

## THE STORY OF MY LIFE

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By Shotaro Hikida  
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### INTRODUCTION

A task of writing an autobiography by any individual is considered to be a difficult one and it is no exception in the case of my own life story. In fact, I consider that it is doubly difficult in writing the story of my own life for the simple reason that to date I lived in two entirely different environments, having lived in a typical oriental village of Japan until I became 16 years old, and then adapting the life of occident and living in America more than twenty five years. Looking back my past life's history I often thought of my life in terms of some plants such as cherry trees being transplanted from the soil of a little island country to the soil of continental America. As such plants always go through a process of an error and trial before they can grow normally in different soil and climate, my past life somewhat had been similar to that of error and trial before I finally became adopted to the life of the occident. I often wondered myself that if I did not come to America to live, then what would have happened to me. Did I live in little village of Japan and ended my life as a typical Japanese farmer or businessman whatever case may have been according to the circumstances, without knowing a thing about America and Occidental civilization. These questions from time to time occupied my mind in the form of imagination and, at the same time, I could not help but be thankful for the opportunity which I had, coming to this country and being able to know more about greater world. These experiences of my past life, though interesting, make my autobiography rather a complicated story of my life.

### MY FAMILY LINEAGE

I was born as second son of Minokichi Hikida (father) and Kiku Hikida (mother) on January 28, 1899, in a little village called ISODA MURA, situated on the eastern side of famous Biwa Lake and not far from a little town of HIKONE in the prefecture of SHIGA. In tracing back my family lineage or ancestry, as far as I can remember or recollect, through the occasional conversation of my mother and grandmother

in my childhood ages, we are the descendents of Samurai. The original Hikida, perhaps, three to four generations ago, served as Samurai under Ii Kamon No Kami, a lord of Hikone Castle. When my grandfather, Hansuke Hikida, being a third son, branched out from original family line and established a home of his own, giving up the title of Samurai or Shizoku, and became Heimin or common people. My mother, Kiki, was the only child of Hansuke Hikida (grandfather and Ito (grandmother) and as it was the common practice of Japanese family organization, my father, Minokichi Hikida was adapted as YOOSHI. He was fourth son of Shinpei Hikida of same village. In other words, on my father's side, the family is also the descendents of original Hikida family. My grandfather, on mother's side, was owner of fish market, while my grandfather, in my father's side, was a farmer. My father, Minokichi Hikida, at the age of 30, came to America as an immigrant while my grandfather, grandmother, mother, and my only brother, Shintaro, and myself remained home. The year in which my father came to America is 1890, and I was only one year old.

#### MY CHILDHOOD AGE

At the age of 6, I first entered elementary school, called Isoda Sho Gakko, which was situated about two miles from our home in our village. While it is rather difficult to recollect some of the memories and incidents which took place in my childhood ages, some of them which stand out still in my memory are: first, death of my grandfather, Hansuke Hikida, when I was 5 years old. Second, Russo-Japanese War of 1904 and 1905; third, my first possession of watch which was sent from my father in America and occasional receipts of rare presents such as shoes, raisins, and etc. Fourth, days we spent on the beach of Biwa Lake which was only a short distance of less than a block from our home and many other plays such as chasing fireflies, catching grasshoppers in summertime, as well as making Yuki Daruma, a snow doll, and throwing the snow balls. Thanks to the nearer location of our home to the lake and mountains and rivers, added with heavy snow falls in the winter, I was so able to enjoy my childhood days with the nature of the land and sea. The ethical teaching which I and my brother received from my mother and my grandmother

is one which I never can forget and which I am always thankful of. My father being abroad, my mother and my grandmother always stressed upon us of our behavior. They always told us that our father is in America and while he is absent the burden of responsibility in care of the children is in their hands and they do not want that any one of us to be criticized by others. Mother and grandmother were constant watch of our behavior. To a certain extent, I realize at this age, I am so much influenced by such careful attitude of them that I also am too careful about ethics of the children, regardless of the advisability of being too attentive and careful. Since my father left us when I was only one year old, my desire to join my father was extremely strong in my younger days and this desire became added incentive of my desire to acquire western civilization. I was often told many interesting stories about America by those who returned from America, the living conditions, habits, and customs of that people.

