

Version III

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THE KIKUCHI DIARY

A Personal Record of the Japanese American
Evacuation and Resettlement

Abridged and annotated
by

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and
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Foreword by Dorothy Swaine Thomas

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Foreword

From 1941 to 1947, I served as director of the Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Study at the University of California. Our research staff included a number of evacuees who as "participant observers" kept daily records of the impact of events following Pearl Harbor upon the Japanese minority: evacuation from the West Coast, concomitant with the exclusion orders of 1942; detention in government-operated camps; administrative efforts to assess the "loyalty" of the evacuees; segregation of the "disloyal"; planned relocation of the "loyal" outside the areas of exclusion; and closure of the camps following rescission of the exclusion orders in December 1945.

Many of these records were used extensively in the three volumes on Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement that were published by the University of California Press in 1946, 1951, and 1954;* and in a paper published by the American Philosophical Society in 1950.** Others, however, have been relatively unexploited, and, whereas they are available for research purposes in the archives of the University of California at Berkeley, their sheer bulk and lack of explanatory annotations limit their usefulness as source materials. Among these is a 10,000 page diary, which was kept continuously by Charles Kikuchi, a research assistant on the Study, from April 1942, when he and his family were evacuated from Berkeley and San Francisco to an assembly center at the Tanforan Race Track, throughout his period of detention at the Gila River Relocation Project in Arizona and of initial resettlement in the Chicago area to the day, in August 1945, when he was inducted in the United States Army. His well-written, faithfully documented account represents a record unique in the annals of social science. The present abridgment ~~to approximately 10 percent of the original~~ ^{of the Tanforan Period} was painstakingly prepared by Professor Donald

Kent, of the University of Connecticut, and Mrs. Barbara K. Fitts, of Philadelphia, who, working relatively independently, reached a consensus as to portions of the original which should be published in order to maximize the value of a necessarily short volume. Dr. Kent and Mrs. Fitts jointly prepared the greater part ~~of~~ of the introduction and all of the annotations, *whatas 9*

*am responsible for Part I of the first section. ****
The Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Study was financed, during the 1940's, by the Rockefeller and Columbia Foundations and the University of California. Additional grants to aid in the preparation of the present volume were received in 1951-52 from the American Philosophical Society and the University of Pennsylvania. Assistance from all of these sources is gratefully acknowledged.

Dorothy Swaine Thomas

- * The Spoilage by Dorothy Swaine Thomas and Richard S. Nishimoto (1946)
The Salvage by Dorothy Swaine Thomas, with the assistance of Charles Kikuchi and James M. Sakoda (1950)
Prejudice, War, and the Constitution by Jacobus Ten Broek, Edward N. Barnhart, and Floyd W. Matson (1954)
- ** "Some Social Aspects of Japanese-American Demography" by Dorothy Swaine Thomas, Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. 94 (1950), pp. 459-480.

*** ~~Part I of the Introduction ("The Setting") was prepared by the present writer. It is an ~~over~~ concise summary of points that are developed in detail in the publications cited in the preceding footnotes.~~
Entitled "The Setting" this part

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1. The Setting

During the spring and summer of 1942, the whole of California, the western half of Washington and Oregon, and southern Arizona were cleared of their 110,000 Japanese residents by the Western Defense Command, under authority vested in the Commanding General, John L. De Witt. Sanction for this forced mass migration of a racially-defined segment of the American population was derived from an executive order, signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on February 19th, which authorized delimitation of military areas from which "any or all persons" might be excluded.

Immediately after the outbreak of war, Japanese, German, and Italian nationals had been declared to be "enemy aliens," and the Department of Justice had designated a number of small zones, surrounding strategic installations, from which they would be required to move. When the Army took ~~over~~ control of the situation, General De Witt promptly added as a fourth category for exclusion "Americans of Japanese descent," defined to include "any person who has a Japanese ancestor, regardless of degree." ^{On March 2, 1942} He designated a wide strip of the coastal territory and of southern Arizona as "Military Area Number 1," and issued proclamations and press releases notifying "all Japanese" to prepare to evacuate the area. However, no mass action was ever taken against German and Italian aliens.

~~For a few weeks~~ ^{following this proclamation,} the Japanese were permitted to leave the area voluntarily and to choose destinations anywhere outside of Military Area Number 1, with assistance from a newly formed agency, the Wartime Civil Control Administration (WCCA). It soon became apparent that the vast majority could not meet the deadlines imposed and, on March 27, further voluntary change of residence was prohibited. Exclusion orders, similar to the one shown in Plate I for

after several proclamations?

San Diego, were issued in rapid succession covering the whole of Military Area Number 1, and Japanese residents of one neighborhood or community after another were moved, en masse, and under military guard, to barbed-wire enclosed "assembly centers" which had been hastily constructed on nearby race tracks, fair grounds, and similar sites. Early in the summer, the eastern half of California--which was known as the "Free Zone" and ~~was~~ ^{had been} the destination sought by most of the voluntary evacuees--was added to the exclusion area. With the systematic removal of all of Japanese from this zone the first phase of controlled evacuation was completed. ⁹ The second phase involved another mass movement from assembly centers to more remote and more extensive camps, called "relocation projects," which were designed for longer occupancy and administered by the War Relocation Authority (WRA). These camps, too, were surrounded by barbed wire and established as military zones from which unauthorized egress was prohibited under penalties of public law.

Forcible detention of the Japanese had not been anticipated in the original plans of the Western Defense Command, whose declared intention was merely to clear the coastal region of "potential enemies," as a matter of "military necessity"; and the primary purpose of forming the War Relocation Authority was to facilitate the resettlement of the involuntarily displaced evacuees. Once detention became a reality, however, and the camps declared to be military zones, WRA found it next to impossible to implement its resettlement program. A small number of bilingually competent young men were recruited from camps for teaching positions in army language schools or for training in military intelligence. A few hundred students obtained permits to enter midwestern and eastern colleges, under arrangements initiated by a private organization, the Student Relocation Committee. Several thousand men and a few women received "seasonal leaves" for work on nearby farms and ranches during the harvest and planting periods, but

they were required to return to camp after the expiration of their contracts. Provisions for "indefinite leave" to take up more or less permanent work in normal communities required not only an individual "loyalty" investigation but also evidence of a valid job offer, of community acceptance, and of ability to support dependents remaining in camp. These provisions were cumbersome and by the end of 1942, only about 1 percent of the adults in the camps had been cleared for "indefinite leave." In an effort to speed up relocation, WRA entered a cooperative arrangement with the War Department for mass clearance, in the spring of 1943, and a plan was drawn up for the simultaneous registration of young men eligible for military service and the execution of lengthy questionnaires, designed to test "loyalty," by all persons 17 years of age or older. ^{and clearance} The plans for registration were hastily conceived, and ineptly administered, and although ^{the vast majority} ~~most~~ of the evacuees complied with the requirements in most of the camps, there were widely publicized instances of passive resistance, refusals to register, verbal declarations of disloyalty, and in one camp--Tule Lake--open revolt. Following a Senate investigation, WRA undertook ^{another} forced mass movement ^{and} ~~of the detained evacuees,~~ by segregating the "disloyal" and members of their families who wished to accompany them in the Tule Lake camp, ^{while} ~~and~~ moving the "loyal" from Tule Lake to other camps. ^{II} Inasmuch as the "disloyal" contingent represented only ^{a small minority} ~~about one in six~~ of the evacuees, registration ^{fulfilled the} ~~was~~ ^{original purpose of} removing a major impediment to resettlement for the great majority of camp residents, and WRA proceeded to facilitate their movement by setting up offices in many midwestern cities to aid in finding jobs and housing for them. By the end of 1944, approximately one in three had left for the "outside World" to continue their education, enter the armed forces, take up an occupation, or join previously relocated family members.

On December 17, 1944, following a decision of the Supreme Court, the Western Defense Command's order excluding Japanese from the West Coast was rescinded. Simultaneously, the War Relocation Authority announced that all camps ~~under their supervision~~ would be liquidated within a year. One after another of the ^{W.R.A.} camps was closed, on schedule, and most of the evacuees who had sat out the war years in camp returned to the West Coast. In the course of the next few years, they were joined by appreciable numbers of the earlier resettlers to the Midwest and East, and by 1950, four out of five of all of the Japanese in the United States had again taken up residence in one or another of the western states.

The 110,000 Japanese who experienced the various phases of evacuation, detention, and resettlement were homogeneous in respect to ancestry. Demographically, politically, and culturally, however, the group consisted of many ^{disparate} ~~disparate~~ ~~ate~~ elements. One-third were first generation immigrants, known as Issei. Two-thirds were American born, most of whom were American-educated and known as Nisei or second generation. Within the American-born group a small minority (~~approximately one in seven~~) had received some or all of their education in Japan and were called Kibei (literally, "returned to America"). Issei were ineligible to American citizenship, in accordance with various judicial interpretations of our Naturalization Act of 1790 and its subsequent revisions; but by virtue of birth on American soil, all Nisei and Kibei held American citizenship.

The majority of the Issei males came to the United States between 1885 and 1908, when the Gentlemen's Agreement with Japan became effective and brought labor immigration to an end. Most of the Issei females came between 1908, under a provision of the Agreement permitting the earlier immigrants to bring in close family members, and 1924, when Oriental Exclusion was incorporated in our

immigration law. As a consequence, there were marked age disparities, the median age of Issei males and females being 55 and 47 years respectively, and that of the American born, only 21 years. Moreover, since the practice of sending young children to Japan for education ~~virtually ceased during the 1930's~~ ^{declined from the 1920s to the 1930s} the Kibei, with a median age of 26 years, were appreciably older than the Nisei, whose median age was only 17 years.

