

COPY
C
O
P
Y
SANTA ANITA

1207 W. 36th Place
Los Angeles, Calif.
April 20, 1942

Copied

Dear Dr. Lowie:

I was extremely interested to hear that plans are being made in Berkeley for the scientific study of Japanese in reception centers and would appreciate greatly if you would inform Dr. Thomas that I shall be happy to cooperate in whatever way I can. She may be interested to know that for the past five weeks I have been helping in the orderly evacuation of Japanese from the Los Angeles area and have accumulated considerable data which may be of value to her. When I left Berkeley last month I had full intentions of accepting a job teaching Japanese in one of the Eastern universities but when I realized the plight of my people in Los Angeles I decided to make a study of them before and after confinement in "concentration camps" not so much to gather data for a monograph which I intend to write someday on the acculturation of the Japanese in Hawaii and California but to test a few personal theories I have harbored for some years. Dr. Thomas may also be interested to hear that some of my more enterprising friends have taken motion pictures with army permission of the earliest evacuees to Manzanar, the reception center in Owens Valley, with the hope of preserving them as documentary films. I am informed that for public consumption the authorities have requested that the more unfavorable portions be cut but as far as I know they have not been destroyed and may be available for research at a later date.

I do not know whether Dr. Thomas consulted authorities before making her "somewhat elaborate plans" but I doubt from personal experience whether they will permit a scientific investigation of the Japanese in reception centers in the immediate future at least. The favorable accounts of camp life in newspapers and over the radio in conjunction with frequent denials by the army of "certain rumors" concerning evacuation, which I know from personal experience to be true, lead me to believe that the authorities are not particularly desirous of acquainting the public with true conditions in these camps. This suspicion is further substantiated by the fact that the authorities will not permit any White person, with the exception of White wives, to take up residence in camp. This became evident when the Maryknoll Brothers, who have worked with the Japanese for many decades, and some 400 Caucasian teachers, who will lose their jobs with the evacuation of several thousand Japanese school children, applied for admission into these camps and were refused. All these things in conjunction with attempts in Congress to disenfranchise American-born Japanese have given rise to unhealthy explanations such as the desire of the authorities to segregate Japanese so that

at the end of the war they may find justification in claiming that the Japanese are unassimilable and should be deported to Japan; that the authorities are afraid to allow Caucasian friends of the Japanese to reside in camp lest they expose true conditions to fair-minded citizens, etc. etc. All in all the stage is set for an extremely fascinating study of personality types. Particularly interesting to me at the moment is the reaction of unfortunate victims of interracial marriages. Since the army decrees that anyone with a drop of Japanese blood must observe curfew and be removed from the Pacific Coast we are encountering a number of ruptures in family life -- many of which, to me, seem unnecessary. I am told that within the last few days the army has given sanction to the reunion of non-Japanese wives with their Japanese husbands in camp, but as far as I know no non-Japanese husband has been permitted to rejoin his wife.

Last week I interviewed Miss Mahn, Indian commissioner for the Colorado River Indian Reservation, and was accepted as social service worker among 38,000 Japanese to be concentrated on this reservation at an early date. I was originally scheduled to leave this morning for Parker, Arizona, but was informed at the last minute that the army has indefinitely postponed the staff's departure. Since the area in which I am residing at present must be evacuated by the 29th of this month, unless the army speeds up our project or unless I move to an unrestricted section of this city, I may have to go to Manzanar, Santa Anita, or any one of the other reception centers already in use. I do hope, however, that the Parker project will come through in time since my job as social service worker will give me access to certain type of sociological data without appearing too inquisitive to the authorities or the Japanese. If I am sent to another camp I hope they will permit me to conduct adult classes in English or americanization studies. But wherever I go I am planning to make a detailed acculturation study and shall be happy to cooperate with Dr. Thomas. If she has formulated a definite program for research by now and I do not have to leave Los Angeles within the next week or two (army orders change so frequently that we can never be certain of the exact date of departure) I may be able to run up to Berkeley for a day or two to discuss plans with her if she so desires. Once I enter camp I presume it will be rather difficult for me to leave and furthermore I am duly warned that censorship will be extremely strict.