At the end of regular six years, I was graduated from Isoda Elementary School and following month I entered HIKONE Middle School. The study of wider field of subjects such as English and history of foreign countries undoubtedly broadened my view of the world, and the deeper I studied the subjects on occidental civilization the stronger my desire became toward fulfilling my vision of new land. When I was 16 years old and at the finish of the winter semester of the 4th grade of that school, I was notified from my father to prepare the journey to America. It was a great joy for I have longed years and years to go to America and join my father and pursue the study of western civilization. But, on the other hand, when I finally made up my mind to take the Chiyo Maru from Yokohama on April 4, I was struck with extreme feeling of sadness in separating myself with my mother and my grandmother whose love to me was so noble and pure. Again and again I asked myself whether such separation is possible for I felt as if I were pulled back by a mysterious power. Though I had a burning desire to go to America I humbly asked for their advice and both of them not only stopped my ambition but they encouraged me to go ahead with my plan and become a real man. For I was 16 years old, and I

was still a young boy, mother arranged for me to journey with a man who also planned to take the same ship to America. March 28th is a day which will remain throughout my life as a day of my memory, being my first step to new life and saddest day of my life in the sense that it was a day when I left my mother and my grandmother for a long journey from which I will not be able to return soon and be a life-long parting. All the preparations and arrangements for my journey to America were completed and as it is Japanese custom, mother took me to a shrine to offer my prayer for future success of my life in the land of strange country. On the day of my departure for America, relatives and friends all came to our home and helped me as well as to bid me a goodbye. Friends and relatives accompanied me to the station which was located about 4 miles from our village and gave me a fine send-off. On the following day, I arrived in Yokohama and stayed there three days during which physical examination and passport inspections were made. On April 4, aboard the S. S. Chiyo Maru, I left Japan for a long expected yet somewhat fearful voyage to America. After 21 days of voyage, I finally landed at San Francisco and there I was met by my father the first time in my life. My first meeting with my father was a peculiar one for it was with a sense of shyness rather than a joy. The day which I arrived was April 24, 1915, and that time in San Francisco there was the Panama International Exposition to which my father took me for two complete days. Although I was a young man of 16 years, I had an opportunity of observing the representations of western civilization through many exhibits and I was greatly impressed with progress achieved by human races. After a few days stay in San Francisco, father took me to Fresno where he farmed a little vineyard and there I met my brother who came to America one year prior to my departure.

#### MY EDUCATIONAL CAREER IN THE UNITED STATES

For my primary objective in coming to America was to study the western civilization, my first concern was selection of school which I wished to attend, and then arrangement for my stay in a dormitory from which I might go to school. Thanks to my father's pre-arrangement on these matters, I was able to start my

study in Lincoln Elementary School of Fresno in a few days, enrolling in the special English class in charge of a teacher whose name was Miss Rippe. The class was composed of young foreigners who just arrived in the United States and who needed special teaching in English as beginners. The class was more of international in nature having students of all nationalities, such as Chinese, Russian, German, Filipinos, Italian, and Japanese. The largest number of students of one nationality was Japanese and it was due largely to the fact that during this period a large number of relatives of immigrants were admitted to the United States under the so-called Gentlemen's Agreement. For more than a year, I attended this class and when I acquired a fairly good knowledge of English, then I was promoted to the 7th grade. While I was attending this special class I had an opportunity of knowing the students from other foreign countries and through my associations with them I began to understand people of other countries. Once I became friend of these people I was so impressed in my mind that no matter what race one belongs to if individuals of different races can understand each other, mentally and spiritually, after all, we are the same human being. After more than twenty seven years, as I write this autobiography, I feel so grateful that I had such fine opportunity to mix with young people of other lands, especially when I first came to America, and particularly when my ideas and thoughts were in an early stage of making and forming rather than at the stage of complete maturity.