At the outbreak of war, approximately two in every five of the Japanese in the Pacific Coast states were gainfully occupied in agriculture. The Issei had, in the main, started as seasonal or casual workers, and many of them had progressed to tenancy and even ownership in spite of land laws prohibiting ownership and restricting tenancy among aliens ineligible to citizenship. Most of ~~the~~ ^{their} farms were operated as family enterprises, dependent in large measure upon the unpaid labor of wives and children. With little capital expenditure and intensive application of labor, they obtained virtual monopolies in the production of many of the important crops, and in California where their farms included less than 3 percent of all the cropland harvested they were producing between 30 and 35 percent by value of all commercial truck crops.

Many Issei entered the urban labor force by way of domestic service: day work on a contract basis, gardening, and what was known as a "schoolboy" job, in which young Japanese immigrants worked and lived in white households and tried to get an education at the same time. Movement into trade and service enterprises and into the ranks of skilled labor was hampered by boycotts and other restrictive measures. Aside from their numerous enterprises devoted to meeting the needs of the ethnic group, they expanded into the wider community in only a few limited branches: hotels, grocery stores, cleaning and dyeing shops, Oriental art goods stores, and the wholesale and retail marketing of agricultural produce. In some of these they attained a considerable measure of

success, and, as in their farming enterprises, they drew heavily upon unpaid family labor.

Occupational outlets for American-born Japanese were, during the depression years when many of them were seeking their first jobs, extremely limited. There were few opportunities in the professions or in other white-collar jobs, except in the ethnic community or in state and federal civil service. Domestic service was the modal occupation for American-born females and was often the only gainful employment obtainable also for appreciable numbers of males in the western cities. In San Francisco, for example, one in every four of the citizen males and three in every five of the citizen females ~~was~~^{were} so occupied in 1940.

In striking contrast to the low occupational status of the second generation was their high educational level. By every available index, American-educated children of Japanese parentage were more thoroughly schooled than even the notably well-educated general population on the Pacific Coast. In number of grades completed, they greatly surpassed any other identifiable minority and approximated native whites of native parentage. Compared with other population groups, Nisei children started school earlier and remained longer through the adolescent period; finished full curricula to a greater extent; obtained better grades and ratings from teachers; and received a quite disproportionate number of scholastic honors. Kibei, too, were well educated. One in four had completed schooling in this country, with a median number of years of formal education only slightly below that of Nisei. Those who had completed their education abroad had, on the average, two years less of formal schooling than Nisei, but they had spent more years in schools in Japan than had the parent generation.

The high value placed on education had far-reaching consequences in developing American habits and attitudes among Nisei and in thus promoting their

rapid assimilation, but also in promoting aggressively nationalistic "pro-Japan" attitudes among the Kibei, many of whom ^{had attended school} ~~had resided~~ in Japan during the crucial 1930's.

The cultural-political orientation of the three "generational" groups tended to vary not only with respect to education but also in terms of geographical location, occupation, language, and religion. There was less segregation and discrimination in the Pacific Northwest than in California; and, in general, less in urban than in rural areas. Farming communities tended to be more close-knit and ethnocentered than even the Little Tokyos or Japanese Towns of the larger cities. Family enterprise tended to retard integration; while domestic service, in spite of its low status, was one of the few occupations that brought the Japanese minority into more than casual face-to-face contact with the Caucasian majority.

Although many Japanese had had contact with Christian missionaries prior to immigration, about three-quarters of the Issei settlers adhered to the Buddhist faith; and the proportion of Buddhists among Kibei was appreciably higher than that of the parent generation. Approximately half of the Nisei, however, followed the majority-group preference pattern of Christianity or secularism. Acceptance of Christianity did not, in and of itself, imply integration into the larger American community, inasmuch as all of the major West Coast denominations segregated their Japanese members in separate churches or missions; but it did, through various related activities, provide a basis for interracial contact that had no counterpart in Buddhist congregations, which were branches of organizations centered in Japan, and by their very nature, tended to orient their adherents to the mother country.

Most of the Issei were highly literate in the Japanese language but had very imperfect knowledge of English; whereas the converse was true of most Nisei,

among whom English was considered the "mother tongue," in spite of years of attendance, at the behest of their parents, at privately-organized Japanese language schools. ^{Few} A minority of the Kibei were skilled bilinguals; the majority tended, like their parents, to have greater facility in Japanese, and to be handicapped, compared with Nisei, in the use of English.

During the prewar decades, there was a plethora of immigrant organizations and associations on the West Coast. In most settlements, the Japanese Association, which included in its membership most of the farmers and business from surrounding areas was the focal organization. It received official recognition from the consular offices, and performed a number of semiofficial functions, in addition to many social and meliorative activities. Almost every immigrant belonged also to a prefectural society (kenjinkai), which included persons ^{originating} ~~originating~~ in the same prefecture in Japan, and served, in many communities, as the center of immigrant social life. Attempts to form "junior auxiliaries" among Nisei had met with limited success, and the only numerically important second-generation association was the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) which, by 1940, had 50 chapters, devoted to exerting political pressure against discriminatory legislation, to promoting public relations with the larger community and to emphasizing "Americanism" to the second generation. After 1939, concomitant with the development of strong ^{against Japan} anti-Japan sentiment in the United States, JACL officials cooperated ~~(perhaps overenthusiastically)~~ with American intelligence agencies in evaluating the "loyalty" of members of the immigrant community; and, when evacuation plans were announced, its chapters served as liaison groups with WCCA.

The cultural-generational-political cleavages that existed before the war were aggravated by the conditions of life behind the barbed wire of assembly

centers and relocation projects. The registration crisis of 1943 and the subsequent sifting of the "loyal" from the "disloyal" resulted in a highly selective segregation, with an extraordinary ^{if high} incidence of "disloyalty" among Kibei and an extremely low proportion among Nisei, with Issei occupying intermediate positions. The ability of second-generation American-educated Japanese to maintain their orientation as Americans under the pressures engendered by evacuation, detention, and registration was noteworthy for all classes, but strongest among those who had resided in the Pacific Northwest, who had been employed in non-agricultural or urban pursuits, who had accepted Christianity or professed no religion, and who had attained the highest level of education. And it was these classes that responded most eagerly and quite disproportionately to their numbers to the opportunities opened up for resettlement from camps to the Middle West and East. The net effect of forced mass migration and selective resettlement was, therefore, the dispersal beyond the bounds of segregated, ethnocentered communities into areas of wider opportunity of the most highly assimilated segments of the Japanese American minority. ←

2. Charles Kikuchi and his Family

Charles Kikuchi, an American citizen of Japanese parentage, was evacuated from Berkeley on April 30, 1942, while a student at the University of California. On that day, he began to keep a diary of what was happening to him and to his fellow-evacuees and of how they reacted to these happenings. The idea of keeping a journal of the evacuation had been conceived some weeks earlier in a discussion with two Berkeley students, James Sakoda and Warren Tsuneishi. Sakoda in particular had urged the historical value of "on-the-spot" documentation, by participant observers, and all three students kept diaries, independently, for varying lengths of time.

Kikuchi had an unusually curious and retentive mind, and he produced what ~~may well be~~ ^{is probably} the most complete and revealing day-by-day ~~record~~ of the evacuation and its aftermath. His diary, in its uncut version, covers 10,000 typewritten pages for the period from April 1942 to August 1945.

CK, as he calls himself in his diary and as we shall refer to him, was born in Vallejo, California on January 18, 1916--the second child of Nakajiro and Shizuko Kikuchi. His father had immigrated to America around the turn of the century in the hope of acquiring wealth and returning to Japan. But after several years as a migratory farm worker and a five-year period of service as cook in the United States Navy, he took a course in barbering and settled down in the waterfront district of Vallejo, close to the Mare Island Naval Base. His friends among the sailors patronized his shop and for a time he prospered.

Mrs. Kikuchi--seventeen years younger than her husband--was the well educated, attractive daughter of middle-class Tokyo parents, and the sister of one of Nakajiro's shipmates. The marriage was arranged, in 1913, by a ~~broker~~ ^{"bro - broker"}, for the sum of \$500, and Mrs. Kikuchi did not meet her husband until the day he arrived in Japan for the wedding. ^{(Compare Diary, June 19, 1944).} She and her parents accepted in good faith the groom's claim that he was a rich American businessman.

Arriving in America with her husband, Mrs. Kikuchi was hardly prepared for his barber's shack located across the mud flats of Vallejo in the midst of dilapidated stores, saloons and brothels. Her new home had two rooms: in the front, the barber shop; and a fifteen-by-twenty foot back room that served as complete living quarters. Inasmuch as barbering ^{was an occupation} ~~is a trade~~ of low status in Japan, being generally performed by women, Mrs. Kikuchi found it difficult to adjust to her husband's career in America. Domestic discord ~~soon~~ developed and Mr. Kikuchi's addiction to alcohol, already strong before marriage, increased greatly and with it came frequent outbursts of cruelty.

The first child, a girl named Mariko, was born in 1915; and the first son--^{- CK -}the author of this diary--a year later. Each of the children was given a Japanese name which--as was customary among Nisei--was anglicized as they grew older: Sutekatsu, born in 1917, became Jack; Haruka, born in 1919, was called Alice; Emiko, born in 1924, was known as Emi or Amy; Yoriko, born in 1926, changed her name to Bette; Takeshi, born in 1929, became Tom; and the youngest, Miyako, born in 1931, called herself Margaret or Margie. CK had a great antipathy to his "screwy Japanese name," and was reluctant ~~even~~ ^{even} to disclose it ^{to us.} Customers in the barber-shop dubbed him "Charlie," and, from early childhood, this was the name he used.

The Kikuchi pattern of living was a mixture of old and new world customs; but Japanese was the only language spoken at home, and neither CK nor Mariko knew any English when they entered the public schools--a fact that was to set off a chain of nightmarish events for the former.

A few days after CK had been admitted to school his teacher visited his parents to talk over his language difficulties. The purpose of her visit was apparently misunderstood, and as CK recalls it "this incident caught my father in a tender spot and touched off in him something that made things hard for me thereafter." When the teacher left, Mr. Kikuchi worked himself into a violent rage.

