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Jokunaga, [R?]

Longitudinal oral history

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(Kazuhiko Itabashi)

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KAZUHIKO ITABASHI

[In mid-June of 1944, Mr. Kurihara gave me a paper, "Defense of the Nisei", which, he said, had been written by an Issei friend, Mr. Itabashi. (I immediately mailed this paper to Dr. Thomas.) Kurihara said that Mr. Itabashi would probably be willing to talk to me. Mr. Itabashi was 57 years old, frail, but very alert. He was a member of the Seicho no Ie Shinto sect.¹ He had three children, all of whom renounced their citizenship.

Mr. Itabashi lived in the Manzanar section and I first visited him on June 27. We had a long and enjoyable conversation and when I left he asked me to come and discuss any camp matter with him whenever I chose. He also said he would like to prepare a paper for Dr. Thomas on "Issei Feelings Toward Japan in the War." I encouraged him to do this.]

TALK WITH KAZUHIKO ITABASHI

Mr. Itabashi remarked that his daughter was becoming worried typing these things out for him. She was afraid he would be arrested as an agitator. (He also told me that Dr. Opler had wanted him to work for him, but he refused.) Itabashi then asked me if there was any matter which had taken place in camp which he could explain to me. I asked him about the unsuccessful election of May 22.

Non-nomination of Representatives:

That's very simple. Every time the Administration asked the camp residents to elect representatives. The first we sent out, they were all put in the stockade. They [WRA] were denouncing them that they were not representative of camp opinion. So they sent out the next one (Second Negotiating Committee). Then, negotiations were going on. Then the Administration say, 'You don't represent camp opinion either.' They sent them to the stockade again. Then there were no representatives. Then the supervisors in the divisions voted as representatives for the time being until the situation cleared up.

Then in May, the Administration formally requested the camp people to elect representatives. Everybodys' opinion was, 'What's the use?' 'Every time we send a representative, they are arrested. If we make more representatives, they will only put more people in the stockade! Everybody said, 'What the heck! We don't want to send anymore people to the stockade.'

Administrative Policy:

Another impression we received soon after we arrived here. The Administrative policy seems to be to make us fight among ourselves and then control the camp. Of course we admit that there are a handful of fanatic patriots and they think that to fight against the Administration is real patriotic. But that's only a handful of people. They agitate all the time and the simple minded people think they are right. That's the only trouble in the camp all right. Their (the Administration's) first biggest mistake is that they think we're all traitors or criminals.

[1. "Seicho-No-Ie is an internationally renowned humanity-enlightened movement or truth movement founded in Japan by Dr. Masaharu Taniguchi in 1930 through divine revelation, based on the sublime ideal of bringing genuine happiness to all mankind - an ideal of world of happiness, gratitude, and peace - not a mere visionary Utopia but the manifestation here on this earth of a home of infinite unfoldment brimming with abundant life and creation." (Contemporary Religions in Japan, IV, No. 3 (September 1963) pp. 212-229.)

Literally Seicho No Ie means "house of growth". Loosely it may be translated as "The Home of Infinite Wisdom and Abundance."/

If the Administration really wishes to have representatives they can have them. Any trouble that happens in this camp or any other camp always starts by the Administration trying to grab something. Even at the time of the trouble in Manzanar, that trouble was started by the steward, Carter, sending sugar to the nearby towns, in cooperation with a few of the Japanese who were taking care of the kitchen. Then the newspapers said the trouble started when the Japanese celebrated Pearl Harbor.

Co-op:

The information I get from all over say that there are a few of the managers of the Co-op who have a close relationship with the WRA officials. They are getting graft out of the Co-op (both Appointed Personnel and evacuees). The first thing I heard when I came to this camp was, 'If you said anything against the Co-op here you'll be arrested.' As long as the Co-op is carried on this way, some day another big trouble will happen.

Talk with Mr. Provinse, WRA Chief of Community Services:

When Mr. Provinse was here he asked me how to keep the camp in peace. I said that was very simple. There's only one way. Give them fair treatment. The Japanese, when they think they are treated right, they are always so grateful. They are inspired by fairness, especially at a time like this. But when they think they are mistreated, they resist, even if they know they will be crushed if they resist, as the Japanese soldier on the battlefield.

Of course, there are a handful of incorrigible people. I myself am for it that they be sent away. But if I said so in camp, I would be killed.

/Mr. Itabashi gave me a copy of another article he had written, entitled, "Give Us Segregates a Fair Treatment." He told me that he had sent it to Mr. Best, who, he said, had passed it on to Dillon Myer. (It did not occur to me at this time that Mr. Best was probably attempting to get the co-operation and support of responsible and respected men who might assist him in alleviating the prevailing political hostility and apathy.) In any case, I am including Mr. Itabashi's article in his case history, since, I think, it reflects the view of many of the mature residents./

Our First Impression:

Before we segregates left Manzanar, we had been told by the WRA officials there that we would be treated fairly at Tule Lake Segregation Camp according to the international agreements. When we arrived here at the end of February, 1944, however, we found everything contrary to our expectation.

The very first impression we received after our arrival here, was that we were being looked upon as traitors or criminals to be deported. The food was so abominable and scanty, and every one was losing weight (though it was improved recently). (Note: Mr. Itabashi arrived in Tule in the middle of February, when, I have been told, the food had already improved a great deal.) Clothing allowances and financial aids were given us grudgingly after a long delay. When clothing allowance and financial aid were given us, the officials seemed as though they were always looking for some excuses not to give us what we believe were entitled to. When we made protests against what appeared to be unfair, we were often told, "This is a segregation camp and is different from other centers."

Americans in Japan Treated Fairly:

According to the testimonies at Manzanar by the three Americans at three different occasions who returned from Japan on the exchange boat, they were given about the same kind or a little better food in the camp than they used to have outside before the war in Japan, and they never have been pushed around.

Give All of Us Jobs:

Work is absolutely necessary for anyone for both financial reasons and particularly health reasons. American war prisoners in Japan, according to a news reporter, are made to work for a few hours every day for their health and they are paid for it.

There are approximately ten thousand employable persons in this camp, I am informed, and only about five thousand of them are employed at present. I request Administration Officials to increase jobs as soon as possible to employ all the persons who are willing to work. If, however, it is impossible to create jobs soon enough, then let ten thousand people work half a day every day or five thousand people work every other week, excepting the cooks in the mess halls and job supervisors. This is the most important problem to be taken up immediately and solved satisfactorily for the maintenance of the welfare of the camp residents.

Why Does the Project Director Hide Himself?

Needless to say, when one meets a stranger and keep an intimate contact with him, he cannot only avoid misunderstanding between them, but also create a friendly feeling even when unhappy thing happens.

How can one expect to be advised correctly of the camp situation by depending entirely on his subordinate for information when the Director makes an important decision on a camp problem. The necessity of Director's making direct contact with the residents was fully proven at the time of Okamoto incident a few weeks ago. When the news of Okamoto incident spread all over the camp, the tension of the people was so high that anything might have happened at any moment. But when the Director made a sympathetic announcement regarding the incident, the tension was much eased and when he made a sincere speech expressing deep sorrow over the incident at the funeral service, the tension of the people was still more eased, and saved the camp from another fearful commotion.

I have often heard block managers complaining, "We have no way to present to the Director our suggestions and requests; they are always either crushed in the hands of his subordinates or pigeon-holed on the way to him."