As I have written in my previous report, it was common practice of Japanese students to secure a job as so-called SCHOOL BOY. The usual arrangement was to stay in American family as house boy doing such work as washing dishes and cleaning house before and after school hours. They were paid between three to four dollars a month besides board and room. The primary purpose of this was to get acquainted with American custom and habit. The securing the job of this kind was usually arranged through the intermediary of Japanese Christian churches which opened part of their church building as a dormitory for young Japanese students of recent arrival to America. It appeared to me that my father, prior to my arrival to this

country, had already arranged for me to stay in a dormitory of the Japanese Congregational Church in Fresno. Upon my moving into this dormitory from my father's little ranch near Fresno, I was heartily welcomed by Reverend Tsuji, a pastor of the church and student roomers of the dormitory. After staying more than three months, I was sent to one of the American families as a school boy and thereafter I went to school from the family where I worked as house boy or school boy. During these years of 1915 to 1920, Japanese school boys of recent arrivals with little knowledge of English language were very popular in American families, and as I recollect, once there were more than thirty of them employed in American families in the city of Fresno. How eager these Japanese young men were in securing a part time job as school boy can be exemplified by one of my friends who called on American homes door to door asking if they are in need of a school boy. He, as being a recent arrival from Japan, hardly could speak English, so he told me that he knocked each door saying that "Do you have school boy mouth." The literal translation of MOUTH in Japanese is KUCHI which sometimes means a job. Whether his English was understood or not was never known, but after canvassing for four days he finally landed a job and he stayed with that job for five years in the same place as a school boy. These school boys spent their spare time in study of the English and in evening they all attended night school which was opened in the Japanese Congregational Church. As I have mentioned previously the church and school and American homes were three integral parts of their early life in America and I was one of those who benefitted so much from these three sources for my early training in the United States. From church I received a teaching of Christianity and, in 1918, I was baptized. From school which I attended in Fresno I received my preliminary education from which I later continued my study in high school and university. From American family where I worked as a school boy I received training in the art of making an ideal American home. From my first year in an American school to the year of my graduation from Fresno High School I worked as a school boy and worked in farms as a farm laborer, in hospital as a dishwasher,

in fruit stands as sales clerk, in cannery as canners during every summer vacation and earned enough money to sustain my year's expense in attending school.

During my three years of study in elementary school I have concentrated my time and effort in study of the English language rather than other subjects such as arithmetic or history for such subjects were already taken up in elementary and middle schools in Japan. Study of different subjects in school first came to my attention when I was second year in high school. From this time a real application of my acquired English in study of other subjects began to function normally although I had continued difficulties in oral English expressing my thought as well as hearing and digesting the lectures delivered by the teachers.

When one enters high school he must have fair knowledge of his interest as to his life's occupation or his vocational preference, thus he must choose the course of his study accordingly. When I entered high school I had some concern of vocational problem. To me it was much more serious problem than ordinary American students for our vocational field was so limited. From the time of my departure for America my life's objective was to devote myself for better relationship of America and Japan through whatever line of occupation I may follow. I had special interest in study of foreign trade, particularly in connection with trade between America and Japan. Being internationally inclined, so to speak without modesty, I decided to pursue the study in foreign trade and, therefore, I have followed the study in this line, both in high school and university. Of course, my interest was not limited only to this subject but I also had keen interest in social and educational work and, accordingly, I took such courses as sociology and psychology.

We have been often told by our teachers and read in our books that real education of men both in high school and university is not accomplished only through books and lectures in class rooms but real education should be accomplished by the influence of the personality of the teachers. Realizing the importance of this phase of our activity in schools and university, through personal contact with teachers and faculties, I was always in search of it both in high school and university. It is my extreme regret that contrary to my desire and efforts, while

I was in high school and university, I could not accomplish it. The failure of it can be explained in two ways; first, while I was in high school my personal contact with teachers was so limited because of language handicap; second, the university which I attended was so large with more than ten thousand students enrolled and, under such condition, I was not able to establish contact with professors as I would have been able to at smaller colleges. The personal influence which I received from two of my teachers in Fresno High School during my attendance for four years should not be overlooked. One is Major Leymel, who was the teacher in history and instructor in R.O.T.C. While I was a student of his class and while I was one of his R.O.T.C. cadets, I was direct influence of his character which stood out as courageous and of strong will power and righteousness. Miss Bernard who was our English teacher and class advisor certainly influenced my thought with her fine qualification as a leader, her kindness and motherly love to her pupils shall not be forgotten by us.