I hope that both you and Mrs. Lowie are well and that the war has not brought drastic alterations in your life. I would appreciate very much if you will give my regards to my fellow graduate students.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Tamie Tsuchiyama

Santa Anita Assembly Center
Arcadia, California
June 24, 1942

Dear Dr. Lowie:

A number of factors prevented me from answering your letters of June 10 and 15 promptly. For one thing there has been much discontent for the last three weeks in camp and I deemed it unwise to communicate with you especially when I feel that my mail is being carefully scrutinized. The fact that many of my letters do not seem to reach their destination or arrive there at a very late date leads me to suspect that my letters are being censored. Also since June first I have been employed as girls' supervisor on the camouflage net project and the sit down strike of some 1200 workers last week left me with little time to write to you. Now that the project is functioning smoothly again I asked to be released today in order that I may devote full time to research but the director begged me to remain until he could find someone capable of managing some five hundred girls. From tomorrow I hope to go on a half-day schedule and within a few weeks to drop out completely from the project.

As you may have read in the San Francisco papers about 1200 workers employed on the camouflage net project--the only national defense project in the center--staged a two-day strike in protest against what they termed inhuman conditions. While making my round of nets I sensed a considerable degree of discontent for some time but did not anticipate a strike for at least two weeks. The strike began when a group of men working at the extreme western end of the grandstand walked out in protest against the bad food served in camp and the other hundred nets followed one by one. The immediate cause appeared to be unappetizing food offered at lunch--in fact the Los Angeles papers jocularly referred to it as a "protest against sauerkraut, a dish of German origin, and wiener sausages served at lunch"--but the underlying causes were long hours of monotonous work weaving burlap strips into nets in the hot afternoon sun, uncertainty of payment, coolie wages (\$8.00 a month for 8 hours of work daily; i.e. 4 1/2¢ an hour), bad food (type of food we would have hesitated to feed hogs in pre-evacuation days), and last but not least annoyance at the idea that "prisoners of war" had to be "blackmailed" to work on a national defense program on a patriotic note. The battle cry of the workers seemed to be: if you must appeal to us as patriotic citizens to perform the dirtiest job in the center, give us the treatment accorded American citizens and we will wholeheartedly cooperate in finishing the quota set up by the U.S. Army. Public reaction to the strike was extremely varied but interesting in that it revealed the thinking of different groups of Japanese in camp. One of the most articulate councilmen demanded that the 1200 workers be blacklisted and sent to Parker Dam, the "Devil's Island" of assembly centers, for chastisement; some called us "true Americans" for attempting to preserve the American standard of living. No matter how dreadful the strike must have appeared to the outside world at least it was instrumental in bringing about wholesale improvements in camp which two months of so-called "self-government" could not obtain for us. Apparently the administration is fearful of the consequences if it cannot produce the quota demanded by the U.S. Army and is willing to appease workers to some extent to receive greater cooperation.

With reference to your letter of June 15 asking me whether I would like to be transferred to Tule Lake I have given considerable attention but am still suffering from indecision. Climatically speaking Tule Lake probably would be the most desirable of all relocation centers. But from the viewpoint of a successful investigation I wonder whether it would not be more profitable for me to follow the Los Angeles group to Parker Dam, Arkansas, Wyoming, or any other relocation center to which they are sent. As I mentioned before, since March 16 I have been studying the Japanese in Los Angeles and neighboring areas and moved with them to Santa Anita. Since I have investigated them in their pre-evacuation and assembly center stages I feel that it might be wiser for me to continue residing with them in their relocation stage rather than going to Tule Lake where I have had little or no contact with the evacuees before removal to their final site. Also you may have known that there are marked regional differences among the Japanese in California--e.g., the Japanese in Los Angeles are much more Americanized than those in San Francisco. Furthermore most of the Nisei leaders now in evacuation camps are concentrated in Santa Anita or Manzanar. In other words Los Angeles offered greater social and economic advancement to Japanese than any other Pacific Coast city. Therefore it would be extremely interesting to study the adjustment these leaders will make in their relocation center since their attitude will largely determine the attitude of the majority of the Japanese-Americans after the war. Also from the memorandum sent me by Dr. Thomas I infer that four investigators are being sent by the University of California to Tule Lake. Since there will be at least three other students making the survey at Tule Lake I wondered whether it might not be more advisable for me to go to another relocation site in order that we may obtain greater perspective on the problems confronting the Japanese in different relocation centers. With the above in mind, I prefer to leave the decision to you and Dr. Thomas. If you both feel that I shall be of greater service to you at Tule Lake I am ready to leave for northern California whenever you wish; otherwise I should like to follow the Los Angeles group to whichever center the Army will send them.