My advice to the Director is to show up himself at the block managers' meeting at least once every week and keep direct contact with the representatives of all the residents and exchange views with them. This is the only way to avoid misunderstanding, create friendly feeling, and save the camp from any further trouble.

Abolish Sales Taxes in the Camp:

I cannot see fairness in collecting State Sales Taxes from the camp residents who are deprived of normal livelihood and confined in this camp guarded by the U.S. Army. Are Americans in concentration camps in Japan paying taxes over there? I cannot even imagine such absurdity being practiced over there. Collection of Sales Taxes in the camp should be abolished at once, and the taxes already paid should be refunded to the residents, the payees.

Open the Hospital to Visitors

When one becomes ill in this camp and is sent to the hospital, wife, husband or children are allowed to visit the patient only once a week on Sunday for about ten minutes, and are absolutely not allowed any other time during the week to visit anyone. We cannot understand why such an inhuman attitude is taken on the part of the Hospital and the Administration authorities. Welcome visitors at least one hour every day as is allowed at Manzanar and so not invite indignation of the people which are avoidable if proper steps are taken.

Is This Center Different from Other Centers?:

We are not criminals nor traitors. The first impression we had when we entered this camp was that we were being treated as traitors and criminals. But we Isseis are simply wishing to return to our old homes, the Niseis who were disappointed at the treatment they received from the American public since the war broke out are following broken-heartedly their parents.

There may be some of narrow minded fanatics and growlers so unruly, but the majority of us hope to live in peace and pray there not be any violence and turmoil in the camp until the day of our departure to Japan.

Both America and Japan claim final victory is theirs in this war. No matter how the war may be brought to an end after a bitter and bloody struggle, however, it is certain that neither side can exterminate other nation to the last man; and sooner or later we all shall have to live in peace as our Creator intended to.

The first question we would be asked when we arrive in the old country is, "How were you treated at the segregation camp?" Let us have a sentiment of gratefulness to the Government of the United States for its fairness and decency when we will have to answer the above question. Our answers will have a strong bearing upon the relationship between the two countries when diplomatic connections are re-established after the war. "Give us segregees a fair treatment."



JULY 24, 1944TALK WITH MR. ITABASHI

/Six days after my first talk with Mr. Itabashi, Mr. Noma, the General Manager of the Co-operative Enterprises was murdered. For several weeks after the murder I did not go into the "evacuee section" to interview respondents. Mr. Itabashi was the third respondent on whom I called. He began talking as soon as I entered and I did not interrupt./

Rumor of Dividing Camp into Three Groups:

There is a rumor that the Administration is trying to divide the camp into three groups. Mr. Best asked my opinion about it. He said this camp is too large to be controlled under the same Administration. So I told him, "No matter how big the camp may be, if the policy of the Administration is based upon justice it can be controlled. Even if it is divided into three or a dozen groups, if the Administration plays monkey-business no peace will be established."

Of course, everyone who came to this camp wished to go to Japan. Maybe, some, if Japan loses, say they do not wish to go back, but that would be very few. But of course I wish that the few who answered Yes to that question would leave.

But in the other camps we lived with some extremely pro-American and pro-Japanese people. Then we lived at peace as long as they didn't spy on each other.

Do you know how the Manzanar trouble happened? In Manzanar everyone who entered the camp have known that they couldn't do anything until the war is over. We wish to live in peace till the end of the war. As we see in any community there are always a few self-centered people, trying to make money in the camp, in a fair or unfair way.

I wonder if it's really true that Mr. Pell, the project director of Manzanar cheated 200,000 dollars out of the WRA funds and went to Mexico and was finally arrested. But when the head was like that you can imagine what his subordinates are like.

Then the steward of the camp was cooperating to cheat out the sugar of the camp. There were about a dozen Japanese in the group. That was the first cause of the trouble. They were the so-called inu.

First was a meeting in the center of camp to impeach the WRA officials. Then they demanded to petition the director and went to the Administration building in a big group. A dozen representatives of the mass meeting were in the Administration building and the rest of the people were outside. The representatives requested the people to keep quiet, but, when mass psychology, the soldiers came with guns and tear gas.

That was what really happened. The newspapers said it was the Japanese celebrating the 1st anniversary of Pearl Harbor. That really made the Nisei mad.

/By this time I thought it would not be impolite to ask Mr. Itabashi a few questions about the current disturbed situation in the camp. I asked him what he thought of the new Co-op Board./

New Co-op Board:

The people feel it's better than it used to be. They will have a hard time, though, trying to make the whole camp understand. The Co-op is the biggest source of trouble.

Resignation of Internal Security:

The first trouble was that the camp residents suspected them that they are spies of the Administration. That was the main reason the police couldn't get the cooperation of the residents. And also there were the gambling groups who were protected by the police.

Fanatics:

In this camp no really able man will show his face because so many narrow minded fanatics are in camp that you can't honestly cooperate with these fanatics. Even your safety cannot be guaranteed.

Murder of Noma:

I have not heard a single man say, "I'm sorry he's dead." When Okamoto was shot to death the whole camp closed down all entertainment, even small parties in homes.

Administrative Policy / Informers/:

Anyway, the Administration is trying to make the Japanese in camp fight each other and control (by that means). So far (in the past) when a man was put into the stockade they didn't say why. But now they ask this man in the stockade, "You know so and so? Is he your friend or your enemy?" If he says he's a friend they say, "You better be careful about him." And then when he's sent out they say, "So and so informed that you did this and that."

/I asked about the rumors of rape./

Rumors of Rape

The bothering of girls is just rumor, I think. Of course there is a high possibility that such crime could be committed when living this abnormal life. But a friend of mine tried checking up the rumors. There is no way to prove it that there was any such crime. I think that's a rumor made by the Administration to make people form a police department.

Rumor of Gripsholm:

About four weeks ago there was a rumor rife in camp that the exchange boat was coming. I got a letter from the Spanish Consul on July 12 saying that there wasn't the remotest possibility of an exchange boat. Why does the Administration start rumors like that?

/After the murder of Mr. Noma all the members of the Japanese Internal Security resigned. I asked Mr. Itabashi what chance there was of getting a new police force./

New Internal Security:

I think they'll get an Internal Security but it will take time. So far the police department has been looked upon as Administrative agents. Now we are trying to get the police of this camp - our own police. We elected two officers from each block in ward VIII. We have 10 blocks and 20 police officers will be elected. That way I think we can maintain a police force.

Most of them hate to take the job but if they understand the new system I think we can get police. One man we elected might take the job and the other refused for personal reasons.¹

/1. Some blocks in the center remained unpoliced for six months or more. But every position in ward VIII, the Manzanar section was soon filled, in large part by members of the underground Resegregation Group. (See Thomas and Nishimoto, p. 280.)/

Arrests for Draft Evasion:

If the boys were loyal to this country people think they should be arrested. But if the government tries to conscript those who said, "no", then there will be trouble.

New Project Director:

I wish Mr. Merritt could be project director here. Of course he's an American and he must cooperate with the Federal government, but if he only would try to do what is right, we are satisfied. We realize the conditions here and don't ask too much.

Giri and Election of Representatives:

I asked Mr. Itabashi about giri and was surprised to find that he apparently did not know what it signified in camp. He has a definitely different view of the November difficulties than those people who came here in October. I wonder how far his views are shared by other Manzanites.