It was June, 1922, that I was graduated from Fresno High School with recommendation to enter the University of California. To enter the University was a greatest adventure of my life when I considered my own situation. I had no definite plan of raising tuition and other expenses to carry on my four years' study. With economical depression of all the farmers in those days there was no indication whatsoever that my father would be able to help me. As a result of it, my outlook was very dark. Those who came to America about the same time and who attended schools with me have given up their study and worked in different lines of employment. In spite of all these hardships, should I continue my study or should I give it up and follow the same footsteps of my friends in pursuit of work, was a puzzling question which I had to solve myself. There was a Japanese pastor in the Congregational Church by the name of Kumazo Fukushima from whom I received a great deal of influence in religious teaching and by whom I was baptized as Christian. He advised me to go ahead with my study, no matter how hard it may be, for ultimate victory is not the money but the education which one can have and with that education a man really can contribute toward civilization of mankind. My mother who came to America,

a few years prior to the time of my graduation from high school, also encouraged me to continue my study in the university. After serious consideration, I made up my mind to continue my study and enrolled in Fresno State College instead of the University of California in order that I might be able to save little expense in several ways. At the end of one year, my financial crisis reached its peak. During that one year I often had to content myself with two meals a day of little cost such as noodles at one time and doughnuts and coffee at another time. In June of 1923, I became so handicapped financially that, as a result, I decided to take leave of absence for a period of one year during which I might work and save enough money to finish three years of my study in the University of California. It was fortunate enough that I was able to secure a job without much difficulty in the Japanese newspaper as a reporter and business-manager, temporarily. Through negotiation with the head office of that paper in San Francisco, I was given all-around representative of that paper in Fresno, with a salary of \$125 a month. In other words, I had to deliver the paper in early morning and look after the business in daytime and write a story in the evening. It was the busiest experience I ever had in my life. As this job was given to me for a period of six months, at the end of that period, I was offered a job of tutor in one of the Japanese homes in Watsonville. On February of the year 1924 I left Fresno for Watsonville and took up that position on the 13th of the same month with the agreement that I will work there only six months. The home for which I worked as tutor was that of Mr. Umasaburo Matsuda whose wife just had passed away leaving seven children. It was my duty to look after these children as well as to teach them English and Japanese language. It was not very pleasant job for a young man of my age then. In completion of my six months' work as tutor, I left Watsonville on August 13 of that year, and came to Berkeley where I enrolled as a sophomore student at the University of California.

#### MY THREE YEARS IN UNIVERSITY

My three years in the University was more struggle than ever before. It was a struggle of financing in one way and a struggle of study in another. As mentioned

in a previous paragraph, the tuition and other expense in the University of California was comparatively high, particularly being an alien student and due to language difficulty, that is orally, it was very difficult for me to take notes of lectures. In spite of these difficulties, I am so happy that I was able to complete my course of study in foreign trade in the regular three years. While in the University I participated in student activities such as serving on cabinet of Student Y.M.C.A.; organizing and acting as first president of Japanese American Friendship Society of University students; acting as superintendent of Japanese M. E. Sunday School and officer of Japanese Students Club of University of California. During these three years, while University was not in session, in summertime as well as in wintertime, I have worked in stores as salesman or worked on ranch as farm laborer, through which I was able to raise a sum of money for my tuition which I was very much in need of. Of all these difficulties, one which caused almost complete mental destruction was the death of my mother on November 16, 1926 and a major operation of my father in the same year. Such misfortunes in my family in that year of 1926 certainly upset my educational plan and once I almost gave up the continuation of my study but, thanks to the encouragement and sacrifice of my only brother, I again was able to resume my study. In May of 1927 I was graduated from the University of California with a degree of bachelor of science, majoring in foreign trade of College of Commerce. Upon graduation I did not feel that such graduation from college and university is a completion of my educational career. I often thought that a completion of college education is making a foundation for further study and one should never cease to continue his educational program of his future.

