

TEXT OF TESTIMONY TO BE DELIVERED BEFORE
THE COMMISSION ON WARTIME RELOCATION AND
INTERMENT OF CIVILIANS, AUGUST 4, 1981,
ON BEHALF OF THE LITTLE TOKYO SERVICE
CENTER (LTSC)

- MY NAME IS MIKE MURASE.
- I AM THE PRESIDENT OF THE LITTLE TOKYO SERVICE CENTER, WHICH IS A FEDERATION OF THIRTEEN OF THE MAIN SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS SERVING THE JAPANESE AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.
- MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS OF OUR UMBRELLA AGENCY INCLUDE . . .
 - THE ASIAN AMERICAN VOLUNTARY ACTION CENTER
 - COUNSELING SERVICES FOR ASIAN AMERICANS
 - THE JAPANESE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION
 - JAPANESE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SERVICES
 - JAPANESE AMERICAN CULTURAL & COMMUNITY CENTER
 - JAPANESE CHAMBER SOCIAL SERVICES
 - JAPANESE COMMUNITY PIONEER CENTER
 - JAPANESE WELFARE RIGHTS ORGANIZATION
 - LITTLE TOKYO PEOPLE'S RIGHTS ORGANIZATION
 - MARYKNOLL CATHOLIC MISSION
 - ORIENTAL BUILDERS ASSOCIATION
 - SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SOCIETY FOR THE JAPANESE BLIND
- AND
 - UNION CHURCH OF LOS ANGELES.
- AS YOU CAN SEE JUST FROM THE NAMES, THE SERVICE CENTER IS COMPRISED OF GROUPS WITH A WIDE RANGE OF VIEWPOINTS AND AN EVEN WIDER ARRAY OF PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES, AND I CANNOT CLAIM TO SPEAK FOR EACH OF THE SEPARATE ORGANIZATIONS.

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- I CAN SAY, HOWEVER, THAT THROUGH OUR WORK IN PROVIDING DIRECT SOCIAL SERVICES, LEGAL AND MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING, INFORMATION AND REFERRAL, AND OTHER TYPES OF ASSISTANCE, WE HAVE COME TO UNDERSTAND VERY CONCRETELY THE GREAT IMPACT THE WORLD WAR II CAMP EXPERIENCE HAD ON OUR COMMUNITY.
- I CAN ALSO SAY THAT, ALTHOUGH I DID NOT GO THROUGH THE CAMP EXPERIENCE PERSONALLY, MY TEN YEARS OF ASSOCIATION WITH VARIOUS SOCIAL SERVICE, LEGAL COUNSELING AND COMMUNITY ANTI-CRIME PROGRAMS HAVE LED ME TO CONCLUDE THAT VIRTUALLY EVERY JAPANESE IN AMERICA WAS DEEPLY AND IRREPARABLY AFFECTED BY THE CONCENTRATION CAMP EXPERIENCE.
- I BELIEVE THAT FOR EVERY PERSON WHO COMES BEFORE YOU TO TESTIFY, THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF OTHERS, WHOSE STORIES WILL NEVER BE TOLD PUBLICLY.
- OF COURSE, AFTER SOME FORTY YEARS, MANY OF THE ISSEIS ARE GONE . . . AND OTHERS ARE TOO FRAIL TO COME BEFORE YOU NOW.
- THERE ARE OTHERS, WHO, TO THIS VERY DAY, FIND IT TOO PAINFUL TO SPEAK. . OF THE FOUR YEARS OF SUFFERING, AND THE FORTY YEARS OF TRYING TO FORGET, YET STILL REMEMBERING.
- THERE IS A WOMAN, WHO FINDS IT TOO DIFFICULT TO RECALL THE EXPRESSION ON HER HUSBAND'S FACE AS HE WAS BEING DRAGGED AWAY BY THE F.B.I.--THE FACE SHE SAW FOR THE VERY LAST TIME BEFORE HE DIED A YEAR LATER WHILE THEY WERE STILL SEPARATED IN TWO DISTANT LOCATIONS.
- THERE IS A MAN, WHO CAN ONLY SPEAK IN BITTER AND ANGRY TONES BECAUSE HIS EDUCATION WAS INTERRUPTED IN THE PRIME OF LIFE, AND HIS FAMILY'S BUSINESS WAS DESTROYED.