"... he hung me by the feet to the two-by-six rafters that cut the ceiling of the room in half, and whipped me with an old razor strop. I hung there, head down, for five or ten minutes."

After this traumatic incident, CK was subjected to frequent accusations, beatings, and even torture. The situation became intolerable, and Mrs. Kikuchi left home, taking CK and the other three children, and they went on public relief. Although the parents became reconciled and the family reunited within a

few months, separation had not lessened Mr. Kikuchi's intense hostility to his oldest son. After several ^{more} years of unhappiness and tension, Mrs. Kikuchi's brother offered to adopt CK and take him back with him to Japan, but at the last minute Mr. Kikuchi balked at the plan, and, instead, placed the boy in the custody of one of his own friends in San Francisco. This arrangement came to an abrupt end when the custodian was jailed for embezzlement; and CK was committed to a small private orphanage. This, too, turned out to be only a temporary refuge. The orphanage was disbanded following the death of a child under suspicious circumstances, and CK was sent back to his parents in Vallejo. Again the savage beatings began, and Mrs. Kikuchi, in desperation, asked her lawyer to have CK made a ward of the court.

CK was then eight years of age, and for the next ten years he lived in a Salvation Army institution for orphans and children from broken homes, on a seven-hundred acre estate in a nearby farming area. For eight of these years he was a ward of the court; and he stayed on for two additional years, working for his room and board. He was the only Japanese boy in "The Home"--as he called it--and he was quickly accepted by the other children and by the administrative staff. He soon acquired a knowledge of English, completed three grades in school in a single year, and caught up with his age group. He became something of a leader in his "gang," being a good scrapper and full of ideas of adventure.

During most of the time he was at the Home, CK was out of communication with his family. He had never learned to read Japanese, and his mother could not write to him in English. His oldest sister, Mariko, sent him an occasional greeting card; but he did not reciprocate. Three years after his admission, his mother's lawyer visited him to inquire whether he wished to return to Vallejo;

and to tell him that his mother believed that his father's attitude had softened and that it would be safe to return. The lawyer spoke to him at first in Japanese, and CK discovered, to his surprise, that he had almost completely forgotten the language. Only a "faint and distant rumble of meaning came through," and he could not (or would not) answer any questions until the lawyer spoke to him in English. He then replied with loud "no's," but would give no reason for his refusal to return to his family.

During his last four years at the Home CK attended a nearby high school where he was the only Nisei student. He graduated in 1934 "among the first four in scholarship" and left the Home ^{a few} ~~six~~ months later for San Francisco, with a new suit of clothes and twenty dollars in his pocket. ~~His reception in San Francisco surprised, hurt, and infuriated him.~~ For two weeks he walked the streets in fruitless search of a job. In his wanderings he discovered Japanese Town, but he could understand neither the language nor the customs. After a series of rebuffs, ^{which surprised, hurt, and infuriated him} he sought the assistance of the Director of the Home, and, through him, found a position as athletic instructor in a school for Japanese boys. He managed to collect a month's salary before he was discharged for refusal to bow to his elders and conform to Japanese ways.

After he had been in San Francisco for three months, ^{supporting himself by occasional odd job employment;} CK sought out his family in Vallejo:

One day I found myself on a ferryboat going across the bay. Not having seen my home for nearly ten years, I had only a vague idea of its location. But I found it. It looked poor, small and shabby. Through the shop window I saw my father sitting idle in his barber's chair. I did not really recognize him; I just assumed it was he. He looked very old....

I walked around the block. Should I go in?....I decided to enter by the back way.

My mother recognized me at once, with a little gasp. She was very still a few seconds, looking at me. Then she closed her eyes and smiled as though she had been expecting me....My mother had aged, too.

She was so thin, so little. She came scarcely up to my chin. I could not understand what she was saying in Japanese and she knew no English.

There were several youngsters in the room, my brothers and sisters. At first I barely saw them. They all stared at me, and whispered excitedly.

My father shuffled into the back room from the shop....He was only a shadow of the figure he had been ten years before. He was much smaller than I....When informed who I was, he folded his arms and his head dropped on his sunken chest, and he began to talk in a jumble of Japanese and English. I gathered that he thought I hated him. Finally he sat on the edge of one of the three beds that crowded the room, and clutching a brass knob, asked me to forgive him for his mistreatment of me....he had ceased drinking. I felt dreadful over this, but managed to pat him on the shoulder and take his hand, which was weak and small and cold....

My mother tried desperately to make me feel welcome. She was distressed over my inability to understand her....I began to notice my brothers and sisters whose eyes continued to be fixed on me. Every move I made caused a stir among them. By-and-by I counted them. Four; all born after I had left home. One was only three, a tiny fellow sitting in the middle of one of the huge beds. They made me uneasy....On that first visit the other three members of the family were not home. The two senior children in the house acted as interpreters between my mother and me. She said she hoped my feelings about my father really were not bitter any longer. I found it difficult to say anything, but said they were not: I bore him no grudge. She asked me to come to live with them; they would make room for me. This caused a flutter among the interpreters. One whispered to another in English, "Where will he sleep?" I declined the invitation. I said I would crowd them too much. But my real reason was that I did not belong.

During the ~~fall~~ and winter of 1934-35, CK visited Vallejo several more times, and gradually became acquainted with his family. Mariko, who was working as a domestic servant in San Francisco, and had been the chief support of the family for several years, was the only one of the siblings who really remembered him. She received him with warmth and affection, and offered to help him find a job. There were, however, few openings, except in domestic service, and the idea of becoming a servant was extremely distasteful to him. For weeks, he lived at a bare subsistence level, doing odd jobs and occasional

"day work" in Japanese Town. As a last resort, and still ~~against his wife's~~ ^{reluctantly}, he took a job as houseboy for a prominent business man and his wife.

To say that I was difficult is putting it mildly, and I still marvel at their patience with me. Now and then, during my first two years with them, they would put me in my place, which pushed me to the brink of quitting; but they also made frequent concessions. For example, the previous houseboy had worn a white coat while serving them. I rebelled against this so much they let me have my way, except when they had special guests.

His employers encouraged CK to continue his education, and so arranged his hours that he was able to enter San Francisco State College in the fall of 1935. In spite of their kindness he was sensitive and stand-offish. He did his work so well they could not find fault, but he answered as many questions as possible with a curt "yes" or "no."

At college CK did not reveal the fact that he was working as a houseboy, and he deliberately avoided contact with his fellow students--especially with other Nisei. Early in his junior year a Caucasian member of the Student Council challenged him for the obvious chip on his shoulder, and he began to associate more freely with other students. He became interested in the history and status of Japanese Americans, read widely, and discussed Nisei problems with his "boss." He was elected president of the International Club, and graduated in May 1939 at the head of his class. "The ~~boss~~" ^{Employer} and his wife gave him a used Model A car and five twenty-dollar bills as a graduation present.

CK had majored in history, hoping to teach in the public schools; but, in 1939, there were ~~few openings for teachers~~ ^{was an oversupply of potential}, and no Japanese were then being employed in California schools. During the summer, he earned his living as a farm laborer, travelling from place to place in his car. Returning to San Francisco in the fall, he sought advice from former professors; he applied to numerous business firms and agencies; and he was interviewed by employment

and personnel managers, but he could find no permanent job. During the entire fall and most of the winter of 1939 he was unemployed, finally obtaining help from the National Youth Administration--a ^{New Deal} ~~government~~ ^{subsidary of} agency established under the Works Progress Administration. Under NYA, he began a study of the economic problems of Nisei in the San Francisco Bay Area. The following summer he again joined a group of agricultural laborers along with his brother Jack, and worked ten hours a day for twenty-five cents an hour.

In the autumn of 1940, CK resumed work for NYA, and in this connection drifted into "Japanese Town," and became associated with a group of Nisei ^{prostitutes.} "~~broads~~," none of whom knew of his research activities. He describes this as his "disorganized period." He spent much of his time drinking, gambling, and visiting houses of prostitution; and he seldom saw his family.

In the spring of 1941, CK ^{became} acted as chauffeur for a physician (~~Alice's~~ ^{of his wife Alice}) former employer, and drove him and his family through the Pacific Northwest and Canada. Returning, he spent the summer in "hand-to-mouth" living, working at the San Francisco Fair, on the railroads and in the Reno gambling houses. In August he entered the University of California at Berkeley, on a scholarship, to work for a one-year certificate in the graduate school of Social Work; and on Pearl Harbor Day he was midway in his year of graduate study. He recalls the events of that day as follows:

On Sunday, December 7, a couple of Nisei friends and I had gotten together for a bull session and the conversation turned to the subject of possible war. Right in the midst of this conversation, another Nisei boy rushed in to announce that Pearl Harbor had been bombed by the Japanese air force. We all took it as a joke and we continued our discussion. The boy tried to convince us but we just ignored him. Finally one of us turned on the radio and the news flash came over. We still did not believe it until several other friends came running in to announce the news. Our group quietly broke up and I suppose we were all pretty shocked. My first reaction was one of vague fear because I somehow felt that

I would be identified with the enemy. In order to reassure myself that this would not happen, I walked up to the college library and mixed in with other students who were trying to study for their finals....

The next day I quietly went over to the Civic Center in San Francisco and asked to be inducted into the service. I was refused for the second time because the officer said that a policy had to be set for the Nisei first. I did not press the matter but returned to the campus, and I did not tell any of my friends what I had tried to do.

Under Department of Justice orders, Mr. and Mrs. Kikuchi, being "enemy aliens," were subject to exclusion from ~~their home in~~ Vallejo, which was in the vicinity of the Mare Island Naval Base. Caucasian friends petitioned Washington, unsuccessfully, in their behalf. In February the family was forced to move, and they chose San Francisco as a destination. Mariko, who was working in Los Angeles as a domestic servant, and Jack, a student at San Francisco State College, returned to Vallejo to assist in the moving, but the main burden fell upon Alice who had taken over the major share of responsibility for the family from Mariko. Upon graduating at the head of her class at Vallejo High School, Alice had completed a course in secretarial work but--like Mariko--she had been forced into domestic service to earn a living and help support her parents and younger brothers and sisters.