#### MY FIRST JOB AND TRIP TO PERU, SOUTH AMERICA

To secure a position after graduation from colleges and universities had been one of the most difficult problems which Japanese students had to meet in these days. Out of more than twenty five <sup>Japanese</sup> students who graduated from the University of California on May 1927, there was no one who was promised a position in any line of work upon their graduation. I do not know whether it was fortunate or unfortunate,

but six months prior to my graduation from the University, I had been offered a job by one of the Japanese importing and exporting firms in Lima, Peru. Such arrangement was made through the courtesy of our friend, Mr. Kametaro Mrishita, of San Francisco who was a representative of the Shizuoka Tea Company of Japan and who was a friend of owner of the said South American firm. In these years, a trade between South America and the United States as well as Japan was regarded to be growing trade. Because of this general view, I accepted that position and upon graduation, I was only awaiting the instruction from the said firm in South America. Accordance with our preliminary agreement, the said firm wired me to depart immediately upon my graduation from the University. With all the preparations and arrangements made, I finally left Los Angeles for Lima, Peru, on June 17, aboard the steamship "BOKUYO MARU". After more than twenty-one days of voyage along the central and South American coast, finally reached a port called Callao from where I went to Lima. Few days later I reported for duty and I was assigned to the cable department of the firm. The company was engaged in import of silk goods from Japan and export of Peruvian cotton and wool to Japan. There were more than one hundred personnel employed for both wholesale and retail department of that firm.

Everything went on smoothly for a few months and I was beginning to like my new job as well as life in Lima, but toward the end of November, 1927, the manager of the said Kitsutani Company had been stricken with malaria, and on the following month, his life came to an end. Since the death of the manager, it appeared as if there were uneasy situation existing in the daily function of the company's business. The said Kitsutani Company, aside from their importing and exporting business, carried banking business with Japanese immigrants. Day after day, Japanese depositors came to the banking department of the said company and withdrawals had been made. While I was in charge of cable department, appeal had been wired to Japan time and again. This condition continued for more than two months during which period further withdrawals of the deposit had been refused through personal negotiations with Japanese depositors. In the early part of

February, the company officially closed its doors and more than a hundred employees had been thrown out of jobs. I was one of those unfortunates. While I was in Lima, working in this company, I lived in the same house with Mr. Kitsutani, the owner of the firm and thereby I was in close contact with him. During the period of this hardship, Mr. Kutsutani often told me the condition of his company and his difficult position. When the company closed its doors he was criticized severely by the Japanese depositors and creditors for possible hiding of the wealth. He confessed before a group of employees one time that he could not withstand such criticism and he wanted to end his life to show that he was not such a kind of man. There have been several meetings of creditors and pressure had been put on Mr. Kitsutani to show that no illegal method had been employed in his company's bankruptcy proceeding. He often confessed that he was the victim of two other partners who left for Japan a few years prior to the fall of this company and told us that some day he is going to show how clear he was as far as his stand and position in connection with the bankruptcy of the company. It was early morning of one late February, he was found in his own library room, his life ended by the stab of a knife in his throat. Several notes were left for his families who lived in Japan. His death was greatly mourned by not only his friends but by all the Japanese in Lima as well as native Peruvians for he was active in civic and community affairs and considered to be an outstanding leader of the community. On the day of his funeral, President Leguia of Peru sent his secretary to pay the tribute to this late Japanese businessman and leader of Japanese community and on that day all Lima people mourned, the Peruvian national flag above the federal building was waving sadly at the half mast. It was the saddest experience I ever had in my life. It was only a period of less than seven to eight months during which I had witnessed the most tragic picture of businessman's life who once was regarded as SILK KING of South America.

After the death of Mr. Kutsutana, whether I shall continue to remain in South America, looking for another job, or go back to America, was my immediate problem. Many of my friends there persuaded me to stay there, but since there was

no attractive position and my father requested me to return to California, I took Rakuyo Maru on March, 1928, and arrived in Los Angeles in the early part of April. Thus my ambition as a future businessman of South America came to an end. I regret very much that my first step in business life was a complete failure, but on the other hand, I am thankful of the opportunity which I had in seeing South America and witnessing and experiencing the tragic life of the business concern and its owner, from which I was able to gain many valuable lessons.