Of course there may be several reasons for the failure of the election of representatives. The first group was rather fanatic. The majority of the people didn't support them; they were too extreme.¹ When the Administration requested the second group of representatives, they tried again and very reasonable fair minded people were elected.

They were interned too, same as the first. Then the M. P.'s took over the whole situation.

About a month or so ago, the Administration asked us to send a new representative group. We had a meeting. What's the use? If we send delegates to make our suggestions, they'll be put in the stockade. We don't want to send people into the stockade for our sake.

We are newcomers and are trying to keep aloof from the affairs of the past. Because of what we were informed of the past trouble, some was so extreme that we couldn't cooperate with that.

There is still a handful of agitators. These few agitators think that by making trouble here they're doing good for Japan. That's extremely wrong. The Japanese government wishes us to live in peace until the end of the war.

The majority of the people here don't know the changes and progress that has been made in Japan. In their heads they have the Japan of 40 or 50 years ago. They don't understand the policy of Japan. They don't understand why Japan has to fight.

(Mr. Itabashi asked me if I would buy some paper for him to write the article he intends to prepare for the evacuation and resettlement/study. I did so.)

/1. Mr. Itabashi did not come to Tule Lake until February of 1944 and his statements about the Daihyo Sha Kai are hearsay. (Thomas and Nishimoto (p. 379) give his date of segregation as February, 1943, which is incorrect.)

AUGUST 8, 1944

On August 8, Mr. Itabashi made the following statement about the murder of Mr. Noma.

Of course, Mr. Noma was one of the most hated men in camp. But he wasn't bad enough to be assassinated. I heard that he signed a petition to send the people in the stockade away to Santa Fe.

SEPTEMBER 26, 1944

TALK WITH MR. ITABASHI

/On September 24 the Resegregationists circulated a second petition, accompanied by an explanatory pamphlet, requesting the signatures of "those who truly desire to return to Japan at the first opportunity." The pamphlet stated that the group was preparing a final list of repatriates and expatriates which was to be presented to "both the American and the Japanese governments." (See my fieldnotes for September 21 and also Thomas and Nishimoto, pp. 315-8.)/

The Resegregationist Petition

Mr. Itabashi, though giving less detail, was just as strongly against the petition as Kurihara. He made the following cryptic remark:

It might be premature to say anything about this, but in two, three weeks maybe the whole incident story will be exposed in the Japanese newspaper. The dark side of this whole camp, only a few people know.

I asked what he meant, but Mr. Itabashi changed the subject to the lack of education of the Japanese in America.

The common people don't know. Education in Japan progressed so fast. They are about 100% educated in Japan now. But in this country, I was surprised that the average education (of the Japanese) was very low.

My observation is this. My family is 350 years old in Japan -- clear history. But it wasn't very wealthy. And the unwealthy people came to this country, to make a living, quite young. They were not very well educated.

I was more interested in studying than in making money, but the majority of people were more interested in making money. Money making came first to them. But their children - almost every one graduated from high school and many went to university. The father and mother were ignorant while the children were highly educated. So there was a tendency for the child to be contemptuous of the parents.

/Since mid-August the Resegregationists had emphasized the renunciation of citizenship as an important part of their program. I therefore asked Mr. Itabashi what he thought of renunciation./

Renunciation of Citizenship:

My common sense opinion is this: from the Japanese part, the right of American citizenship is already denied. So it is not necessary for them to make formal declaration of denouncing it.

Japanese Radio Broadcasts:

I asked Mr. Itabashi if the rumor that the Japanese radio was broadcasting orders that the residents of Tule Lake should make no trouble were true.

I have heard no broadcasts like that. Of course the Spanish Consul asked eight questions.

War Situation:

I can't believe Germany will collapse. But even if Germany collapses, I don't think that Russia will declare war on Japan.

Noma Murder Solution:

Mr. Itabashi now said something that no informant has ever said; that he believed that it would not be long before the Noma murderer was caught. He said it was being whispered that the FBI was hot on the murderer's trail and that the murderer had been hired to do the job by some group. The murderer was said to be an ex-convict, because nobody else would do anything like that. The Noma family is also supposed to know more than it is telling, because the family members are afraid.

/In a previous conversation Mr. Itabashi had hinted that some Japanese American at Tule Lake was writing an account of what had "really happened" and was planning to publish it./

More on Newspaper Exposé

It's his intention to save the Tule Lake people. Only a handful of people in camp make all the trouble. And most of the people are against it (trouble). It is going to appear in the newspaper, column by column. But it is not going to appear, until the man who has written it has gone out /left Tule Lake/.

Resegregation Petition:

I asked one man, "Why did you sign the paper?" He said, "So-and-so said so-and-so, so I signed it." They do not have any judgement.

If status quo had been taken honestly, I think 75% of the people would have been gengjyo-daha (anti-status quo). Even the young Kibei didn't know what was behind the scene.

At the block manager's meeting they made a request to raise the clothing allowance and the amount of aid given.

OCTOBER 10, 1944TALK WITH MR. ITABASHI

Called on Mr. Itabashi today, the man who prepared a paper for the study. After paying him some compliments on the paper, I remarked that I had heard that the Manzanar section had had 1,200 new signatures on the repatriation petition.

They may have gotten them here in the Manzanar section. The people here don't know what it was all about. The majority of them signed under intimidation or ignorance.

I was going to tell Mr. Kurihara, 'Don't worry about it. It's not so serious as you think.'

(I hinted that Mr. Kurihara might be in some danger because he was trying to get information about the intentions of the leaders of the Resegregation Group. But Mr. Itabashi said, in a reassuring tone:)

Sasaki was top man opposing this movement. Openly, he said he objects. If Kurihara tried to crawl around in the dark, he might be caught.¹

(I said, "But there are dangerous men in this center. . .")

Even among themselves they are not agreed. The people who signed up say, 'When I go to Japan I don't want to go with this group or that group.'

(I asked if he had heard of Mr. Kira's resignation as block manager.)²

Kira resigned the block managership to take charge of the Resegregation movement. That may be the cause of big trouble. He wishes for himself to be a big shot. I hate that type of man. Of course, if one works on something with a sincere idea, you will respect him, but when he does it for himself, I hate them.

(I said that I thought that there were quite a few honest, sincere people working on the Resegregation movement. Mr. Itabashi agreed, saying 'Especially some of the young people.')

Maybe I told you about a young man I talked to when I was working on Social Welfare. This young man was about 22 or 23 years old and he had been on Terminal Island and his father was interned. In 24 hours he had to evacuate and sacrifice everything he had. He was so indignant at his treatment - so he joined the December incident in Manzanar, because he didn't know what else to do. He was mad at the way the government had treated him.

They brought him here in October. He joined this trouble and was put in the stockade.

/1. At the time Mr. Itabashi made this statement I did not fully understand what he was saying. But because I knew more about the Resegregationist leaders than did he, I was not reassured. Reading his statement today it appears that he was telling me that Mr. Kurihara had nothing to fear if, like Sasaki, he opposed the Resegregationists openly. Indeed, this is what Mr. Itabashi himself proceeded to do.

/2. Mr. Kira's threat to resign his block managership may have been a political ploy. See, the Project Attorney's statement, Fieldnotes, Oct. p. 11, Mr. Robertson's statement, Oct. p. 26, and Mr. Kira's long explanation, Oct. pp. 43-4.