At about this time
Mr. Kikuchi completely reversed his attitude toward CK and looked to him, as the oldest son, for leadership in this period of crisis. Through CK's efforts, assistance was obtained from federal relief agencies and the financial burden on his sisters was eased. However, his vigorous entrance into family affairs marked the emergence of conflict between him and his older sisters. Alice and Mariko welcomed his aid but resented his exercise of authority, and the struggle between them was to mount in intensity over the next three years.

Two months after the move from Vallejo the family was uprooted again when all persons of Japanese ancestry were ordered to leave Military Area I, which, of course, included San Francisco, Berkeley, and Los Angeles. Mariko alone decided to resettle to the East during the period of "voluntary evacuation" and she left for Chicago just before the orders prohibiting change of address were enforced on March 27.

Mr. and Mrs. Kikuchi and six of their children were evacuated, early in April, to an Assembly Center at the Tanforan Race Track. Orders had not yet been issued for Berkeley, but CK registered for evacuation under the "family number" so that he would be assigned to the same barracks at Tanforan. He continued his studies at the University and managed to complete the exams just before he was evacuated on April 30th. His grades---all A's---were sent to him in the Assembly Center, accompanied by a certificate in Social Work and, ironically, an invitation to attend graduation ceremonies.

At Tanforan, CK was united with his family ~~for the first time in~~ *after a* *separately* ~~eighteen years.~~ Here he and his parents and six of his brothers and sisters lived for five months in a barrack-like apartment of two rooms, converted from horse stalls; and here CK had his first close association, since ^a early childhood, with Japanese immigrant culture. Here, too, he began ~~his~~ diary, which he kept daily (with only three or four exceptions) throughout the entire war period.

while in the assembly center
~~At Tanforan,~~ CK accepted a part-time research assistantship on the University of California Evacuation and Resettlement Study; and he agreed to turn over his diary as source material for the Study.

CK's connection with the California Study gave him some choice in his subsequent moves to a WRA "relocation project," for the Western Defense Command had approved a request from the Director of the Study to move evacuee

assistants to selected relocation projects which would serve as centers for observational research. The Kikuchis, therefore, had ^{the choice of} to choose between going to Tule Lake ¹⁹⁴¹⁻⁴² or Gila River, or to remain at Tanforan and take their chances with the evacuees in this camp, ^{whose destination was not yet determined but} who were eventually sent to Topaz. ^(Utah) CK selected ^{in Arizona} Gila both because it was outside California and because he could be independent of the other members of the Study, all of whom had selected Tule Lake. The rest of the family agreed to go with him, and in September they were all transferred to Gila.

This was another turbulent period for the Kikuchis. Mr. Kikuchi had a stroke on the way to Gila and was removed from the train at San Luis Obispo. He never fully recovered, although he was able to be transferred to the hospital at Gila where he remained until his death (in July 1943). Jack stayed at Gila only long enough to help the family get settled, and then left to take a scholarship at Drew University in New Jersey; and shortly afterward Alice joined Mariko in Chicago.

For several months, CK functioned as a participant observer at Gila, obtaining a job in the housing and welfare division of the WRA project and becoming secretary of the leading Nisei organizations in camp--the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL). Possibly because of his close involvement in community affairs and his association with administrative personnel, he was attacked and beaten by unidentified assailants on December 23, ^{1942,} After this painful experience, he became increasingly anxious to leave camp, and eagerly accepted an offer to continue work on the California Study, as a full-time research assistant in ^{some} the midwestern area of resettlement. In April, 1943, he left camp for Chicago, taking Emiko and Bette with him. CK and his sisters were thus in the vanguard of the evacuees resettling from camps to "the outside world."

CK worked in the Chicago office of the California Study for two and a half years. Here he prepared resettler life histories--meticulously detailed and vivid retrospective accounts of evacuation and early resettlement--many of which are included in The Salvage. Here too he continued, unremittingly, his own daily record of events and personal reactions.

With CK's induction into the army in August 1945, his story of the evacuation, detention and resettlement of the Japanese minority group comes to a close. Corresponding to these phases is the division of the Kikuchi Diary into three sections--Tanforan, Gila, and Chicago.

The diary has been extensively cut, the present version amounting to scarcely more than 10 percent of the original. The editors have, however, neither rewritten nor altered it; the only "corrections" are for obvious typing errors. But in the interest of smooth reading the dots of ellipses have been omitted.

In general the material eliminated from this abridgment has been of three types: 1) information which is of no importance either as a history of the evacuation or as the reactions of the Kikuchis and their associates (e.g., weather reports, minor illnesses, etc.); 2) repetitious details of camp living (e.g., menus, block meetings, etc.) and minutes, official announcements, and similar items ^{CK had} which were incorporated as documents; 3) information about the camps that is adequately or better presented in other sources (e.g., ^{their} administrative organization and reorganization). The annotations give some indication of the material omitted, ^{and} a copy of the unabridged diary ^{has been deposited} is included in the Thomas Collection of the University of California Library at Berkeley.

Volume 3
Gene Forster

April 3, 1943 (Saturday)

This evening I talked to Emiko and Bette and I asked them what they thought was the thing they would remember most about camp. Bette said that the heat was the thing. She believes that the most valuable thing that she learned in camp was to reason and think things out. Bette has matured considerably since the day we were evacuated. She takes a lot of responsibility, has an even disposition, good personality, and she is able to talk with people easily. She is very considerate of others although she tends to be a little impatient with the conservative Nisei. Easily adjusted, Bette has made a host of friends both among the students and the teachers.

Emiko said that the messhall food was the thing that would stand out in her mind. She can hardly wait until we get to Chicago so that she can do some real cooking. She says that she has had diarrhea ever since evacuation. Emiko's adjustment to camp life has been more difficult for her than for Bette. She has looks, a good personality, can meet people gracefully and she is strongly conscious of the family welfare. Emiko is a little hot tempered because she was spoiled by Pop as a child. Since Emiko has been used to having her own way, she views everything from a personal basis. Since she came into camp just at the age when she was growing up, she didn't have time to adjust herself completely to a mature life. She now has progressed to the point where she wants to continue on with her education. Emiko places a great deal of emphasis on a social life at present and her values are slightly distorted. An indication of her present attitude is the group of boys that she seeks--the zoot suit-jitterbug type, who has graduated from High School, but who have little initiative or ambition. Emiko will

April 5, 1943 (Monday)

This morning I met Imeko Matsumoto in the Employment Office. She said that she was leaving for Chicago next Monday. She is going to work as a domestic for \$40.00 a month for a Jewish couple. The job was obtained through the Chicago WRA Office. Imeko was a little afraid that the public reception would not be very good. She wondered if there would be a "Nihonmachi" (Japanese town) in Chicago. I told her that she should not worry about seeing other Nisei for a while because she could get along in any group. She said that she was willing to expand but was not so sure that the "hakujis" would let her. I did not think that there would be any difficulty. Imeko plans to go to the neighborhood churches as the initial step in getting acquainted with other Americans. "But it's harder for a girl. If we go around with the Caucasians, people will think that we are bad. Even when you refer to a white American as a Caucasian, they look funny. A label brings forth all sorts of connotations. The most desirable thing is to call everybody an American, but people don't do that."

Me: "We shouldn't worry too much about labels. Just act like an American and people will gradually accept you. An American is a funny person. Just have the guts to stand up for America's principles and culture and that makes you an American too. People will accept you if you do that. Don't ever apologize for your ancestry even if you hate the 'Japs'. By 'Japs', you mean a system of living that doesn't give the little guy a chance to even think for himself. Wartime hysteria does a lot of funny things--things that we will all laugh about afterwards. If you accept the role of a second class citizenship now, you will have a hell of a time to overcome this stigma."

April 5, 1943 (Monday)

Imeko: "Gee, if I can do all those things and if all the Nisei does it, the problem will solve itself."

I met Mr. Ikeda this evening and he advised me to turn down my job offer and stay in camp where it was safe and where I had plenty to eat. I told him that we had to go out sometime and the best time was now. Mr. Ikeda said that I was not being a good Japanese if I left my sick father behind. He said that my first duty was to my parents and I should not even think of going out. "Stay in camp because you can help the people. Then after the war, you can go back to California. Too hard to live on outside."

Tuttle gave me a hint that the WRA plans to pay all of the evacuees' transportation and first month subsistence expenses. We worked out the resettlement cost for the whole family and it came to \$471.00. Since three of us are [now] going the cost will come to around \$215 for transportation and subsistence for the first month. I am only going to declare \$71 [in assets, the amount that] U. C. is paying my travel expense. I don't know if I will be able to get the balance, but I will try damn hard.

omit page ?

July 31, 1942 (Friday, 12:30)

Three months in a concentration camp! Life goes smoothly on. I should be more dissatisfied and rebellious, but much against my will I'm forced to admit that I'm getting adjusted to this restricted life and falling into a smooth and regular rut. There still is that something within me that makes me feel uneasy but these momentary lapses are getting more infrequent, or else I am feeling better tonight than usual.

The unemployment situation is leveling off. Many capable people are still doing nothing, but many have fitted in on odd jobs here and there. A lot of the workers in the skilled and P and T jobs are receiving valuable training, others are badly misplaced.

The paper has come along to its peak. The work has fallen into a routine and some of the old zip is gone. We have sort of developed a policy of subtle Americanization and avoid loud protestations of loyalty or waving of the flag. We minimize things Japanese.

The recreation department is probably one of the best organized phases of camp life. It has expanded into a full program through the efforts of the Nisei in it. All types of sports are now possible here, with the exception of a few like swimming and horseback riding.

The Music and Art School are coming along nicely and probably offer more of lasting value to the residents than any departments. The staff is good and the pupils have confidence in their teachers. The other schools for education of the Nisei are not too good. The teachers are running out of material to teach so they are giving the pupils a two day holiday next week.