When I returned to California the immediate concern was the question of finding a job which was still considered to be a difficult task by any Japanese young man in those days. For a period of two months I contacted several importers and exporters, and such organizations as the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Japanese Association of America which often acted as intermediary between prospective employers and employees. I also called upon our former professor, Dr. Henry Grady, who then was director of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce in charge of Foreign Trade Department. My effort in looking for a job was in vain and no longer could I wait for the opening without doing any work. Then, a certain publishing company called Lincoln Library was looking for a Japanese salesman for solicitation of their published books among Japanese people. Realizing the need of some way to support myself until I could secure a permanent job, I applied for it and upon approval I began calling on all the Japanese in northern California. I continued this work until January of 1929, during which time I sold more than three hundred values of books and earned sufficient funds to support myself for the next one year. The experience which I gained through this work as a salesman was more to me than what I received in terms of money. Moreover, the acquaintances which I made through this campaign with the people of different localities was another valuable return which I was able to accomplish.

It was the first part of February, 1929, that I was offered a position of secretaryship of the Japanese Association of Stockton, California. The work of the Japanese Association secretary is classed as highly respectable position, taking

certain responsibility of the general welfare of the community. He is regarded to be a leader of that community. Its work is more of social and educational type among Japanese people. Since the nature of the work of the association and line of the study which I followed in the university differ so much that, at first, I was not so confident as to my qualification for that position. After serious consideration I accepted the offer with a hope that I might be able to serve the people as well as to lead the people and community toward better American campaign, and also to promote better and friendly relations between the Americans and Japanese. On February 20 I took up this position, the executive secretary.

During five years and six months when I acted as secretary of this organization, I was very happy to realize that many things had been accomplished for the community as a whole. Out of those, the following are the noteworthy achievements: 1, cooperative farm marketing; 2, organization of various lines of business into cooperatives such as hotel owners, dry cleaners; 3, cooperation of Japanese community toward civic and state and federal agency; 4, establishment of better relationship between American and Japanese in that city; 5, social education of Japanese people through lectures and publications.

While I was serving as secretary and living in Stockton, the greatest achievement was made as far as my own life's story is concerned. They are to be remembered by following generations of my family as a history of the family for years and years to follow. On September, 1930, I was married with Sadako Fujii, eldest daughter of Yonekichi Fujii (father) and Nui Fujii (mother) of Walnut Grove, California. Sadako was born in Sacramento in 1908, and at the age of four, she was sent to Japan where she was raised under the care of her grandmother. After graduating from Yanai Girls High School, she returned to California and reunited with her parent and her only sister, Ayako Fujii. On July 7th, 1931, a daughter, Eleanor Yoko, was born to us and on October 7, 1933, second daughter, Keiko was born. From the day of our marriage until this day the family has been so fortunate not having any serious ill nor any misfortune but always have been blessed with health, happiness and harmony.

SECOND ADVENTURE OF MY LIFE

In December, 1933, a deep water project of Port Stockton was completed, and the following month two Japanese ships entered into this port and loaded a cargo of dry fruits and scrap iron and left for Japan. Being the first visit of a Japanese ship to Stockton, a warm welcome was extended to the crew of the ships by both American and Japanese residents of that city. I have taken very active part in the said welcome ceremony and banquets. The prospect of trade between Japan and Port Stockton was considered to be very bright by the fact that cotton grown in central California was an attractive commodity for Japan and not only cotton but dried fruits and scrap iron were plentiful in this region of California. On April of 1934, Port and City of Stockton became so much interested in establishing a shipping relation with Japan that she made constant offers to the Japanese shipping lines to call on Port of Stockton. The steamship companies such as Daido and K. Line, in turn, were very much interested in calling at Stockton. As a result of this development, the officials of Port and City of Stockton and Chamber of Commerce were very much for materialization of this epoch-making relation with Japan.

It was in the early part of April, through a friend of mine, I have been approached, asking whether I will be interested in representing Port of Stockton in Japan, acting as publicity agent, or not. Since I was very much interested with kind of the work, and realizing the great importance of the work from the standpoint of international relations, I immediately accepted the offer. For more than three months, through the arrangement of the Port of Stockton, I made an extensive study of different industries of central California and gathered all information on commodities suited for export to Japan, such as raisins and other dried fruits, wines, cotton, used farm implements, scrap iron, and others. My proposed trip to Japan had been heartily backed up by not only the Japanese people of Stockton but by the general public of the City of Stockton. After completing all the arrangements and preparations, I departed from America on August 20th, from San Francisco aboard

the M. S. Chichibu Maru, and arrived in Yokohama on September 4. It was my first visit to Japan in 19 years since I first left that country for America.