When they brought him to my office, I looked at him. He looked like an honest, nice boy, but he had a very strained expression on his face. After he explained his application, I talked to him about a half hour. I told him, 'I understand how you feel - and in the meantime I appreciate your demand for wrongs to be righted. But don't try to attain your object by violence. You're a young man. Japan's future depends on your shoulders. Your life is too valuable. If you make trouble in camp, it's just like throwing tofu against a stone wall.' I really cried myself at him. He cried too. Then he said, 'I understand. I'll never try again to do any violence.' I told him to study in this camp.

(Mr. Itabashi could not remember this young man's name.)

To make right demands to the government is all right.

Department of Justice:

I don't know. If the Administration plays too much monkey-business, we prefer military rule. The rule is strict but they are honest. In Manzanar they felt that way. The only difference is that we would have soldiers with bayonets hanging around.

Strike Threat:

Did you hear about the stubborn people proposing a strike?¹

I (hopefully) said I had heard only vague rumors. But Mr. Itabashi then said that he had been in bed with a severe cold for two weeks and hadn't heard much. He would tell me no more and said instead:

The majority of people are sick of all this trouble.

Sokoku Kenkyu Seinen-dan:

The Sokoku Kenkyu people don't know Japan. They think they are fighting for Japan's egoistic idea. They still think Japan is fighting for Japan only. When they go back to Japan they will say, 'We did this for the people in camp and we did that.' But the government of Japan doesn't think that way. It wishes for the people in camp just to live in peace and keep their health.

I say to them: 'The Japanese government is not so narrow-minded as you. They are sacrificing material wealth for the people of Asia.'

A lot of people are disgusted at the way they (Resegregation Group) act. They are going out of camp because of it. You know there is a Japanese proverb - Tsuno wo tamete ushi wo korosu. (By trying to straighten the horns of the cow, you kill it.) So - by trying to keep the Japanese in camp here, they are driving the Japanese out of camp.

Just yesterday, a woman and her daughter, 24 years old, came to see me. They had intended to go back to Japan. But after they saw all this kind of trouble they want to leave camp. Her mother came to me yesterday and cried all afternoon.

Resegregation:

Resegregation means nothing when you analyse what they say. My family of five have applied already through the Spanish ambassador to go back to Japan. So what more do we need?

(We then discussed the changes in the Administrative personnel that a change to the Justice Department might bring. Mr. Itabashi was glad to hear that Black was going.)

¹I. Mr. Itabashi was the first of my respondents who indicated that he knew anything about the threats mentioned by Opler and Robertson on October 4.

I think his head is a little muddled. He talked about one hour and the point was only that much. (Here Itabashi indicated about 1/2 inch with thumb and forefinger.)

Even those who signed for resegregation are tired of trouble. They simply think those who want to go back to Japan should live together. If we (men like Itabashi) were given a chance to explain our opinion, they would be convinced again (would swing over). But we are not given the chance to talk.

Some say they have 8,000 signatures, some 6,000, some 4,000. I don't believe 10,000 signed. This time, in the old camp (Tule Lake excluding Manzanar section) nobody signed. Even those who signed in this block, they are ignorant or uneducated. If they are educated they are stubborn and narrow-minded.

OCTOBER 15, 1944

On the night of October 15, five days after I had talked with him, Mr. Itabashi and two other elderly Issei returning from a religious meeting were attacked by a gang of young men and brutally beaten. After he had recovered I wrote to him, asking him to write and tell me when I might call on him. On November 1, I received the following letter.]

Dated Oct. 28, 1944

I thank you very kindly for your letter expressing your sympathy to me. I am alright, and feel as if nothing happened to me now.

The very first word I uttered right after the attack was "Baka." (Baka is a very strong term meaning fool.) I rather feel sorry for those who attacked me because they do not know what they were doing.

Be rest assured that your calling me was not the cause of the attack, and I welcome your coming at any time. However, it might be best for both of us to keep quiet for a while.

Thanking you again for the letter.

Sincerely yours,

(I shall answer this letter and see what happens. I don't want to hold off too long in seeing Mr. Itabashi, providing, of course, that it is safe for him.)

NOVEMBER 9, 1944

TALK WITH MR. ITABASHIStory of Beating

I never thought I had any enemies in camp. For a few days I thought it was a case of mistaken identity.

I was coming home from a religious meeting at block 52 - I heard noisy footsteps. One of my friends was at my side and the other was 15 feet ahead. The first man who was attacked yelled. I turned around and saw that big stick. I can still see the club like a frozen picture but I don't know anything after that.

When I got up I didn't even know I was hit. I felt something dripping. I noticed the blood. I thought I was clubbed.

From the start until today I never felt any pain. I walked right home and the blood stopped bleeding on the way. I went to the shower room and washed myself. I saw that the cut was spread open. The ambulance came and we went to the hospital. They put in four stitches. The most pain I felt was when they put in the four stitches.

After that, for a few days, everybody asked me why and how. I said I think it's mistaken identity. Then one man who hasn't signed for resegregation and is very antagonistic to the segregation group, he spied all over camp why I was hit. He told me the reason I was attacked. I and one other, Mr. Amaya, both of us, didn't sign. The resegregation headquarters said that on account of us the people didn't sign.

I didn't speak against it. Whenever they asked me I just said that I didn't sign it for this reason or that. There are six families in my barrack and only one family signed.

Another thing he spied out for me, about a month before that date I made a lecture at a religious meeting. I said that this camp is no place for young men to make any trouble. They should study. I talked about 45 minutes. What I said there was reported to (Resegregationist) headquarters.

One week after I was attacked the resegregants of Ward VIII had a meeting and Yamashita and Kira made speeches. And Kira spoke first and very aggressively. He said, 'For the greater cause it can't be helped to sacrifice the small cause.¹ Young men, go ahead and do it. I'll take care of you.'

Then Yamashita stood up next and said, 'Our group is not for violence. Our idea is not to do any harm to the non-segregants. This group, (the boys Kira referred to) is not a member of our group.' He said, 'I'm very sorry that the resegregants are taking to violent actions.'

Mr. Itabashi then told me:

Among the resegregants there is one group already against violence, a modest group, and then Kira's violent side.

¹/1. What Mr. Kira said was: "Dai no mushi wo tasukeru niwa; sho no mushi wo korosane kereba naranu." The literal meaning is: "In order to help the large bugs, we must kill the small bugs." Like all such sayings, its implications may be various.

/On October 30, a young man living in block 78 had been knifed. (See Thomas and Nishimoto, p. 319.) I asked Mr. Itabashi about this./

Knifing in Block 78

This boy's father signed the petition but he's very much against Kira. That's why we think he was knifed.

Sentiment Toward War

(In the letter I had written him I had asked Mr. Itabashi if he would care to tell me how the people in camp felt about the war. In answer to this question, he said:)

Every Issei Japanese all blindly believe that Japan will win. So it's out of the question how they feel. Of course the Issei Japanese in other camps might have doubts about the outcome of the war. But the Issei in this camp all believe final victory is theirs.

So, what you call - fence sitters, the Nisei, all don't know why the Japanese war started and how the war future would be. So they might change their mind as the situation changes. But the Issei, I don't think.

Some Issei still have property outside. So they want to dispose of that after the war is over and then go back to Japan. That's why they say they don't want to go back on the first exchange boat.

