. (757-2131)
Sept. 21—"Death by Hanging," directed by Nagisa Oshima; and "The Face of Another," directed by Hiroshi Teshigahara from a novel by Kobo Abe, with Tatsuya Nakadai.

Name Board Members Of Basement Workshop

The Basement Workshop recently announced the names of its newly-constituted board of directors whose principal immediate objective is to reorganize the operations of the Basement to better serve the Asian American community.

The present acting director of the Basement is Jack Tchen, an historian. Members of the board are the following:

Mary Chin, a junior bacteriologist at Bellevue Hospital; Richard Chong, financial analyst, with Grumman International Co.; Ken Chu, staff attorney and coordinator, Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund; Beatrice Eng, bookkeeper, aesthetician, makeup artist; Jacquie Kay, President, Wu Pi, Inc., Seattle, Wash., and Cambridge, Mass., community economic development consultant; Peter Kwong, convener and Professor, Politics Dept., SUNY at Old Westbury; Paul Lee, Vice President, Quong YuenShing & Co., New York, and President, LJQ Productions, Inc., New York; Felipe Luciano, poet writer, news reporter for local NBC News; John Wang, investigative reporter; Eddie Wong, Associate Products Manager, American Can Co.; Spencer Wong, staff analyst, Sanitation Dept.; and Elizabeth Young, active in the Asian American community.

SS Arizona Memorial

WASHINGTON, D.C.—"This memorial is probably the most beautiful in the nation, and, more importantly, it represents our dedication to our fighting men, that they will never be forgotten."

So spoke Hawaii Senator Daniel Inouye in announcing earlier this month that the Navy has awarded a \$1.1 million contract for construction of the S.S. Arizona Memorial shore-side facilities to the firm of S & M Sakamoto, Inc.

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