Upon arriving at Yokohama, I felt as though I came to strange land rather than to my own native land and such feeling, I am quite certain, came to my mind as a result of my long absence from Japan and my associations with American ideals and customs and life. Through the arrangement made by the U. S. Embassy and Foreign Office of Japan, I appeared before several groups of shipping interests, traders and press conferences. Not only appearing before groups of people and speaking to them on the Port of Stockton, but I also called upon steamship lines and importers and exporters of Tokyo. I was received by every group with a great interest. After having campaign of this kind for three months in Tokyo, I visited and carried on similar campaigns and made fine connections in cities such as Nagoya, Osaka, Kobe. At the completion of this campaign, I spent two months in visiting Korea, Manchuria, and my native village. On February, taking same Chichibu Maru from Yokohama, returned to the United States. During my stay in Japan and while I was absent from Stockton, Japanese ships called on that port and carried several commodities for Japan. During the course of my publicity campaign in Japan several exporters called on me asking for prospective market in America, among those were fish meals for fertilizers, finished cotton goods, toys and vegetable oils. Upon my return to the United States I have called on several firms in San Francisco but all of my efforts were in vain because of the fact that these commodities were mostly imported to this country through such large and powerful firm as Mitsui Company. However, a limited amount of merchandise have been negotiated for import. As far as my publicity campaign in Japan was successful, but a certain handicap was placed upon future development of shipping relations between the Port of Stockton and Japanese ports. The Pacific Shipping Conference, including all the Japanese shipping lines such as Daido and K Line, established a ruling upon members prohibiting the call of their ships to such minor ports as Alameda, Oakland and Stockton. Coupled with the constant threat of labor strikes, the prospect of further development

of Port Stockton in relation to oriental trade became a matter of least possibility. In September, 1935, within six months of my return to the United States, I departed for Japan again, this time to establish a trade relation with a certain firm in Tokyo, expecting to import a certain line of merchandise to be sold at a retail oriental store which I planned to operate in Stockton. Several connections were established with importers and exporters in Tokyo. Returning to the United States in February of 1936, I immediately opened a retail oriental arts store in Stockton and continued to operate this store until March, 1938. Whether my business foresight was short of because of the ill fortune of my business life, I am not able to judge, but the Sino Japanese war of 1937 was a damaging blow to all the stores carrying Japanese goods. Even a boycott movement was initiated against Japanese goods. The sales of our store gradually decreased day by day. On March 1938 upon invitation from the Japanese Association of San Francisco to take up the secretaryship of that organization, I accepted the position and leaving the store in the hands of my wife, I moved to San Francisco.

#### MY POLICY AND PRINCIPLE AS SECRETARY OF ASSOCIATION

My principle and policy in carrying out the work of the Japanese Association as a secretary was the same as that of the Japanese Association of Stockton. The principle was to serve the members of the organization and residents of Japanese community in promoting general welfare of that community. During my service as executive secretary of that organization, I emphasized especially the importance of better American program among Japanese people through publications, lectures, and other Americanization activities. Prior to the outbreak of the war between Japan and America on December 7, 1941, this program had been intensified through the Japanese Association of America of which secretaryship I held since July, 1939. The national defense through farming had been put in effect in every Japanese community of northern California through the member organizations of each locality. When National Draft Law became effective we cooperated with local draft boards in registering the Japanese draftees and encouraging these young men as well as their parents for their willingness to served in the armed forces of the United States.