Those Issei who leave camp for the outside are disgusted at the conditions in camp (Tule Lake.)

Even among the segregants there are many who want to live in peace.

Return to Trouble

When we came from Manzanar last February everybody said we don't want trouble. But when Kira started making trouble, the whole ward VIII got stirred up.

Kurihara says, 'Give him plenty of rope and he'll hang himself up.'

Speaking of Mr. Tachibana, Mr. Itabashi said: He's like Kira too, but not so extreme.

I heard a rumor that the Japanese government said that some Issei in this camp is good for nothing. In the first place, when the Japanese government heard of the trouble the WRA Administration was torturing them.¹ But the officials thought that soon the Japs would be beaten, so we can treat them as we wish.

Of course, my feeling, when we were chased into this camp, the Federal government didn't mean to harm us. But the WRA officials thought that soon the Japs would be beaten, so we can treat them as we wish.

And they treated us that way. In Manzanar, Mr. Nash was so bad that one day he was

/1. Mr. Itabashi may be referring to the rumors of mistreatment of the men confined in the stockade./

nearly beaten. We thought, this isn't the policy of the federal government toward us.¹

When we came to this camp from Manzanar, the food was so terrible for two months. (The food at this time according to many old residents had greatly improved.) We found out that was a trick. They didn't want to send people here. The food in Manzanar was so good while our food here was so poor.

Now when they want the camp residents in Manzanar to leave for the outside they give them the poorest food. They say, 'If you want better food, you go outside.'

War Situation:

Do you think that the American public believes the news they are given about the fighting in the Phillipines and on Formosa? We hear the opposite things from Japan.

The Japanese strategy was actually the same as I guessed. In June the Japanese Salt Lake City newspaper said, 'What's the matter with the Japanese navy?' Then I wrote four pages on the subject of Japanese Pacific strategy as I see it. I said that the big naval battle will be around Formosa and the Phillipines.

What I would like to know is that if the American Navy won the battle as they claim, why are they sending more American forces to Leyte island?

Another thing, the recall of Stillwell and the resignation of the ambassador. The papers say it is only ? . My guess is that Stillwell and the American government advised Chiang Kai Shek to wait until the Navy battle. If they win, America will send its fleet and aid Chiang Kai Shek. After the battle Chiang Kai Shek's expectations were all upset. Then I believe Chiang Kai Shek told Stillwell, 'What's the matter with you? What's your position?'

Election

I'm very sorry that Roosevelt was reelected. I'll never believe they can beat Japan. With Germany still fighting and not by any means beaten they are already talking about what they will do with Germany. And Churchill and Stalin and Roosevelt all have different ideas.

Newspaper Exposé of Hitomi Killing

I asked how this matter was coming along. Mr. Itabashi said that he suspected that the Japanese newspapers probably thought the story too hot to handle. I then asked that since the author did not mind publishing it, would he mind giving me a copy for the study. Mr. Itabashi said he would write and ask him, only he doesn't know his address or his first name. He told me that you can know a man very well in Japanese society and not know his first name.

✓ 1. Many segregants tended to blame seemingly unjust or cruel policies or decisions on the local administrators rather than on the federal government. Indeed, I shared this view for most of the period that I lived in the camps. See "Doing Fieldwork," p. 116./

DECEMBER 14, 1944

/On December 8, Mr. Noyes, the Project Attorney, told me that John Burling, of the Department of Justice, was planning to summon and talk to those leaders of the Resegregation Group who had not renounced their citizenship. On the same day, Mr. Robertson told me that there was a rumor in camp that some of the "agitators" would soon be "picked up". I do not know what was done but I suspect that some of the prominent leaders of the Resegregationists were called in for interviews. /

TALK WITH MR. ITABASHI

Mr. Itabashi was in good health and very high spirits. He could hardly wait to tell me the good news:

I've heard WRA has called in 18 of the Resegregationists. The people first thought they were arrested by the FBI. All of them are pleased, excepting those who are members, of course. They want them to be taken away. Kurihara was most pleased of all.

I then told Mr. Itabashi that I had heard that Mr. Kira had not applied for renunciation of citizenship. Itabashi was amazed, since Kira has been making such a tremendous show of his super-patriotism. He forgot himself far enough to exclaim, *Why, that dirty son-of-a-gun. I thought he renounced it a long long time ago.*

I then asked how the young people who were not Sokoku members were taking the renunciation:

Naturally, the young people should be willing to renounce. But I don't have any contact with them. There are a lot who are not members of the Sokoku. They are willing to renounce anytime (non-Sokoku people). They actually made out applications last summer on blanks given them by the WRA.

People still don't know what the outcome will be. It will take a few weeks to see what the outcome will be.

The members of the Sokoku are narrow-minded. Many of them were sorry after they signed and found out what was inside. But if they cancel their signatures, they're scared. So they can't cancel their signatures, not even if at the same time they didn't want to be one of them.

I understand that Kira and Yamashita have both resigned. /From their positions in the Hoshi-dan. /

Itabashi's Account of how Kurihara Stopped Kira

Itabashi then asked me if I had heard how Kurihara had stopped Kira.¹ I said I had heard some of the details but not all. "Well," said Itabashi, maybe I shouldn't tell you if Kurihara didn't. But, said I, Kurihara is such a modest man that he won't tell me because it would seem like boasting. Itabashi agreed that Kurihara was not likely to tell me the full part he played and so he proceeded to give the following account:

Kira was in Terminal Island before the war and so was Kurihara. So they know each other for a long time and Kurihara knows the personality of Kira and that he is always for himself only.

He knew everything that he did in Manzanar. He knew Kira was a coward. And still he bragged himself. But Kurihara kept quiet as long as Kira didn't do any big wrong. But since Kira's followers had attacked me at night Kurihara was as mad as a bulldog. He came to me immediately the next day and said he's going to either kill him or have him arrested because he knew everything what he did in the past. I told him to be quiet and see what will happen in a month or two.

Then a young boy was slashed. And the fellow who attacked him was one of the men who attacked me.

And then Kira tried to attack Kurihara. He planned it and Kurihara found out. And then Kurihara was kind of alarmed. And one of the Sokoku men, a mean fellow, he and one other went to Kurihara early in the morning. Both went there and stayed there talking until two o'clock in the afternoon. And Kurihara said to them, 'I might be attacked and killed but in the meantime I might kill a couple of you. I dedicate myself to the justice and welfare of the camp. That's the only way we can keep the peace in the camp. When Itabashi and Amaya were attacked, I was ready to punish Kira. But at the request of Itabashi and Amaya, I withheld. But now I am ready.'

And then he told these two men who were representatives of Mr. Kira all that he knew about Kira and his movements. He said, 'You are having as leader such a man as Kira. Do you know about this?' These two men were surprised.

Before this, these two men had said, 'As long as we let you alone you shouldn't mind what happens in camp.' Then Kurihara was madder than ever. 'What!!!' he said. Then he told them all about Mr. Kira.

And that was Thursday or Friday. The next morning Kira resigned, for the reason that his wife had a baby and there was a lot of work to do in the house. And the baby was born about four months ago.

Ever since Kurihara has told all about Kira a lot of people found out what he was. The people didn't know (before) and they worshiped him humbly. But now they've found out that he's a coward and just doing everything for publicity.

