My parents went to the only shelter available to them, in buildings belonging to the Japanese churches. They lived in a room a fraction of the size of our camp quarters. They did not complain, because the less fortunate ones slept on the bare floors of church and social halls. With single-minded perseverance and fortitude, my father challenged a hostile society and encroaching old age and once again began to build his life, his home and the employment agency business.

I returned to San Francisco shortly after and matriculated at the University of California in Berkeley. My father and I first worked in domestic service. We had no choice. My father was back where he had begun when he first disembarked in 1901, forty-three years before. The three of us slept on two army cots at the church hostel. We lived this way for almost a year until my father's house was vacated.

Just as his business was beginning to show profit after three years of working at a Herculean pace, my father suffered a massive stroke. Within a year, he was up again, dragging his half-paralyzed body to work every day. He continued for two more years until a second stroke claimed his life. He was 72 years old. For a man who had everything wrenched from him - his home, his business, his health, his basic human rights, his dignity, even the life of his first child, my father never became cynical. Even his frequent letters from the bleak life in prison camps always conveyed positive thoughts. I still ache deeply for him when I read a passage from one of them, dated May 1943, after a

year of separation from us. It is on the original prison stationery of specially treated paper. "Try to laugh every day and think the bright side. Do your best to your mom as you are. I am your love, Papa." I was not blessed with his gifts.

My father's story is not unique, nor is it extraordinary. Each of the tens of thousands of Japanese immigrants suffered. Collectively, their story is a heroic one of an invincible human spirit that survived cruel indignities, injustice and the final humiliation of mass exile behind barbed wire for the crime of being Japanese. Still they persevered to find a niche in a country they tried to adopt.

As I was writing this testimony, enormous pride welled up in me that I am Japanese American. There is a Japanese word, gambaru, for which there is no English equivalent. It means to fight, not to give up hope, to persevere. Gambaru is what enabled my parents' generation to survive the hardships in a land that did not want them. Gambaru is our heritage which is rooted in America, not Japan. Gambaru is a legacy which my father and his peers, courageous men and women, left to me and you - to all of us. This spirit is their contribution to America.

To validate my father's story, I have brought with me the prison uniform worn by him bearing his serial number. He brought this home as a souvenir for his children. For history's sake he said. It is obviously several sizes too large for a slight man. He told me that the trousers were of the same denim and that on

the seat were stenciled in white paint, two large letters, "P W", Prisoner of War.

And now, just a short piece I wrote in 1981 after attending Commission hearings at three sites. I would like to quickly share with you experiences of people other than my family whose heart-wrenching stories moved me to write my first poem. This is my first public reading.

The Japanese terms used: issei and nisei refer to first and second generation Japanese. Kibei are nisei who returned to the United States after being brought up in Japan. These were the incarcerants. Enryo, giri, and gaman refer to some of our cultural values. Enryo is reticence; giri in this context refers to a blind loyalty; gaman means to endure, usually in silence. Hakujin refers to a caucasian American. Each tragedy here happened to a real person.

SILENCE . . . . . no more

Silence
Forty years of silence
Forty years of anger, grief, pain
Shackled in the hearts of
Issei, nisei, kibei.

Many died in silence
Some by their own hands
Some by others.

Today
The survivors
Stood tall, strong, proud
Issei, nisei, kibei all vowed
No more enryo, giri, gaman
Shattering the silence.

Today
The survivors
Cried redress, restitution, reparations

for
a father detained in five
prisoner of war camps
for the crime of being Japanese
and joined his loved ones
in yet another barbed wire compound
then returned home to die at seventy-two
rebuilding his life in San Francisco

for
a mother whose demons drove her
to hammer her infant to death
now skipping merrily after
butterflies in the snow

for
a brother, honor student,
star athlete, Purple Heart veteran
now alone, in a sleazy Seattle hotel room
sitting on the edge of a cot
rocking, rocking

for
a fourteen year old girl
mother to the children of Petersburg
orphaned by the FBI seizure of
all Japanese adults
now agonizing in guilt
of having detoured the jailhouse
too ashamed at the sight of her father
waving desperately to her

for
a baby whose whimpers
were silenced forever in a
camp hospital
the hakujin doctor who never came
was a father of a son killed
in the Pacific

Silence
Silence, no more

. . . . . no more

To these people and the other 120,000 internees who were as loyal, if I might say, as the distinguished members of this subcommittee, how can a mere apology suffice? How can a mere $20,000 or $120,000 suffice? The $20,000 recommended by the Commission is only a symbolic amount. But there must be individual monetary compensation. The American system of justice compensated each of the 1,318 Vietnam war protestors the sum of $10,000 for their unlawful detention over a weekend here in Washington, D.C.

To refuse us monetary redress for the flagrant breach of our Constitutional rights, that would set a dangerous precedent by eliminating safeguards to future generations of Americans. Selective justice is no justice.

Mr. Chairman, you and I are fellow Americans and fellow travelers striving to keep our America the country of liberty and justice for all.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Kiku Hori Funabiki

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