In every city where our associations were located, through the efforts of these organizations, farewell parties were given to the selected draftees to encourage them to enlist and gave hearty send-off to them. There were many Japanese young men throughout California who volunteered and enlisted in the armed forces of the United States. The better American residents of alien Japanese and loyal American citizens of Japanese parentage as well as promotion of better and friendly relations were outstanding aims of my work. Alas, in spite of our continued effort and sacrifice in promoting friendly relations of the two countries, tragedy of war brought these two nations of the Pacific into armed conflict. During a period of less than four years as secretary of the Japanese Association of San Francisco, I had been placed a responsibility of secretaryship of Japanese Association of America, the central organization of all the associations in northern California and also a secretaryship of Japanese Committee for Golden Gate International Exposition. The family which remained in Stockton when I left that city closed our store and moved to San Francisco in April, 1941.

#### OUTBREAK OF JAPANESE AMERICAN WAR AND DETENTION OF LIFE

On December 7, 1941, the day when Pearl Harbor was attacked, I was apprehended by an agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation as one of the dangerous enemy aliens. Detained 10 days in the San Francisco Immigration Headquarters, then, on December 17, sent to Alien Detention Camp at Fort Missoula, Montana. As I have touched upon in the previous paragraph, I put my heart and life to the program of better and loyal Americans of Japanese extraction, particularly, when Uncle Sam was calling the men. In acknowledging the service and cooperation I was appointed as one of the committee on Local Draft Board No. 96, San Francisco, by Governor Olson. Yet, when war broke out, I was taken into custody by F.B.I. with handcuffs cratched to my both hands. It was most miserable scene of my whole life and I was struck with sudden feeling of sorrow and darkness. The question immediately flashed in my mind was "AM I JAPANESE OR AMERICAN?" I felt as if I were thrown into the hell of devils, my hand and feet binded by some force of oppression. Living more than twenty five years in America, I was always proud of being a good American but when I was apprehended

by F.B.I. and put into the cell, I could not help but question myself, "AM I STILL JAPANESE?" When I realize that thousands of Japanese were put into this same condition, either by detention or by internment or by forced evacuation, they must have asked the same question -- "WHAT AM I? IF I GO TO JAPAN, PEOPLE THERE SAY YOU ARE AMERICAN BY VIRTUE OF LONG RESIDENT AND WHEN I AM IN AMERICA, PEOPLE HERE SAY THAT YOU ARE A JAP." The Japanese who are now living in America are most unfortunate group of people. "IS DEMOCRACY EXIST IN AMERICA?" is the question I am quite certain will follow in the mind of every Japanese. Since July, 1941, and until outbreak of war, agents of F.B.I. were constant visitors of our office and I have given them every cooperation. During the course of our conversation, I have always expressed my confidence in our people in the United States that there is no fifth column nor sabotages of any kind and I still hold that confidence in my people of American residence. I firmly believe that not even a single case of sabotage has been found among Japanese people in the United States since the outbreak of the war or prior to the war, yet our people are considered as most dangerous enemy aliens of any axis nation. As a result of such suspicion in the minds of Americans, mass apprehension of males and forced evacuation of all the Japanese from the Pacific Coast has been made. Is such a movement as that a result of purely militaristic policy or caused by certain influence based upon racial prejudice is the question to be studied by the political and social students of the world.

From December 19, 1941, to August 11, 1942, I was detained in Fort Missoula, Montana, during which I endeavored to promote the spirit of cooperation among detainees, which I am very sure that spirit helped to create better understanding between administration and the detainees. Acting as spokesman of the Japanese detainees in said camp, I am so grateful that a fine spirit of goodwill existed among detainees and Caucasian officers. On August 11, upon parole, came to this relocation center.

Summing up the story of my life, I can say that my life to this day can be divided into two major parts, namely, my life in Japan and my life in America. The latter can be divided into two parts, that of educational career and business

career. Although my educational career was more of a struggle in many ways, I feel that I was fortunate in carrying through the University. In my business career, both of my attempts had ended in failure while as secretary of a social and educational organization, I feel that I was able to accomplish a great deal. Both in my educational and business career I have encountered with many hardships because of which have arisen from language difficulty and racial prejudices but such setback is not my own problem but it is general among others. In ending this brief and incomplete history of my life, I pay my respect and gratitude to the educational institutions which I attended and to the teachers and faculties of the institutions as well as to many of my friends in America who have so kindly and warmly extended their hands to this little oriental who came to America in search of western civilization. May God bless so that peace come to this world and once again may I serve toward better understanding of people of all the world.