/1. In mid-November, Mr. Kurihara and I had good reason to believe that Mr. Kira and his gang might embark on another series of beatings. (See my Fieldnotes for November 9 and 13.) But on November 13 I talked to Mr. Kurihara about this and on November 20, Mr. Kato, who claimed to be a gang leader, told me regretfully "that there wasn't going to be any trouble for some time".

/On the night of October 30, a young man, whose father (it was said) had spoken against the Resegregationists, was attacked with a knife by a man known to be a follower of Mr. Kira. I asked Mr. Itabashi about this./

Slashing Affair of October 30

Everybody was mad that he was given a light sentence. I understood the boy's father is a Sokoku man. He didn't know that the inside of that party was so rotten. Then he found out how rotten the inside was, he was indignant at Kira and was speaking about it openly. That's why his son was attacked, I heard.

/At the end of November, the Abe-Kunitani-Tada faction openly began to oppose the Resegregationists. On December 9, Mr. Kurihara, who also was vigorously opposing the Resegregationists spoke of the "Tada bunch" and told me that Tada "was running the gambling houses" in the Center. On the same day, Mrs. Tsuchikawa referred to Tada's "boys" as "the gamblers". Since I at this time knew very little about this group, I said that I had heard something about the gamblers./

Gamblers :

Mr. Itabashi looked alarmed and said: Everybody knows it's going on, but I don't know anything about it. Even the Japanese police department can't do anything with the gamblers.

Since I was attacked there has been born a new party in the spirit of justice. There are two men who say they will dedicate their lives for the peace of the camp. And especially because these Sokoku people were destroying the peace of the camp by attacking innocent people.

Soon after we were attacked, even among the Sokoku people, there were two parties - one extreme and one mild. Those who were mild were indignant at the radicalism and both were in feud among themselves. A big trouble was looming at that time.

Then another party of justice appeared. That's why these radicals were scared to death.

(Mr. Itabashi gave me the impression that Kurihara has started a unobtrusive organization. The same impression was given me by George Wakida.)

Itabashi - January 5, 1945

JANUARY 5, 1945

On December 6, John Burling, representing the Department of Justice, had arrived at Tule Lake, to open hearings for persons who wished to renounce their citizenship. On December 15, an uproar occurred in block 54 (where the Resegregationist Headquarters were located), during which the head of the executive committee of the Resegregation Group and a member who had been expelled fought each other with sticks. On December 17, the rescission of the orders excluding Japanese Americans from the West Coast took place, and WRA also announced that all relocation projects would be closed within a year. On December 27, seventy prominent members of the two Resegregationist organizations were removed to the detention camp at Santa Fe for internment as "undesirable enemy aliens". (See Thomas and Nishimoto, pp. 332-4, 839.) In my talk with him, Mr. Itabashi referred to some of these events, but his attitude toward them was very serene.

TALK WITH MR. ITABASHI

Internments

The first thing Mr. Itabashi asked me was what happened to the seventy men picked up and who had picked them up. I told him that they had been taken to Santa Fe and that the Department of Justice had "picked them up". He appeared surprised and said that there were rumors that they had been taken to an immigration office on the West Coast. He added:

All I wish is just peace for the camp. Most people are glad that the extremists were taken out. The trouble is, they cause trouble. Otherwise I haven't any enmity against them.

When we came from Manzanar we heard that about twenty men inu were to be killed in this camp.

Return to California

The newspaper says that less than 100 Japanese will return to California. WRA's plan to close the centers will fail. Not half of the people in the relocation centers will leave the camps.

When we entered camp at the beginning of the war I heard that the German people who were interned during the First World War were paid \$1,000 each when they were allowed to leave camp.

They have nothing now to depend on. A job can't be depended on. I feel the WRA plans for closing the camp will be a total failure.

I hear that in Manzanar Center specially the Issei are asking the U.S. government through the Spanish Consul to stay in camp until the close of the war.

I don't know one person who wants to go out. Of course, those who want to go out say nothing about it.

Turn of War in Europe

Mr. Itabashi frankly expressed his satisfaction over the German drive in Belgium. He compared the German push to the tactics of General Yamashita who (he told me) is drawing as many American troops as he can to the Phillipines so as to cut them off eventually from their supply line. Reviewing the present war situation Itabashi said with satisfaction:

We may have to stay in camp until five years, but that's all right.

Exchange Boat

The reason the Japanese gave up the Exchange boat was because American flyers bombed the Japanese exchange ship twelve or fourteen times. The Japanese government got mad and cancelled all talk of exchanging. So unless the American government apologizes for bombing, there's no chance of changing the Japanese government's mind.

Hōshi-dan

Generally, what I've heard is that the trouble started among themselves. It started because Hamaguchi and some others were too radical in their principles. The moderate people in that party were against them and in number they were much more than the radicals.

After that trouble (block 54 fracas) so many withdrew from the Hōshi-dan. Before the trouble only nine families in block 54 were not members. Afterward there were only three families remaining as members.¹

I think even the members of the Hōshi-dan are glad the radicals were picked up. I don't think there will be any trouble about it.

Reverend Kai

I understand Reverend Kai was a Red (Communist) in Japan. He called himself a priest but he really isn't. He was a Red in Japan and was always followed by a detective. He really isn't a priest.²

/In an effort to stop Resegregationist pressure, Burling, the Justice Department representative, issued an open letter to the chairmen of the Hōshi-dan and the Hōkoku. Mimeographed copies of this letter, with a Japanese translation, were posted in all mess halls on January 24. In this letter Burling condemned the activities of Hōkoku members, and of Hōshi-dan elders who "encourage the activities of the young men." On the same day he announced plans for a second internment, and two days later 171 more men were taken out of camp. At five-thirty in the morning, in a spectacular gesture of defiance, Hōkoku bugles were blown loudly, and young members who were not being interned drilled and ordered themselves in ranks facing the fence- As each truck of internees passed, those present shouted, "Banzai!" (Thomas and Nishimoto, p. 356)./

On January 29, the Newell Star printed a statement by Dillon S. Myer, in which Myer said that "those who do not wish to leave the (Tule Lake) center at this time are not required to do so and may continue to live here or at some similar center until January 1, 1946."

/On January 29, Mr. Noyes, the Project Attorney, told me that one of Wakayama's henchmen, Fujizawa, had been appointed as one of the new leaders of the Hōshi-dan./ (See Fieldnotes for more detail.)

/1. This is not correct. In late 1944, 20 to 50 percent of the residents of block 54 were Hōkoku or Hōshi-dan members./

/2. Some members of the Resegregation Groups had also suggested to me that Reverend Kai was a Communist. I suspect that Mr. Itabashi approved of neither the Daihyo Sha Kai nor the Resegregationists. From his point of view, they were "radicals" who disturbed the peace./

JANUARY 30, 1945

TALK WITH KAZUHIKO ITABASHIAttitude Toward Hōkoku

All the moderate people in camp think it is very foolish to make that much noise. It's no use.

The men in ward VI were extreme Hōkoku men. I wonder why Mr. Burling hasn't taken the bugles away from them.

Only a few people misled them. All the young men are innocent. I think only 20 or 30 people started all this trouble. It's terrible to think that the young men have to suffer the result. They have the idea of the Japanese 70 or 80 years ago.

Most people are really glad about the pickups but they don't say so. Most people are glad that those radicals are picked up. But they don't say a word about it.