With reference to your suggestions for acculturation study it is very difficult to procure data on Shintoism, Buddhism, and the Japanese language at the present time. Since F.B.I. agents in pre-evacuation days investigated practically every Shinto priest and language school teacher within their reach, people are still reticent about divulging information concerning Shinto sects or the Japanese language. In a lengthy conversation with one of the most influential Buddhist priests in camp I was recently informed that membership in Buddhist organizations dropped markedly at the outbreak of the war because most of the members felt that Buddhism was an Oriental religion and that they would probably receive kindlier treatment from Caucasians if they embraced Christianity, an "American" religion. This was confirmed by a noted Methodist minister who maintained that his church in Los Angeles was filled to capacity in December and January when most of the more spectacular F.B.I. raids occurred. I have little reason to doubt that secret meetings of the Tenrikyo sect (a modern Shinto sect very similar to Christian science) take place in the center but fear of F.B.I. agents who make almost daily rounds of camp, prevent them from holding public meetings. You may probably be interested to know that one of the members of the Los Angeles Branch of the F.B.I. occasionally visits me to acquaint himself with Japanese culture and I was extremely happy to learn that soon after a lengthy conversation with him on Tenrikyo, all of the Tenrikyo priestesses interned on Terminal Island were released and sent to Santa Anita. Many of the American-born Japanese who felt that they were true Americans and were scornful of learning

the Japanese language wish to study it now in camp but so far permission to hold Japanese classes has been denied. On the other hand, English classes and democracy training classes for the first generation and those who have recently returned from Japan are very popular. A few days ago a petition was circulated in camp to start a Japanese newspaper for the benefit of those who could not read English but I am informed that the request was denied by the administration. Curiously enough, the leader of this movement was removed this week from camp, but whether this was due to his agitation for a Japanese newspaper or because of his alleged Communistic leanings I have not yet been able to determine. Anyway, things are happening fast and furious at Santa Anita and anyone with an I.Q. of 75 or above who attempts to improve conditions in camp is on the suspect list and chances of his being sent to Parker Dam or some other "Devil's Island" is very great. Since army orders seldom give you more than half an hour to get ready, I have unpacked only my barest essentials and after finishing my laundry carefully repack them in my suitcases. The most familiar greeting at the mess line is: "All ready to leave for Parker Dam?"

If Dr. Thomas would like to have me send in a weekly report I shall be happy to do so but I cannot guarantee its reaching her. She can rest assured however that I am putting in from six to eight hours of research daily and have accumulated considerable data since May first when I set foot for the first time in an American "concentration camp."

Please give my regards to Mrs. Lowie and my fellow graduate students. At night when the floodlights from the twenty sentry's towers scour the camp and prevent me from falling asleep, I pretend that I'm back again on the sixth floor of the library stacks and attempt to recapture, if only for a fleeting second, the security that was once mine.

Very sincerely yours,

(Signed) Tamie Tsuchiyama

(copy)

Dist. 6, Barr. 33, Unit 4,
Avenue T
Santa Anita Assembly Center
Arcadia, California
July 8, 1942

evidently meant August

Dear Dr. Lowie,

This is just a short note to inform you that I am still located at Santa Anita. Due to a riot which occurred in the center on the day I was scheduled to leave for Arizona, all travel permits were automatically cancelled. I hope that by next week the excitement will have sufficiently subsided to enable the authorities to grant my release. Martial law was imposed on the center immediately after the riot Tuesday afternoon and only lifted last night so I could not communicate with you earlier. I have just been informed that the post office will open in a few hours so I am dashing off this note in the hope that it will reach you before you send any letters to Poston.