July 31, 1942 (Friday, 12:30)

The churches have made good progress up to now as far as organization of its physical means are concerned, but it is very unreal to life. Most of the churches avoid the real practical problems facing all of us. I don't know too much of church activities as Sunday is too good a day to be wasting away in a stuffy church.

The hospital has a good staff, but there is a definite need of facilities and medicines. The staff works very hard and have not begun to catch up. The dentists are still able to fix only severe toothaches.

Messhalls are well organized now and food has improved 100%. From the excess starchy foods we got the first month, the diet has become very well balanced. We get lots of vegetables and everyone has probably gained pounds. There is less confusion and meals are served in an orderly manner. Manners are not so good, and the noise makes conversation difficult.

With Mom sick, our family unit is slowly drifting apart and nobody pays much attention to Tom and Miyako. We haven't all eaten together for quite a while. Our evening snacks, however, has become customary. We are one of the few families allowed to use an electric plate (because of Pop's special diet) and there is an abundance of good food around. People are always bringing something in for us from the outside.

When we first came here, everybody wore jeans and slacks. Now they are all dressing up, especially the girls. Only a few stay in jeans.

The laundry situation is pretty good now. During the first month not a laundry was ready. The shower rooms are also good now.

July 31, 1942 (Friday, 12:30)

Compartments have been placed in the women's showers, plus foot baths. The men's latrine still do not have compartments; but in the women's, plywood separate every two toilets.

Our Grant Avenue is no longer a mud hole. It has been leveled off and a gravel walk has been put in. Street lights now help the people from getting lost in the pitch darkness. Gardens have sprung up all over the place and vegetables are now ready to eat. A hot house provides flowers for the various flower projects around here. All kinds of baseball, golf and basketball fields dot the formerly vacant landscape. In front of many barracks are to be seen many fine pieces of architecture.

The moral problems have not increased tremendously on the surface, except from rumors heard. All kinds of talk about "professional women" circulate, but I have not been able to trace any of these rumors down to its source. Undoubtedly a lot of it is true.

Clothing is one of the most acute problems that has developed. The people did not bring enough clothes in many cases or else they have worn out what they did have. Free clothing was only started last week, except for the few "relief cases."

The attitudes of the people have settled down in many respects. From fearing and hating everything around the place, many of them have arrived at the point where they like it here and would not mind if they stayed on indefinitely without moving on to a relocation area. The Issei as a whole believe that their status is a result of the war and have accepted it. Social barriers have also broken down and people are on a much more equal footing. Money and former position does not mean so much as it did on the outside.

July 31, 1942 (Friday, 12:30)

Our family have also fitted in with this process of adjustment. Alice is set in the supply room and it takes up most of her time. Emiko is an established part of the mimeograph room and she seems content with it although I have told her that she should be thinking more in terms of the future. She is still very much "social" events minded. Bette is going to school and not getting too much out of it. Lately she has been doing additional study on the side. Her prime concern right now is her boy friend. Tom and Miyako also go to school. She and Tom have probably made the easiest adjustments.

Mom and Pop are apparently resigned to this life and take it as cheerfully as possible. Pop no longer insists about going to work as a barber here. He now considers himself more as a retired person. Mom has been ill for the past month so that the family is not such a close unit as it was when we first arrived (on the surface). Most of the responsibility for the younger children rests with Alice, Jack and I.

1. Exact year not certain. See page 2.
2. Marriages arranged through an exchange of photographs and correspondence.
Jacobus tenBroek, Prejudice, War, and the Constitution, p. 217.

ANNOTATIONS

1. Statistics cited here are from the Sixteenth Census of the United States, ^{April} 1940. The figures have been rounded and no attempt made to adjust to December, 1941.

2. Acquisition of citizenship by naturalization was limited by the Naturalization Act of 1790 to "free white persons," and decisions by the Supreme Court have held that this act excludes Orientals. In 1935 by an act of Congress aliens otherwise ineligible to citizenship were made eligible if (a) they had served in the United States Armed Forces between April 6, 1917 and November 11, 1918, and had been honorably discharged, and (b) they were permanent residents of the United States. A small number of Issei obtained citizenship under this act before the deadline, which was set at January 1, 1937.

Why wasn't
Top a citizen? →

~~3. In the late thirties C K wrote a brief autobiography which Professor Louis Adamic ^{re-wrote} edited and published in From Many Lands (Harper and Brothers, 1939). The school incident is taken from this book, pp. 190-91.~~

3. The biographical material presented in this introduction was collected chiefly from a series of interviews with C K during the summers of 1952 and 53, and augmented with incidents described in letters to the editors. The account C K wrote for Adamic differs in some details from that presented here. These differences are not crucial to an understanding of the diary, and may be due partly to a differing perspective at a later date and - partly to the fact that one enjoys greater freedom in speaking than writing.

use

4.

could do nothing.

For reference, we shall refer to it as the

Adamic Chapter.

to Louis Adamic.

None of them material. There are slight differences in facts & chronology between the Adamic Chapter and the

Diary and CK's present recollections.

Louis Adamic, From Many Lands, Harper Brothers, 1940, p. 191. CK wrote his biography for Louis Adamic in the form of a letter, at the request of one of his college professors. Mr. Adamic then rewrote the letter as a chapter for his book still using the first person singular.

Some of the details in this chapter do not conform to the diary or to CK's own present recollections.

304/34.

Keut
Louis Adamic, From Many Lands, New York,
Harper and Brothers, 1940

A Young American with a Japanese Face
pp 185-234

He Begins

His Story

I am an American whose story in this country begins on Angel Island, here in the Bay of San Francisco. Before that, of course, my background is Oriental: Japanese. My parents arrived in the United States during the period of the great Oriental influx between 1890 and 1924.

He was twenty-three, five feet five, compactly built, and neatly, inexpensively dressed. His full round face was Japanese, but more expressive than are generally the faces of Japanese born and raised in Japan....He had written me some months before I visited San Francisco: he wanted to tell me what it meant to be an American with a Japanese face. Now, late in April, 1940, he sat in my hotel room.

In 1923 earthquake and fire destroyed an ancient temple near Tokio, and with it the complete genealogical record of my maternal ancestors for the last eight hundred years. I have no feeling of loss there...yet lately this long ancestry does hold an interest for me.

During these eight centuries my mother's family lived in and around Tokio. They were, and still are, of the

higher and wealthier middle class. There were generals, an admiral or two, ministers in the government, ambassadors, an artist, a writer of verse, and, I do not doubt, knaves of all species.

My maternal grandmother, now past her middle nineties, was nine when Commodore Perry "opened the doors of Japan"; my mother was her youngest child. I have an uncle who owns a bus line running out of Tokio; an aunt with a coffee plantation in Java; several other aunts and uncles about whom I have no definite information; and dozens of cousins, the older of whom are attending universities and academies, or are fighting in the China "incident."

To me, they are so many characters in a misty, faraway fairy tale, and I have no feeling for any of them, except for a cousin, a boy two or three years my junior, whom I dislike...although, on second thought, "dislike" is not really the word. Not long ago he wrote to me from his naval training station and said he was getting ready for the day when the mighty Navy of Nippon would repulse the attack of the American Navy. He wrote in English (as practice, I suppose, for as a future officer he is required to study the language), and my first reaction on reading the letter was that the punk had a hell of a nerve making a crack like that. I had a good mind to write him the United States Navy had no intention of attacking Japan; and, fur/thermore, if it ever came to any kind of a show-down between the two navies I had not the least doubt of

its outcome. Then I decided it would be silly to write to him; he was a victim of the dogmatic nationalistic "education," the poison that was being pumped into him, and had no chance of knowing differently. I guess I pity more than dislike him. He sent a snapshot of himself—a good-looking boy, and I imagine he is not a bad fellow generally. Perhaps all he wants is the chance to live and do and be something-like most of us.

II

My father's line winds among the islands off South Japan. His people were mostly of the merchant class, and as such despised before the beginning of modernization in the 1860's. For that reason they probably did not think so much of themselves, but I imagine a record of his ancestry exists—or existed—somewhere, too.

He ran away from home at thirteen, and went to sea as a cabin boy. Later he became the ship's cook, and, it appears, a good one. His independence and wanderlust were infringements on the family tradition, and resulted in his father's disowning him. After nine years of sailing to various ports of the world he reached California. This was in 1900; he was twenty-two. He quit the sea, and started on a short career as a transient agricultural laborer, working in fruits, nuts, and vegetables up and down the State.

In 1904 he struck up a friendship with another Japanese immigrant, the black sheep of a Tokio family...and the two of them joined the United States Navy. They were not American

citizens, although Japanese could yet, though not easily, be naturalized at that time; the Navy was still accepting recruits who were aliens, including a small quota of Orientals.

My father knew very little English, but soon after joining the Navy became chief cook on the gunboat Bennington, which blew up in San Diego Harbor in 1905, Sixty-five men and officers were killed. My father saved several men and came out of the disaster a sort of hero. One of the rescued was a high ranking officer. He praised my father and promised him a citation, but died of burns before anything was done about it. Some of the other men were cited for bravery, but my father's act-due, perhaps, to an oversight or some confusion-never was offically recognized. This made him angry at the Navy. He was transferred to another ship, on which they also made him a cook-I think in the officers' galley; but when his hitch was up, he did not re-enlist.

My father had another claim to fame during his naval service. Owing to his Judo training before he came to America, he was for a time a wrestling champion; whether of the fleet or only of his ship, I am not sure.

Out of the Navy, my father worked for a few years as a fisherman, farm laborer, section hand, and lumber-mill worker. Finally he took a course in a tonsorial college in San Francisco, then proceeded to establish himself as a barber with a shop of his own in one of the communities across the bay./

He chose this particular town because no other Japanese lived there then (he had difficulty in getting along with most of his co-nationals) and, also, because a naval station and naval anchorages were close by. He figured that as an ex-Navy man with a reputation as a wrestler and hero he could get the sailors to patronize his shop. He opened it in a little two-room lean-to building near the Navy landing. At the station he had friends who helped him distribute his business cards and advertising leaflets.