(I asked why they did not speak, out of sympathy or fear?)

The radicals are still stubborn so we better keep quiet. If they are willing to debate in public whether we should stay quiet or make trouble it would be all right. But if I should say that in public, they'd say, 'Oh, beat him up.' This is especially true now after this last bunch of radicals has been picked up.

Kira used to say right out, 'When I go to Java or the East Indies, will I fool the natives there!'

I bet 80% of the residents are willing to co-operate with the American government, but a handful of men start up trouble and a handful of people just follow them.

Department of Justice Statement

Everyone said - it's a matter of course. Most people think that way. It was a very very poor Japanese translation. I think a Nisei must have translated it. It's like my English.

✓ The people did not resent the sternness of the statement. Only I ask the Department of Justice that they wouldn't make the mistake in deciding who is responsible for the trouble and who's innocent. I hear some very mild men were picked up. Of course, the Department of Justice can't see as we do.

Fujizawa

Fujizawa is a darn fool.¹ He's plain dumb. He's a disgrace to our people.

At least we trust the Department of Justice. They are honest. Under WRA there is so much politics.

/1. See Fieldnotes for January 29, where Mr. Noyes, the Project Attorney tells me that Fujizawa had come forward as a new leader of the Hōkoku. Noyes also told me that he had heard that Fujizawa was one of Wakayama's henchmen./

Statement From Myer Put Out Yesterday /in Newell Star/

I hadn't noticed any statement from Mr. Myer. Nobody but very few are willing to leave the camp. I believe the WRA will fail in trying to get the people out of the other camps too. Every camp I get letters from says that 90% of the camp residents will stay in camp until the end of the war. When we hear of so much anti-Japanese feeling on the West Coast, how can we leave?

Reactions to Exchange News

The people were all pleased to hear about the exchange but they don't believe it at this time. Everybody says, 'We can't believe it until they start.' Naturally, the first day they were all very enthusiastic, but I said, 'I hope so, but we won't take it for too sure yet.'

Gambling Gang

Is the government going to do anything about the gambling gang in camp? It's really ruining our young people here.

(Mr. Itabashi told me that soon he might be working for Social Welfare. It seems they want him so much they are willing to give him a special dispensation and allow him to have three people working in his family.)

Most of the people are determined to stay in camp.

Reasons Why Mr. Itabashi's Sons Are Returning to Japan

My children were born and educated in this country and understand American Democracy. Both boys graduated from drafting school. They did very well in school, as their report cards show. After they finished school, they couldn't get jobs on account of racial discrimination. Other boys, doing poorer in school work - some even got jobs before they finished school. So they were very unhappy about it.

Then my first boy heard that in seamen's life there is less racial feeling. So he went to the Marine school. Before he finished the first year, the war started. And then he was expelled from the school at San Pedro. He was told to enter a camp. He left the boat and on his way to the camp he stopped at Los Angeles one night. He was arrested and put in jail for three days and three nights. Since then he was so indignant at the treatment he received that he said, 'For any reason, I will never fight for America.'

Reaction of More Moderate Hōkoku to Higashi's Letter to Department of Justice

The moderate people in the Hōkoku dan say that the letter Higashi and the other sent to the Department of Justice was too hard and too arrogant. What Higashi asked the Department of Justice does not represent the opinion of the group.

/After this talk, I received a letter from Mr. Itabashi asking me not to visit him for a while./

FEBRUARY 19, 1945

Encounter With Mr. Itabashi

I next made three calls but found nobody at home. On my way out of camp, however, I encountered Mr. Itabashi sauntering along. He explained about his letter, saying that things were pretty bad in the Manzanar section, but the rest of the camp was very quiet. In the Manzanar section the Hōkoku had held a big meeting and the Issei had told the boys that they were certain to be drafted by March if they didn't join. Between 200 to 400 joined. Mr. Itabashi, like everyone else, expects another pick-up on the 24th. The people who were not Hōkoku members, Mr. Itabashi stressed, were very pleased to see them get out, [picked up] although they were not saying so yet.

MARCH 3, 1945

TALK WITH MR. ITABASHI

The fact that there will be another pick-up tomorrow, did not seem to disturb Mr. Itabashi since he asked me to visit him.

If the people who have renounced their citizenship are refused and drafted, there will be trouble.

I heard a rumor that the government is going to try to chase all of the people out of this camp. I said, 'It's a darn fool.' Even in the other camps, most of the Issei will stay.

Most of those who couldn't come to this camp had properties outside or sons in the American Army.

We entered into a discussion on the strength of the Hōkoku. Mr. Itabashi agreed with me that the Hōkoku got stronger for awhile.

The last bunch joined only because the Department of Justice came and all sorts of rumors started. Mr. Itabashi, like Kurihara thinks it would be a good idea to bring back some of the boys from Santa Fe.

I think it will be very difficult to stop the Hōshi-dan. They don't know what to do now. They made a big mistake at the start.

We are glad that the worst element was picked up. But taking out a group that couldn't help it, because those people didn't understand, having been agitated by the original self-advertiser (Wakayama?).

Another Question About Kai and Kuratomi Organizing

Is it true that Kai and Kuratomi are starting another group?

Mr. Itabashi then told me that when he gets to Japan he expects to lecture on America. He feels he knows plenty about the "bad side" of America but would like to find out something about the "good side," particularly the efforts of certain church groups to assist the Japanese. He asked me if I would be able to get him some literature and I promised to do my best. He stated:

Before evacuation I often said, 'American people are people of common sense.' But look what happened!

I just laughed when Myer said the camps must close before the end of 1946. I thought Myer was smarter than that.

A relocation man at Manzanar said that we would be like the Indians if we stayed in camp. I said to him, 'Never mind what will become of us. We are more concerned about ourselves than you are. No matter how long the Japanese stay in camp, we'll never be like the Indians. If you don't believe it, you go back to Washington.'

Hōkoku

Why the Hōkoku-dan got power was because when they started requesting for resegregation they said that the WRA hinted that they would co-operate with the Hōkoku. That's what the Hōkoku people said. They claimed they had an understanding with WRA and even Secretary of the Interior Ickes. That's why even intelligent people were fooled.

Social Difficulties

Even in this block there are a few people who hesitate to speak to me. But I don't pay any attention. I just laugh and in my mind I think, 'What the heck.' A few in this block were taken and they are very sure they will be reunited. They are just misinformed, that's all. One of the worst agitators in this block isn't being picked up this time. His two sons are gone though.

The way we figure is that the Department of Justice knows Fujizawa is one of the worst agitators. So they are purposely leaving him to try to keep the people divided and create another trouble I believe they are trying to make the camp residents fight each other.

Nobody puts faith in what Mr. Best says.

I talked to Kurihara the other day. We talked about how the whole country is against the Japanese. Some (of American people) go so far as to say that both the Issei and Nisei ought to be shipped back to Japan. But still the Federal Government wants to keep as many Japanese as possible. I don't understand why. This anti-Japanese sentiment will become worse and worse as the war drags on.

MARCH 17, 1945TALK WITH KAZUHIKO ITABASHINews of Non-reuniting of Families. /Of interned men/

Most people expected it. It was not resented. The Hōshi-dan people expected to be resegregated. But those outside of the Hōshi-dan felt that those taken to Santa Fe or Bismarck were taken as criminals. So they didn't expect they'll be reunited. This announcement didn't surprise them at all.

