



NOC

UCLA Asian American
Studies Center

NIHONMACHI OUTREACH COMMITTEE
NOC, P.O. Box 2293, San Jose, CA 95109

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee:

My name is Shizuko Sue Tokushige, a Nisei, second generation Japanese American from San Jose, California. An American citizen born in 1921, my father went to court and removed the dual citizenship status of all his children.

I am a member of Nihonmachi Outreach Committee (NOC), a branch of the National Coalition of Redress and Reparations (NCRR). Also a member of the San Jose City Commission on the Interment of local Japanese Americans, a board member of the Japanese American Resource Center, and a member of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL).

I appreciate this opportunity to speak about my World War II experiences that were the direct result of Executive Order 9066.

I was a twenty year old mother of a two week old baby in April of 1942, when my family entered the Salinas Assembly Center with only what we could carry. Food was inadequate for a nursing mother. Breakfast consisted of toast and coffee, occasionally an egg or one slice of bacon. Dinner was a small scoop of rice and a cold sardine, or sauerkraut. I understand that later investigation proved there was black marketing of food by the center's director.

On July 4, 1942, we were placed on a train. Mothers with babies and small children were separated from their husbands for the entire trip. With shades drawn, we traveled for three days, being side-tracked for military and other trains. In my railcar was a mother with a ten day old baby, which had undergone hernia surgery at the Salinas County Hospital the day before. The baby was placed on the train even though the doctors and parents had implored with the authorities to leave the baby behind because he would not survive the trip. The baby died with the mother begging for help and no medical care was given.

We had no food during the trip because the food picked up at the Fresno, California train stop had spoiled. At Parker, Arizona we were transferred to buses for an uncomfortable, dusty ten mile bus trip in 120 degree weather to our final destination, Poston Relocation Center on an Indian reservation in Arizona.

The disregard for people with special needs for survival and the lack of care for my baby's well being will never be forgotten. She weighed less than thirteen pounds at six months of age because her digestive system could not assimilate the canned milk provided. Every ounce was vomited back up as soon as it was ingested. We contacted a caucasian pharmacist friend by letter who sent us all the SMA formula milk he could when available. My baby starved for two weeks before we received the first supply of SMA. To alleviate her hunger, we gave her water and ice in between receiving supplies of SMA. All expenses incurred were paid for from our personal assets. Eventually, as she was able to digest solid food, our

problem of providing for our baby eased.

My father fought in World War I with the 79th Brigade. He was promised his citizenship, but the passage of the Oriental Exclusion Act of 1924 prevented his becoming a citizen as he wished. Father's faith in the United States of America was unwavering. When my brothers decided to volunteer from inside the evacuation camps of World War II, my parents sent them to serve their country with their blessings. They also stated, "This is your country - go serve your country well with honor. Someday the injustice of the incarceration of its own citizens will be rectified." It is a shame that my parents did not live to see that day.

We came to San Jose, California upon our release from the concentration camp. After three years of incarceration and paying for all our personal needs such as clothing, soap, toothpaste, etc., we, like others started rebuilding our lives with zero assets.

The hardships, suffering, and financial losses incurred as a result of Executive Order 9066 justifies monetary compensation and should be addressed and rectified.

The above are valid reasons for the appropriation of 500 million dollars (\$500,000,000) during this first year and the expeditious allocation and distribution in the following years is urgent. Forty seven years have lapsed and many former internees are either dead or in their 70's, 80's, and 90's. My husband is seventy four and I am sixty eight. Many of our friends have passed away.

It is essential that the United States honor and fulfill its commitment, having signed redress into law as our neighbor Canada, is doing by paying out checks.

The intent of bill HR-442 must be respected by our government. Our faith again is being tested. We the Japanese Americans are again finding it necessary to justify the amount of funds allocated to make restitution. The morally and constitutionally right thing to do is to allocate \$500 million in each of the first two years of appropriations and the remainder in the third year. Our younger generations will have the rights to question the commitment of equality for all which was written into the constitution by this countries founding fathers. Do the next generations have to wonder if Japanese Americans will ever be treated as the equal of other citizens of the United States? Let our history record that you had the courage to prove that equality under the law is not just a concept but a reality.