His Japanese friend from Tokio had re-enlisted and, serving on a ship based in San Francisco Bay, also aided him in getting patrons. He showed him a picture of his sister, and told him about her. They engaged a go-between in Tokio to arrange matters,..and in 1913, after he had made a start as a barber, my father returned to Japan to marry.

My mother did not see him, nor even a picture of him, till the day of the wedding; in fact, did not know she was to be married until a week before. She was twenty-one, and a sort of reservist or supernumerary lady-in-waiting to the Empress Dowager. This is a nominal honor for the daughters of the "better" families; she never saw the old Empress.

Although they were married in Japan, my mother entered the United States as a picture bride. This was either the only or the easiest way for her to get in. They remarried in San Francisco, whence he took her across the bay to his barber-shop. He had furnished the other room, in back of the shop, as their living quarters, while the tiny back porch was boarded up and converted into a kitchen.

My mother and her parents were under the impression that my father was a rich business man in California. It was a shock to her to discover that he was only a barber—a low trade; in Japan, I believe, only women are barbers. But she had no way of backing out without upsetting her family in Tokio. Besides, her brother, the American gob, talked to her to the effect that her husband was a man with no inconsiderable future before him: was not his shop full of sailors all the time? He argued that America was not Japan; here a barber was as good as a banker. So my mother resigned herself to the situation.

In 1915 the first baby came: a girl. The eighth and last child arrived in 1932. I was number two, the first son, born in 1917.

III

During and right after the First World War, our family was well-off. The naval station teemed with sailors, and in 1919 or '20 my father was worth something like fifteen or twenty thousand dollars. Also, we had acquired ownership of the little building where we lived and my father had his shop. As Oriental aliens, our parents could not own property in California; so, with the aid of a Japanese lawyer in San Francisco, the deed was made out in the name of my oldest sister.

My father always used to drink and gamble a bit; now suddenly, a year/or so after the war, something hit him and he commenced to devote himself wholeheartedly to liquor, cards and dice, to the frequent exclusion of almost everything else,

and to the general embarrassment and agony of his family. There were great blackjack and crap games on payday at the station and along the water front in town, and a few times my father won considerable sums. Then he felt the compulsion to celebrate, and his shop was closed for days at a stretch.

To the Japanese intemperance is no vice. The trouble is that they are poor drinkers (such, at least, has been my observation), and my father was no exception. In back of his mind, I suspect, was the idea that drinking with the sailors of the United States Navy made him an American, which he could not become officially under the 1906 discriminatory provision of the naturalization law barring Orientals from citizenship. He was a curious mixture of pro-American, anti-Japanese and pro-Japanese sentiments and attitudes; a mixture which changed with the winds and the years. At this time, immediately after the war, he was very pro-American and, by virtue of his association with the bluejackets, if nothing else, considered himself superior to other Japanese in the United States.

The money he had accumulated barbering and gambling during and right after the war soon went. But he continued to drink heavily till about five years ago, when advanced age, spurred on by a serious operation, caused him abruptly to reform. He is now in his sixties, and a teetotaler.

When our family was in comfortable economic circumstances, between my third and sixth years, we used to eat mostly Japanese foods, which, since they were nearly all imported, cost

more-contrary to popular belief-than even the best American foods. These delicacies were ordered in quantities from a Japanese importer in Oakland, Perhaps the only cheap item in the diet was rice, grown in California. In those days, too, my father drank sake, smuggled off Japanese ships entering the bay, which was also expensive. (Personally, I don't see how anyone can drink the stuff; it tastes like ether.)

Then, with the money gone, we settled down to the living standards of other immigrant families around us, Italians and Portuguese, Filipinos and Mexicans; although I believe we always lived a little better than did the majority of Mexicans, with their eternal chile, tortillas, and beans. As we grew poorer, we ate mostly American foods, with increasingly fewer Japanese items. We children gave up chopsticks; our parents continued to use them, even when eating macaroni, hamburgers, or oatmeal.

The room in back of the shop was big enough for my father and mother, but as the children began to arrive the situation became serious. Extra beds had to be installed . . . and now there are three beds in the combined living-room, dining-room, and bedroom. When the population reached peak, nine persons slept in that one room.

Saturday nights pots of water were heated on the little kitchen stove. The big round wooden tubs were brought in from the back yard and filled with/steaming water. Father was first to undress and get in. He soaped and scrubbed

himself for fifteen minutes or more. Then my oldest sister went in with him, and he soaped and scrubbed her; and so on down the line till all of us had bathed. We rinsed ourselves in the other tub and on our final emergence looked like boiled lobsters. Mother was last; she took her bath alone after we were all in bed.

Since the Japanese have no "funny" sex ideas, all of us undressed and bathed and moved naked about the room in full view of one another. My parents, however, are more "Americanized" now; they let the younger children who are still at home take their baths in privacy, behind a curtain which Mother rigs up for the purpose.... Now only six people, my parents and four younger children, inhabit the tiny place; the four oldest of us are away from home....

As for clothing, we all wore Western clothes. The only Japanese articles were the house slippers. None of us has any Japanese costumes, except Mother-her wedding dress, a lovely, if a little faded, kimono decorated with Japanese designs or symbols. My father had a Japanese wedding costume, too, and he threw it into the sea on the trip from Japan, just before reaching San Francisco. He kept the wedding photograph, however, and it hangs on a wall in the room.

There are no other pictures in our home, no Japanese prints or mottoes, and definitely no picture of the Emperor or of the sacred, snow-capped Fujiyama. In his shop, on

the shelf above the stack of towels, behind the gas water heater, my father has a little statue of Buddha./

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Father

and Son

In My early boyhood, when my father had a little too much to drink but not enough for stupor or sleep to overcome him, he often turned mean and sometimes violent. My mother was a type of Japanese beauty, and he was extremely jealous of her. Sometimes he would get it into his head that she must not go out of the house alone, even for a walk around the block or to the store. As a gob, sowing his wild oats in Manila, Honolulu, Panama City and Barbary Coast, he acquired the theory that all white women were bad; now he was determined that his wife must not come in contact with any of them or any of his sailor friends. His jealousy carried him so far that he resented the children getting more attention from her than he did. Even though the marriage had been arranged, he did love her-in a fashion.

No doubt it bothered him, too, that my mother was a higher social class than he, and that he had deceived her parents as to his standing in America. To keep her, he probably felt he must terrorize her; and to do that, he had to drink.

On her side, living in a strange land, in a town with no other Japanese, my mother did the best she could, mostly by obeying him. She is a tiny person, weighing less

than a hundred pounds, but there is something in her one could call strength, discipline, Oriental fatalism, womanly endurance. I don't know what it is; perhaps a mingling of all these qualities.

But to be fair to my father, he also had his nice moods and attitudes, and was capable of great tenderness toward my mother.

II

Up to 1924, when I became seven, I was just one of several children in the house; outside our home, I was just another "foreign" child, an offspring of "that Jap barber." When I began to go to the American public school, I knew almost no English.

The second or third day in my educational career, the teacher came home with me and tried to discuss my language problem with my mother, who could not understand what she wanted. My mother called my father, who was working on a customer in the shop. When he came in, the teacher was seated in a chair, her eyes surveying with anything but approval the tight, crowded scene about her, while my mother and I stood apprehensively near her. The teacher tried to explain to my father what had brought her to the house, but/he, too, had difficulty in understanding her. Finally he nodded a few times and bowed Japanese-like, and she left.

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For some reason, this incident caught my father in a tender spot and touched off in him something that made things

hard for me thereafter.

My oldest sister, also, had known no English when she started school the year before, but had, somehow, gotten by. She was a self-effacing little girl, and I suppose the teachers did not notice her until after she had picked up a bit of English. So now, finishing with his customer, the old man poured himself a tall drink of bootleg and, after a long silence during which he kept looking at me, demanded to know why the school woman had not come with my sister but had had to bring me home. Of what worth was I, anyhow?

My mother coming to my defense only made matters worse. I was no good, he declared, because she sheltered me; and, mocking her upper-class status in Japan, he wondered what one could expect from her kind, anyhow. He drank some more, and tried to talk English, then continued in Japanese, for, as he explained, we were too dumb to understand him in English, which he implied was a superior language. He raved about how humiliating the incident was. That an American teacher should come to his house to complain about the stupidity of his son-and his first son, at that! How would he ever live this down!...Another swig from the gallon....Then, flying into high rage, he kicked me across the floor between the beds.

I mentioned that my father was a conglomerate of conflicting attitudes toward America and Japan. Sober, or when but slightly ossified, he had moments-brief, it is true, and infrequent, but still noticeable-when he spoke derisive-

ly of Japan, the Japanese, and their customs and traditions, and worked himself into a nihilistic mood in which he wavered uncertainly, but very vocally and emphatically, between two worlds, Asia and America. One day years later, when he was in this frame of mind, my second-oldest sister overheard him burst out contemptuously, "Japs, goddamn' Japs!- Japs, goddamn' Japs!-" repeating these words over and over, in English....

Now, however, as I whimpered picking myself up after he had kicked me, his rage turned into sadistic passion, and he seized me. I was a disgrace to the race of Nippon! I was not his son, but only my mother's; and she was of the good-for-nothing upper classes. I was unfit to be his heir. He was a hero, he was; hadn't he saved ever so many Americans in the Bennington disaster? His Japanese blood had made him courageous. I had no manly Japanese virtue of any sort! In an attempt to remedy this lack, he hung me by the feet to the two-by-six rafters that cut the ceiling of the room in half, and whipped me with an old razor strop. I hung there, head down, for five or ten minutes; it seemed ages. My mother could do nothing. Huddling in a corner with the other children, she probably prayed to her ancestors.