- THERE IS ANOTHER WOMAN, WHO SUFFERS FROM HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE, NERVOUSNESS AND OTHER ILLNESSES, WHICH WERE CAUSED BY THOSE STRESSFUL YEARS IN CAMP, AND FOR WHICH SHE ALONE BEARS THE BURDEN OF NEVER-ENDING HIGH COST OF MEDICAL CARE.
- THERE IS STILL ANOTHER WOMAN, WHOSE LIPS CANNOT FORM THE WORDS TO DESCRIBE THE FEAR AND THE SENSE OF SHAME SHE FELT WHEN SHE WAS PHYSICALLY ATTACKED AND SEXUALLY ABUSED BY SOLDIERS ESCORTING HER ON THE TRAIN TAKING THEM TO CAMP.
- THERE IS A MAN, WHO CANNOT OVERCOME HIS FEELINGS OF FUTILITY AND A TOTAL LOSS OF FAITH AFTER HE WAS FORCED TO SELL HIS FARM AND ALL HIS BELONGINGS FOR A FRACTION OF THEIR ACTUAL VALUE. HE IS A BROKEN AND DEFEATED MAN . . . A SEVERELY DEPRESSED ALCOHOLIC WITH NO SENSE OF SELF-WORTH.
- I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT NOT EVERY PROBLEM OR HUMAN SUFFERING THAT OUR SOCIAL SERVICE PROGRAMS DEAL WITH ARE DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE EXPERIENCE OF THE WAR YEARS.
- YET, IT IS MY PERSONAL BELIEF, AND THE BELIEF OF THE STAFF OF THE LITTLE TOKYO SERVICE CENTER, THAT THE FAR-REACHING AND LONG-LASTING ECONOMIC, PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS, NOT ONLY REMAIN TODAY, BUT WE ARE LEARNING THAT SOME OF THE DEEP-SEATED PSYCHIC WOUNDS AND FEELINGS OF OUTRAGE, THAT HAVE BEEN SUPPRESSED FOR SO LONG, ARE JUST BEGINNING TO SURFACE.

- THE INSIDIOUS NATURE OF THE WARTIME STRATEGY TO DISPERSE AND FORCIBLY ASSIMILATE JAPANESE PEOPLE IN AMERICA BECOMES MORE EVIDENT AS WE LOOK AT THE IMPACT THE CAMP EXPERIENCE HAS HAD ON SUCCEEDING GENERATIONS OF JAPANESE AMERICANS ... TO SANSEIS AND YONSEIS WHO WERE NOT YET BORN IN THE 1940s.
- I HAVE HEARD THAT IN THE POST-WAR RESETTLEMENT YEARS, TREMENDOUS PRESSURES WERE APPLIED BY CAMP AUTHORITIES AS PEOPLE WERE RELEASED TO "PROVE LOYALTY" AND TO "DEVELOP AMERICAN HABITS." THE CLEAR MESSAGE WAS: DON'T BE CLANNISH AND DON'T BE SO JAPANESE.
- IN THE LATE FIFTIES, WHEN I WAS ABOUT TWELVE YEARS OLD, I HAD A FRIEND WHO USED THROW AWAY THE RICE-BALLS HIS MOTHER PACKED IN HIS SACK AND SKIP LUNCH WHILE HIS FRIENDS ATE SANDWICHES.
- ANOTHER FRIEND IMploRED HIS FATHER TO LET HIM OFF A COUPLE OF BLOCKS AWAY FROM SCHOOL EVERY MORNING BECAUSE HE WAS TOO ASHAMED TO BE SEEN BEING DROPPED OFF FROM A GARDENER'S TRUCK.
- THE SERIOUS EROSION OF OUR DIGNITY AND PRIDE AS A PEOPLE IS ALSO MANIFESTED IN SUCH PHENOMENON AS THE UNUSUALLY HIGH RATE OF INTERMARRIAGE AMONG SANSEIS AND THE PHYSICAL DESTRUCTION OF OUR HISTORIC COMMUNITIES, AND I BELIEVE THAT THE RELOCATION AND INTERNMENT IS A SUBSTANTIAL CAUSE.
- JAPANESE AMERICANS LOST LAND AND PROPERTY, FREEDOM AND PRIVACY, EDUCATIONAL AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES, DIGNITY AND PRIDE. FOR ALL THIS, THERE IS NO PRICE TAG.
- BUT THE LITTLE TOKYO SERVICE CENTER, LAST APRIL, ENDORSED THE EFFORTS OF THE NATIONAL COALITION FOR REDRESS/REPARA-

RATIONS BECAUSE WE ARE IN AGREEMENT WITH THE BASIC PERSPECTIVES OF THE COALITION, AND SUPPORT THE JAPANESE COMMUNITY'S DEMAND FOR JUSTICE NOW, REPARATIONS NOW.

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