When the Army put up the notice of the Hōshi-dan not reuniting, the Hōshi-dan thought it was just a bluff.

Publishing of "regulations"

Well, of course, everybody took it as a matter of course. I hope the police will arrest the leaders.

I was wondering why the Administration didn't put out a notice [to stop Hōkoku long ago]. I rather thought it was a trick to make the camp residents do something which the Administration doesn't wish. The Administration has absolute power over the camp. They have the U.S. Army behind them. They can do anything they please. Why don't they put a stop to it? They simply ask them, 'Please, don't do it.'

Similarity of Camp Psychology

The Japanese think the same in all the camps, especially the Issei. They have the same feelings. Only those in other camps have property or their sons are drafted. That's why they wouldn't come (to Tule Lake).

I don't think anything will happen here in the next two weeks.

Bugle Blowing

I heard a lot of the young kids blowing bugles this morning. But they were not blowing them in Ward VIII. I heard some say to blow them more than ever, but most say, 'It's no use.' The leader behind the scene here in Manzanar told me they wouldn't blow again. That was yesterday evening.

I'm working at the Social Welfare now. There are so many young widows (Hōkoku) coming in for aid. The real responsible people are still left in camp.

(When I told Mr. Itabashi what had happened to Yamashita,¹ he said, He belongs there.)

/1. On February 7, a Department of Justice hearing officer told me that Mr. Yamashita, an important and now interned leader of the Resegregationists, had, immediately on his arrival at Santa Fe, insisted that he and his followers be permitted to perform the taiso (morning exercises). The director of the internment camp had, accordingly, put him on the early morning garbage detail. (See Fieldnotes, for February 7, 1945)/

Mr. Itabashi's Story of How He Talked to Yamashita After he was Beaten

I talked for two hours with Yamashita after I was struck. A few days after I was struck I heard a rumor that those who attacked me were members of the Hōshi-dan. Immediately, I wanted to talk with both Kira and Yamashita, but I had no connection. I had interviewed Yamashita in social welfare when he applied for assistance. I asked the Hōshi-dan representatives in this block to introduce me to both of them on Saturday.

The next morning three representatives came to my place instead of Kira and Yamashita. I told them my opinion on how we should behave in this camp. By making trouble we gain nothing, we only cause suffering of the young people, the women and the children. You Issei want to take the young Nisei with you to Japan and while here, train them so they can be of some use. How can we train them by making unreasonable demands or just agitating them? While we are in camp we should adjust ourselves to this circumstance. I talked about an hour and a half. None of them could answer with one word of protest to my sayings. They just said, Yes, Yes.

A few days after I called on Yamashita myself. I talked two hours with him. I told him, 'I'm going to Japan as you are but your opinion and mine don't meet on how we should behave in this camp. I can't see nothing that we gain by making any trouble here. You say so often about the Japanese Spirit. The Japanese Spirit is to adjust ourselves to circumstances and be patient when we have to. And when the Issei make big trouble - they are about 60 years old and they hardly can't do much bad or good to Japan. But the Nisei are young. If we want them to be good, we must educate them in camp to teach them what the real Japanese spirit is. Japan has a great big mission for the people of Asia, one billion people. If Japan fought for the Japanese only, she might make more profit. But Japan risks everything for the salvation of one billion people. To fulfill this mission they can't make trouble among themselves.'

He said not a word. He simply cavilled at details. I told him I'm not interested in details. He asked me not to say anything about that I had called on him because he himself might be misunderstood in his own group.

I suggested that there was a rumor to the effect that those who attacked me were members of his seinen-dan. He said, 'What?' I said, 'Of course, I don't mean you did it yourself. But as usual, in any group there are always radicals that you don't know. Whether it's true or not, the rumor is that members of your group did that to me.' He said, 'We don't do anything like that.'

Mr. Itabashi now asked me if I knew Reverend Abe. He, like most of the people in camp, seem to think that Abe and Kunitani are up to something.

Yamato Seinen-dan

I heard only that they're trying to organize a group so that those who simply want to go immediately to Japan can belong as members. But they aren't going to take the Hōkoku seinen-dan members unless they repent. But still, Abe himself is working for self-advertising. But I'm not interested in those people.

Reaction When Army Entered Manzanar Center /In December, 1942/

Most people were saying that the Army shouldn't come in. First of all, they thought they (the Army) made very unreasonable demands. Now most people say that Hitomi was innocent. Most people say only the agitators should be taken away. They just laughed at Best's statement in the Newell Star.

APRIL 14, 1945TALK WITH KAZUHIKO ITABASHIRelocation

I seldom have a conversation these days in which my friends do not initiate a discussion of relocation - how it is going to fail and express sympathy for the people in the other centers. Itabashi was no exception.

A friend wrote from Los Angeles to Manzanar, telling about 32 Japanese living in the Boyle Heights district. (Itabashi told me they were living in a certain Catholic school building on Boyle and Whittier with which I am well acquainted.¹) He said that out of the 32 there are only two who have not gotten stoned or slapped while living there.

Of course Myer can make some of the centers close, perhaps four or five, but he can't push them all out.

Hōkoku

I hear that the Hōkoku split on WRA's proposition to stop blowing bugles for one month. The Ward VIII and I complied to the request and stopped blowing. The rest of them keep on. Because if they stop blowing bugles they will lose face in front of the boys who have already gone to Santa Fe.

Kira's Wife

Kira's wife went to Chicago to divorce her husband and get a job as a Japanese language school teacher. She didn't tell anybody in camp here, but that's what she did.

Is it true that Kira has been sent to prison for ten years?

Riot in Santa Fe

I heard the riot in Santa Fe started when the Santa Fe people from Hawaii found out that Kira was the brother of one of the big government inu in Hawaii.

Hōkoku

I don't think they'll stop bugling. The Hōshi-dan and Hōkoku-dan are abnormal people. We can't judge them from our common sense.

You know why they want to go to Santa Fe and Bismarck? They think if they are sent to Santa Fe they are sure they won't be drafted and they are sure they'll go back to Japan.

(I commented on how foolish this was, since there appeared to be almost no chance that the young men from Tule Lake would be drafted.)

The people say, 'We can't trust the American government. Their laws or courts, we can't trust.'

We Japanese understand that whatever happens in camp the director will try to solve the problem in favor of the government. But we know the government wants to treat us fairly and that's what we want - only fairness.

/1. I lived in Los Angeles about fourteen years.

Welfare Difficulties

Only a couple of weeks ago, Bagley tried not to give financial aid to a family where they had stopped working. The way it is, for a single man after they stop working, they don't give financial aid for two months because the government believes he should have saved enough to support himself. On 16 dollars!! But for a man with a family, they don't give financial aid for a month. Bagley tried to keep a man with a family and children for two months. The whole social welfare got mad! (Bagley had to give way on this issue.)

Best and Myer

The camp people say that Best used to be a gardener for Mr. Myer.

President's Death

Mr. Itabashi then asked me very confidentially if I thought the circumstances of Roosevelt's death were entirely above suspicion. I said I didn't know. He then said that the people were saying that he must have been poisoned.

While he had been talking a baseball game was started on the field just opposite Itabashi's barrack. He asked me if I would mind going around the back of his house because of all the people out there. Wonder how long it will take in Tule Lake, until this fear of being thought an inu dies down?