This turned out to be the inception of my service as the object of my father's suddenly awakened sadism, which I imagine was mixed up, somehow, with his being a Japanese, an Oriental immigrant in America who was confused and/

ill at ease here; a victim of his own inadequacies, of his

social inferiority in reference to his wife, of his jealousy and other undefined passions, of the looks of his face. I dimly recall that one day sometime before the beginning of this unhappy period I caught him posed before the mirror in his shop, pulling at the skin around his eyes this way and that, as if trying to straighten them, experimenting how he might look as a Caucasian. It may be, too, that the furious anti-Japan propaganda then at its height in this country, and especially the cartoons showing the Japanese as monsters and ogres, had something to do with it all. Years later I heard that some of the gobs at the naval station, who did not like him, gabbed irresponsibly, mostly in a "kidding" way, that he was a spy. This must have played havoc with him, and mixed him up-his loyalties, instincts and attitudes-to the point of occasional near-insanity....At any rate, as he would drink oftener and more heavily, he would pinch my fore-arms with a pair of rusty old pliers to determine if I could take it without whimpering. I lacked the necessary Japanese fortitude; and the louder I yelled, the harder he squeezed.

One day, unable to endure this any longer, my mother ran away with us children; there were four of us then, all still rather young. The poor woman had, somehow, gotten hold of a little money, and we went to Japanese Town in San Francisco. She was going to get a divorce.

But even before she called on the Japanese lawyer whose advertisement she had seen in a Japanese-language paper, the fear of upsetting her kin in Japan with such an action got the best of her. After she saw him, the lawyer communicated with my father, who came to San Francisco. Sober, contrite, he begged his wife for another chance, which she granted him at once, and we all returned home.

He promised not to beat and torture me any more, but was unable to straighten out his feelings about me. In fact, his resentment of me mounted. Now he blamed me for his wife's attempt to divorce him. He never mistreated any of the other children. How to explain this? Probably it had some connection with my being his oldest son. Perhaps some atavism or tradition made him secretly expect great things from me, and those expectations were shattered by the teacher's bringing me home; which, in conjunction with other things in him, caused him to go beserk so far as I was concerned.

III

My uncle stayed in the Navy till he retired in 1924, when he went to live in Japan on his pension...which, incidentally, he still receives. It is considered a large sum by Japanese standards. Now a man past sixty, he is living in style and comfort in a suburb of Tokio....

Before he returned to Japan, however, he came to visit us and my mother told him about the difficulty between my

father and me; and, wifeless and childless, he asked the old man to give me to him in adoption. He said he would take me to Japan, give me his name and a home, and see that I was educated. I would be his son and heir. At first this idea appealed to my father./ He agreed to commit me to his brother-in-law. Good /192 riddance. Then he changed his mind. He never explained his decision, but I suppose he did not want me to have any advantages over the other children.

So I missed being a Japanese by a hairbreadth!

But this incident suggested to my father another idea, which soon became an obsession: he would get rid of me in some other way without affording me any advantage.

With my mother's consent, I was put into what appeared to be an orphanage. I do not recall much about the place; I was just seven, and the episode connected with it is wrapped in a sort of cloud. There was a building all by itself in the country. We youngsters worked in the fields in the daytime and slept in the yard under the stars, waking up mornings under blankets heavy with dew. But not long after I got there one of the children died in the solitary-confinement room of what appeared to be mistreatment and lack of food and water. The county officers came, arrested the people in charge of the home, which was really a scheme to exploit us kids; and we were sent wherever we had come from.

This did not alter my father's determination to get rid of me. I had been at home a few weeks, making myself as inconspicuous as possible, when he returned drunk from a speakeasy one afternoon and instructed my mother to make me presentable as quickly as she could. In a little while, he said, an American,

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whom he had just met again after many years, was coming to look me over with the view to adoption. This man had served with my father in the Navy, and was one of the sailors my father had saved in the Bennington disaster; subsequently he had put in several enlistments in the Army, mostly in the Philippines, where he had lately received his retirement and adopted a Filipino boy, of whom he was exceedingly fond, and for whom he now sought a playmate.

My prospective father was a genial and expansive man. He was also drunk. Boisterously he exclaimed I was just the pal for his little Filipino lad. He would adopt me, a son of the man who had saved his life; we would all go to court tomorrow and make it official. I would have his name; he would be my father. He gave me a silver dollar and sent my father out for more liquor.

The stuff my father brought back laid out both of them by nightfall. When the American woke up the next morning in the same bed with my father, he had a violent headache. Getting up, he emitted a terrific groan, and my oldest sister, who knew English, understood him to say that he thought he had been poisoned. He left the house before my father awakened, not to be heard of since.

When my father came to, he raged again over this new and unmistakable demonstration of my worthlessness and undesirability, but did not touch me.

Finally my mother decided that for my own protection I must be sent away once more. She communicated with the lawyer in San Francisco whom she had seen about the divorce, and asked him to find a good place for me.../and on a lovely California

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spring day in 1925, as I was going on eight, I found myself in a red touring car and on the way somewhere.

It was my first automobile ride, and I would have enjoyed it were it not for my inability to keep tears out of my eyes. I sat alone in the back seat with no idea where I was going, and terribly lonely. The driver, whom the lawyer had hired for the trip, had nothing to say to me.

After a three-hour ride, the car turned off the highway, then passed between two rows of tall eucalypti. My mother had said I was going to a beautiful place, and I knew this was it.

The automobile halted within a few yards of a great crowd of children, most of them wearing the institutional gray-blue uniform. It was the time of the day, near sundown, when the entire two hundred were lining up outside to go into the mess hall. At the sight of me, one of the boys let out a yell, calling attention to me; everybody looked, fell silent, and stared.

Many had never seen an Oriental face, or at least not one belonging to a person as young and small as I. Their stares, which were like one concentrated glare from four hundred eyes, paralyzed me with embarrassment. I could not move. One of the adults, who emerged from this sea of eyes, kept inviting me to come out of the car; then, as I did not move, lifted me out.

I lived at this institution for the next nine years.

IV

The place was for youngsters from broken homes and poor families, delinquents, stepchildren, orphans, illegitimates, and the like. For a while my mother sent, through the lawyer, small amounts of money for my keep; the rest I earned working. She never wrote

to me, because when I entered the Home, as we usually called it, I did not know how to read Japanese (I only spoke it, in a fashion) and she knew no English.

In all the nine years, I was the only child of Japanese parentage in the institution. There were several Negroes, a couple of Indians, and Egyptian, numerous Mexicans, and many orphans with nothing known about their origin, while the rest were mostly native sons and daughters of California with New England, Midwestern and various European and Near Eastern backgrounds. The superintendent called the Home a league of nations ...and after that first myriad-eyed once-over (which was perfectly natural, of course) I had no serious difficulty there owing to my Japanese origin. I was completely accepted, and my long close association with these youngsters may be the main reasons for my own freedom from racial and cultural prejudice.

There was a seven-hundred acre ranch about the Home, with grazing cattle, orchards, vast vegetable fields, and eucalyptus, pepper-tree and scrub-oak groves. We were in a little valley, with broad slopes all about us. Behind the large stucco-administration-and-school building were rows of wooden cottages for the children, teachers, and other employees. Over to one side were the various shops, the laundry, the power plant; a quarter/194 of a mile away, the large cow barn, the garage and field-implementation shed, and the chicken coops.

In a few days, I felt as though I had been there a long time, and began to take part in the activities of the community, which, in spite of the certain obvious and serious but unavoidable limitations of such a place, was humanly agreeable.

The people in charge were sensible on the whole. They maintained discipline, but there was never any hint of cruelty or browbeating. We were considered people. The food was plain but ample. And, all in all, my boyhood there was not bad. Each of us had to work at something but we were never required to work harder or longer than the strength of our years allowed.

Of course, the place could not give that unquestioning love which children need, and in my case it could not overcome the salient fact, which overhung my thoughts and feelings like a vague threat, that I was an orphan although my parents were alive.

There were all kinds of youngsters, including a good number who were tough or bad; and, coming in contact with all of them, I learned-among other things-to fight for my rights as an individual. I had a good many battles, but very few on account of being a Jap. In nine years, I was called this name not more than a dozen times, usually in extreme anger or exasperation, when my antagonist, if I may use that word, had exhausted all his other resources in trying to get at me. I was, as I say, generally accepted; for, regardless of origins, youngsters are naturally democratic when not trained or influenced by their elders to be otherwise. When I was challenged on some point or issue, all I had to do was to prove myself, my ability and worth. The thing to do was stand up and face the situation; whereupon I was all the more O.K.

The beauty of this institution-and, in my gratitude, I can pay it no higher compliment-was that the superintendent and most of his staff made no concerted effort to turn us into angels or goody-goodies. Within certain necessary limits, those of us who

were tough or bad were at least tentatively free to retain and practice those qualities. There was no spying or snitching, or nearly none. There was no consistent active opposition to our fighting things out behind the butts with our fists. We had our gangs or cliques...and after my thirteenth year, or thereabouts, when I had learned English so I used it as any of the other boys, and I had grown a bit and developed my body, I became one of the leaders.

I was hard but small and my reach was short, and I lost fights because the other fellow had longer arms, or was bigger or stronger or a more experienced boxer; but that was not important in our little world. What mattered was that I did not run away from scraps, and that, thanks to my reading vast quantities of adventure magazines, I was full of ideas for adventures, including doings which were tacitly forbidden by the regulations. The fact that I was never caught doing anything I should not have done (which was true also of most of the others of my gang) gave me enormous prestige among the fellows; which, in turn, was of /195 incalculable value to me as a growing boy with my unsatisfying past.

Of course we practiced deception and tricks of all kinds to be able to adventure over the countryside at night while we were supposed to be asleep in our bunks; but this, I am sure had no permanent bad effect upon me-although one or two of my boyhood friends who engaged in these doings with me are now in San Quentin. This may be the fault of their environment before they came to the institution, or to heredity; I don't know.