Now that the official news of the riot has been released to the press I presume I may present my side of the story with impunity. Early Tuesday morning I noticed a great deal of excitement in my area (District 6) and upon inquiry was informed that a corps of 200 policemen imported from the outside had begun a house to house search for contraband in the stable area and District 7 and would arrive in our neighborhood within a few hours. Those who had managed to escape from the raided areas informed us that not only articles which everyone knew to be prohibited in the center, e. g. knives, liquor, electric stoves, foods that required cooking, etc., but also such supposedly harmless objects as scissors, nail files, buckets, tubs, geta or wooden clogs, saws, chisels, files, electric razors, knitting needles, crochet hooks, and even cash were being confiscated. Curious to see exactly how much truth was incorporated in these assertions I casually strolled over to District 5 when it was undergoing investigation and was mildly shocked to note some policemen breaking into houses in the absence of their occupants. In such cases I noticed that all suitcases and boxes that were locked were hauled out and thrown into the pile of contraband. I further made certain that all of the articles alleged to have been taken from District 7 and the stable area (with the exception of cash) were actually included in the pile of contraband. While surveying the loot I met two of my friends who indignantly told me that not only their diaries and

manuscripts but books written in English had been seized by the police that morning. Among them were the Tolan reports and Tolstoy's works. Toward noon the air was tense with a feeling of resentment. Some muttered that the police had no right to confiscate cash, others that the police had no right to break into homes while their occupants were away at work inasmuch as no one had been notified that an inspection was to occur that day.

Suddenly about two-thirty or three in the afternoon I saw people running toward the Orange Mess Hall in our district and upon arrival discovered several policemen running for shelter into the building while hundreds followed hurling pebbles at them. Accounts as to how the riot started differ considerably but the most popular one is that a little boy attempted to cross the bridge separating District 6 from District 7 carrying a small bag and was stopped by guards who insisted on inspecting it. The little fellow challenged their right to stop him and when the police attempted to lay hands on him the crowd which had been inspecting the pile of contraband broke loose and commenced to stone them. Within a few minutes several thousand gathered near the mess hall and the next instant I perceived two policemen with guns retreating before the surging crowd. I immediately rushed over to the main gate separating the Japanese section from the soldiers' quarters and discovered some twenty or thirty military police lined up on the other side of the fence. Behind them were truckloads of soldiers to prevent any form of violence by the mob. In the meantime the order to cease inspection had been given and all of the policemen fled to the police barracks for protection.

The beating of the Korean "F.B.I. informer" which was highlighted in the official news, occurred about an hour later in the Government House while I was away at supper. I managed, however, to see his bruised body being carted to the center hospital for treatment. For several weeks I had heard threats of "beating up" all F. B. I. informers so I was not particularly surprised when the incident occurred. The victim was notorious in camp as a "Korean spy" and had made himself especially obnoxious to a certain group when he failed to resign from the police force when all other Japanese policemen did a few days previous to the riot. According to some of my policemen friends they resigned as a protest against the removal of Nisei lieutenants and captains while others maintained that they did not wish to take orders from the "Korean spy". The resentment center residents at those who "tattle-tailed" on them had become rather acute in the last few weeks and all those suspected

of writing any sort of reports or were friendly with Caucasian officials in camp or with F. B. I. agents had been notified through devious means of their precarious situation. The beating of the "Korean spy" encouraged the disciplining of others suspected of "treachery" and various individuals on Tuesday night are reported to have had unwelcome visits. In some cases military police were stationed near their homes to protect them from the unruly elements.