There were rules in the place which seemed silly to me then, and still do; such as the rule against whistling and ballplaying on Sunday. I believe the superintendent himself did not like them. They were a concession to the religious supervisor, a bitter, frustrated person, of whom he was afraid (my only serious complaint against him). I disliked this supervisor from the beginning and finally became openly antagonistic to him when he tried, fortunately in vain, to start a spy system. One day he called me a heathen and a Jap, which, I suppose, put the finishing touch on my conditioning against organised religion. I have not entered a church of any kind since leaving the institution.

But to continue the list of its good points: sports were generally encouraged, and, off and on, we held various county championships. One boy who played on our ball team and was a minor hero in the place is a major-league rookie this year. Some of the youngsters were trained in raising beef cattle, and they won prizes at both county and State fairs. And our band was considered the best within a radius of seventy miles.

The elementary education was given us on the premises, and two of the five teachers were good. One was very patient with me at first when I still had to learn English, and continued to be helpful and stimulating right along. Those who wished to go on with their education were enrolled in the high school of the nearby town, a community of about ten thousand, and were taken there and brought back daily by bus.

I was quick in my studies, and by 1930 I completed all the schooling the institution had to offer me.

One day the Japanese lawyer in San Francisco who had arranged for my coming to the institution visited me unexpectedly. As soon as he appeared a rumor flew among the boys that he was my father-my Jap father, one of them put it.

The superintendent called me to his office, then left me alone with the man, whom I dimly recalled seeing before when my mother applied for divorce. He began to talk to me in Japanese...and now I made a strange discovery. I did not understand a word he was saying! Learning English, I had forgotten my original language, or else something had happened in me which amounted to that. Perhaps something had pushed what knowledge I had had of Japanese/out of /196 me....At any rate, as the lawyer spoke in my mother tongue, there was just a faint and distant rumble of meaning in me.

I told my visitor that I did not understand him: would he please speak English? For a while, ignoring my request, he persisted in talking Japanese, and I gathered from his manner that he did not believe me. Then, annoyed, he did start to speak in English. Was I ashamed of being Japanese? I said no, I was not; and what business of his was it anyhow? (I was just coming into my tough period. I had but recently established myself as the leader of my first gang.) I was terribly uncomfortable.

He ignored my remark and, gazing at me, expressed his sadness over my shame at being Japanese. I got angry at this and pointed out that if it came down to brass tacks I was not really Japanese at all; I was an American-and what did he think of that? I began to hate his dead-pan Japanese face.

Speaking English with an accent so strong I barely understood

him, the lawyer tried to lecture me. I urged him to can that stuff and demanded to know what had brought him to look me up in the first place.

He gave me his card, explaining he was an emissary from my mother. I began to feel queer all over. The lawyer asked me: would I care to return home? I was numb, and made no reply.

The past few years, particularly since my eleventh year, I had done very little thinking about home. I had been getting more and more adept in ignoring my history. I was busy studying, working in the fields, playing ball, puffing into a saxophone in the band, reading adventure stories, and scheming activities for my gang. Besides, as I have suggested, there was an active undeliberate effort in me to forget things. The cloud of my past drenched me with a miserable feeling only when someone like the religious supervisor called me a Jap.

The lawyer repeated the question: did I wish to go home?-adding it was part of my mother's message to me. The rest of the message, he continued, was to this effect: that my father still drank, but less and less as the years advanced on him, and had thoroughly reformed in other respects. He was good and gentle to my mother and to my brothers and sisters, and was sincerely sorry for all the abuse and injustice he had inflicted upon me. But my mother, the lawyer went on, did not insist on my coming home, nor did my father. If I liked it at this institution, and I wished to go on with my education. I was free to stay and do so. My parents asked me to make my own decision. Again: did I wish to return? He paused for my reply.

I heard myself yell out, No!

The lawyer talked some more. I repeated my answer, even louder. He asked what reason for this decision he should convey to my family. I did not reply. Not that I did not care. I was on the verge of tears, but I could not permit myself to cry in front of this man with the expressionless face; so I was tough and contrary.

Should he say that I wanted to complete my education here? I nodded and/left him. That night I woke up with my face wet. /197 I had been crying in my sleep.

VI

Soon I was back to normal, and I enrolled in high school.

The school had about a thousand students, a little less than half of whom came by buses from the ranches and small hamlets located within fifteen miles of the town. There were a few Chinese American youngsters, and a Hindu or two, but I was the only Japanese American. I mixed fairly easily, although I inclined to be a little shy at the start. The reason for this was not so much racial as that a faint stigma attached to pupils who came from the institution.

By-and-by I regained confidence and became a very active part of the student body. I was on the basketball, tumbling, and swimming teams. My scholastic record was good. I never considered myself anything but an American--except now and then, I must say, when a wave of confusion swept over me, and I did not know what to think or feel about anything. This happened sometimes at night; or in the shower room after a workout in the gym, when my Japanese body was conspicuous among the white bodies; or when some white girl, adolescent and self-conscious, suddenly moved

away from me as though something had bit her.

But this confusion bothered me less and less. In my last year at high school I had friends in town who invited me to their homes. Our relations were entirely natural. I was elected to offices in the Honor Club, the Athletic Club, and the Senior Class.

When I started going to high school, I ceased wearing the institutional uniform and had to buy my own clothes. I was also obliged to earn my own keep. Hard times had hit my family, and my mother could no longer scrape together the little sums she had been sending through the lawyer the first few years. I worked on the institution's farm and picked fruit in summer on near-by ranches. But my total earnings amounted to only about two hundred dollars a year, which was just slightly more than enough to cover my obligations. It left me only about fifteen cents a week for spending money-much less than my friends in town had at their disposal. So I could not keep pace with them and join in all their doings. This bothered me throughout my high-school years.

In 1934 I was graduated among the first four in scholarship. I was not yet eighteen.

I had a talk with the superintendent of the institution. He was very considerate, and suggested I stay there until I decided what I wanted to do next. I owed the place about fifty dollars for board and lodging; so for a while I picked fruit in the valley, then worked as a stonemason's helper in town for a few months.

I wanted to go to college; in fact, my ambition to continue my education was very intense; but how would I finance myself? Should I work at any/thing available for a couple of years, and /198

save every cent possible, till I had, say, eight hundred or a thousand dollars, and then enroll? Or should I take the bull by the horns and try to work my way through college right off?

I decided to do the latter...and early in 1935 I came to San Francisco. I was healthy and full of self-confidence. But I no sooner got to the big town than I encountered difficulties with which I did not know how to deal.

VII

I needed a haircut, and went to a barbershop. The barber glowered at me. What did I want? I told him. Nothin' doin'; get out! In the town I had come from I never had a hint of anything like this, so I asked for an explanation. He sneered and said, We don't cut any Jap's hair here, see? This is an American establishment! I said I was not a Jap, but an American. He said, Aw, go tell it to the marines! I said I was born in this country, right here in California, and that made me an American. To me it don't! he shot back. For a moment I saw red, and I wanted terribly to sail into him. That would have been the thing to do at the Home: here, something told me, it was not.

I walked out, hurt and bewildered. Goddamnit, I was an American, not a Jap!

Then I discovered that the signs Rooms to Let were not addressed to me. The landlady of the fifth house where I applied for lodging took me in. She was an Armenian woman who spoke very little English.

I had arrived in San Francisco with twenty dollars. For two weeks I walked about twelve hours every day. No job -

Off and on, I found a curious comfort in the thought

(accurate enough) that I failed to get employment not merely because I had a Japanese face but also because of the countrywide depression and the recent general strike and other capita-labor troubles which kept industry and business in San Francisco in a state of jitters. I felt a wavering, indirect gratitude to Harry Bridges, whom the newspapers and the big employers blamed loudly for the situation.

Of course I could not live on this consolation, even if I gave up the idea of entering college at once. I had to begin to earn something. I tried to get ordinary labor....Nothin' doin'! ...One labor boss informed me casually, I wouldn't have anything for you even if you was an American.

Walking about, I came upon the rather shabby, rundown district which is Japanese Town in San Francisco. There were Japanese signs over all the stores. I could not read them. Most of the people in the streets were Japanese. They spoke Japanese. Arches, with lights on them, were rigged up over the streets as I supposed they were in the cities in Japan....I felt a stranger, a foreigner.

I entered a barbershop. The barbers were women, and after I got into the chair I was sorry I had gone in. The woman talked to me in Japanese; she knew no English. I indicated with /199 pantomime that I wanted my hair cut only in back and around the sides. She nodded, then talked to her fellow barber, no doubt about me; how strange it was that I did not understand Japanese. I tried not to listen; did not like the sound of the language-but I could not help hearing them, and there was the rumble of meaning in my head, similar to that I had experienced when the

lawyer visited me at the institution; only it was even more remote. Touching a residue of understanding in me, their words made me miserable. And the barber's touch on my neck, as she put the towel about me, sent shivers all through me.

I had felt intensely strong and compact when I arrived in San Francisco; now, in this chair, having my hair cut, I felt as though I were cracking up, falling to pieces, turning soft and weepy. That my father was a barber suddenly loomed up as a tremendous fact. Should I go home? Of course this question had occurred to me before since my arrival in San Francisco, but not as sharply as now.... Should I ever go home again? I did not know.

VIII

Almost desperate, I wrote to the superintendent of the institution I had just left: could he help me? He had told me to let him know how I was getting along. He happened to be coming to San Francisco that week, and when I saw him I told him I was willing to try anything. Through some connection, he got in touch with a Japanese organization conducting a school for Japanese boys, which needed a sports counselor and coach, and-to my immediate and intense discomfort-I got the job. Since the superintendent had gone to so much trouble to find it for me, I could not refuse to take it.

There were over a hundred boys in the school, and the first time I saw them they all looked alike. I really could not tell them apart! And the names were beyond my grasp.... Suffice it to say that I did not make good. I knew my sports, but my lack of knowledge of the Japanese language was a serious matter, from the viewpoint of the school's director and his assistants, all natives of Japan. On my part, I considered the whole staff cheap, smug,