From four O'clock on Tuesday afternoon to Friday evening martial law prevailed in camp and communication with the outside world was suspended. Soldiers on trucks with mounted guns patrolled the barracks to maintain order although the excitement had more or less subsided by Wednesday morning. On Friday a corps of 200 army officers and military police made a resurvey of the raided areas to ascertain the truth of the allegations in Tuesday's riot. As a result of the army inspection an order was issued by Col. Karl R. Bendetsen assuring the people that all non-contraband seized by the police on Tuesday would be returned to the respective owners and that a list of contraband would be posted before inspection would be resumed.

I received a letter from Robert Spencer Tuesday morning (which I hope to answer today) requesting me to get a visitor's permit for him on August 15. I do not know whether the ban on visitors will be lifted by that time or not but as I expect to leave within a few days for Poston I am afraid I cannot comply with his request. Furthermore, only very special visitors are allowed within the camp, others being restricted to a thirty-minute chat in the visitors' house across a very wide table under the constant supervision of the Arcadia Police. Under the circumstances even if visitors were permitted here by August 15th I see no advantage in Spencer making a trip from Berkeley solely to interview me. Everything that I calculated would pass the censor I have already mailed to you; other reports will have to remain in a nebulous stage until later. At present my chief worry is whether I can take out my field notes without too much trouble. Several disconcerting rumors of confiscation of all manuscripts and diaries before leaving Santa Anita have reached my attention but so far I have been unable to ascertain their truth. I do know, however, that these were taken from some of my friends in Tuesday's raid.

If Spencer is to be located at Gila and I manage to get to Poston, we may be able to get together occasionally for the exchange of ideas. I do hope,

however, that his racial background will not unduly hinder his research. The Japanese in Santa Anita, at least, are becoming extremely "group conscious" and rather suspicious of any Caucasian who appears to be interested in them. Caucasians in camp generally fall into one of two categories: administrative officials or F. B. I. agents in masquerade. Conditions at Santa Anita may be highly exaggerated in comparison with other assembly centers or relocation areas so my generalizations may not apply to others. Santa Anita seems to be the "bad boy" of assembly centers -- at least we don't hear of strikes, "secret meetings", and riots in other areas. In fact, we are getting on the nerves of the Army and latest reports claim that 10,000 of us will be shipped within a few weeks to Lamar, Colorado, in place of the evacuees now located at the Pomona Assembly Center.

Unless something unexpected turns up I shall send you the section on political organization and attitudes within a few days. Until further notice please send all letters to Santa Anita.

Sincerely yours,

(signed) Tamie Tsuchiyama

August 12, 1942

Miss Tamie Tsuchiyama,
Bureau of Sociological Research,
Colorado River War Relocation Project,
Poston, Arizona.

*mailed to Santa Anita
address as her letter
mistaken*

Dear Miss Tsuchiyama:

Thanks very much for your full letter of July 8th. I have just had a copy made for Dr. Thomas who, in the meantime, has communicated with Dr. Leighton. He will doubtless discuss the matter in detail with you. Let me merely say that, although our relations with the governmental agencies have been very cordial in the past, we are obviously working on sufferance and have to be extremely careful not to offend their sensibilities in any way. For that reason, it seemed imperative to Dr. Thomas to offer to release you since Dr. Leighton might easily object to your having at the same time a full-time job with him and a half-time job with us. From past experience, we also know that complications almost always arise when there is any doubt as to the ownership of research material. This explains Dr. Thomas' attitude and her correspondence with Dr. Leighton.

Obviously, you are quite free to deal with the material collected prior to your transfer and we look forward with pleasure to your additional data, especially on political organizations and attitudes. It is also possible that we may have further questions with regard to your present assembly center.

Dr. Thomas, who is leaving for a brief vacation, has sent your last check in care of Dr. Leighton.

As for Spencer, - he left for Gila the other evening. Doubtless, you and he will be able to get together after your removal to Poston.

I hope that you will have a less trying time in the more permanent center to which you are going and that you will have no further delay in getting settled. With all good wishes for the future and hoping in any case to keep in touch with you periodically, even if not officially, I remain

Very sincerely yours,

RHL:M

Robert H. Lowie