



japan food corporation

July, 1972

I had never dreamed of writing a memoir of my days during WW II and the years that followed. However, one day early this year, Akio had suggested that I write about my life for the period mentioned. Some thoughts were given about it and came to a conclusion to do so, not because it might make interesting reading or worthy of writing but with the hopes that the contents might prove to be of valuable references for the members of the Inouye family.

I make no claim to be a good speller nor a good typist. Moreover, this was typewritten at the office during my spare moments but with frequent interruptions breaking my concentration. Consequently, I am aware that mistypes, misspelled words and grammatical errors are there, but I do not have the patience to re-read to make corrections.

It is hoped that the contents will make sense notwithstanding all the possible errors as mentioned.



Japan Food Corporation

DEPRESSION YEARS - 1937 / 1941

Prior to the World War II, the demand for the Japanese foods was on the decline due primarily to the Nisei's preference for the western foods. To cope with this situation, a decision was made by the management of S. Ishimitsu Co., for a gradual conversion of its business from the Japanese food products to general merchandise for the Caucasian market. This was in 1932 when I was transferred from San Francisco to Kobe Head Office. Mr. Torimoto (Mr. Ishimitsu's son-in-law) was my replacement and it was his responsibility to get the conversion started. This was no easy task for any person as large Japanese trading firms had a virtual monopoly on businesses with the Caucasians.

The assignment for Mr. Torimoto was to look for the merchandise suitable for the Caucasian market and to look for the customers. Mr. Charles Teshima, formerly with Hatae & Co., was brought into the Company as he has had experience along this line of work.

After having spent 5 years in Japan (2 of which were in the Imperial Japanese Army, and these 2 years were the most physically difficult years of my life) I was reassigned to San Francisco office. I was discharged from the IJA in November of 1936, married in early December, and returned to San Francisco on 11 February, 1937. At 29, I was the youngest manager of any Japanese "Takuan Boeki" import/wholesale firm in San Francisco. I looked considerably older than my age so I was telling my business friends that I was "39" whenever asked.

Mr. Torimoto started the "conversion" of business with such items for the Caucasian market as agar agar, coffee filter papers, cellophane strips, bamboo rakes, Hontaka chillies, Easter baskets, etc., but had a rough going as Mr. Teshima did not remain with him for long. My job therefore, was to look for more customers and increase the volume of business to a profitable basis. Hiroshi "Dave" Watanabe joined the firm in 1937 to assist me so that I may devote more time to liquidate the Japanese food business and to close out the Accounts receivable.

While fair to good progress was being made on the Caucasian business, it still was not on a self sustaining basis, and other lines of merchandise had to be sought. This led to two things. One was to supply soybeans, Konnyakuko and Nigari (brine) to Tofu manufacturers and soybeans to Miso makers, and the other was the idea of exporting rice and domestic food products to Japanese wholesalers in Hawaiian Islands. The latter came as a result of my acquaintance with Miwa & Co., one of the large Japanese firms in Honolulu.

As we had been doing business with Tofu and Miso makers all these years, there was no problem. However, \$2.00 per cwt import duty on soybeans had made it rather expensive. At about this time, I had read about soybeans being grown in U. S. for oil and feed. Therefore, I started to write to the Chambers of Commerce in the various soybean producing states as I thought that there must be some edible soybeans available. I struck the jackpot when I got in touch with Carter, Venable & Co., in Richmond, Va., as they turned out to be very reliable firm. Sample after sample were obtained and experimented for making Tofu and Abura Age. Finally, it was discovered that the "Tokyo Green" soybeans was suitable for Tofu and "Mammoth Yellow" was best suited for making Age. As a result, S. Ishimitsu Co., was the first to introduce domestic soybeans to the Japanese market and enjoyed good business not only in San Francisco but in Los Angeles and elsewhere. There was no specie problem for making Miso.

Export to Hawaii was another matter as all well established Japanese firms there had their own suppliers in San Francisco so I have had to compete with them for the business. The so called 5 Big firms (Caucasians) had the monopoly on all the nationally advertised brands. Others had the second rate merchandise. I have had to look for the third rate items but good in quality. That was like looking for a needle in the hay stack.



Being young, I had no patience but I do know that I was desperately seeking a supplier. I am unable to recall how I got in touch with Valvita Foods (Mr. Norton Simon started it in Fullerton) but made a connection with them and began sending samples of all sorts of tomato products and canned fruits. These efforts began to pay off as orders, though small, started to come in and I was invited to visit Valvita's canning plant in Fullerton. Just about this time, a group of retail grocers in Hilo, Hawaii organized a co-op named Hawaii Retail Grocers Association (HGA). Mr. Tomiji Yamamoto, manager of HGA contacted us and after exchanges of letters, we were appointed to act as their buying agents in San Francisco. This was when I established business relationship with the United Grocers. If I remember correctly, we were working on the cash discount plus 2% override. This was considered as being good as UG was doing all the work while we were doing the paper work only.

In the meantime, I was equally busy desperately trying to liquidate the Japanese end of the business. Disposition of merchandise was not too rough but the collection was. This was due primarily to the fact that the trade customs at the retail level was credit rather than cash, especially in the farming areas. Consequently, customers that pay in 90 days or less were considered good customers. Such being the case, I have had to resort to tough tactic as referring some accounts to collection agency. I was known as the SOB of Ishimitsu at the time.

Caucasian business continued to make progress and had added some prominent names such as McKesson & Robbins for all types of agar agar, Continental Baking Companies in California, Oregon and Washington, Langendorf Bakeries for the powdered agar agar, Baker, Hamilton & Pacific, Dunham, Carrigan & Hayden, Union Hardware and California Hardware for bamboo rakes. Cello strips and baskets were sold to confectioners through brokers. Edwards Coffee (subsidiary of Saefeway) and Farmer Bros., Coffee for the coffee filter papers.

A good thing does not last long, as the saying goes. This was true with my efforts for the conversion of Ishimitsu's business. While the going was still rough, I began to see the light at the other end. However, the relationship between U. S. and Japan began to deteriorate with the China and Manchurian incidents in 1937 and further deteriorated when Japan, Germany and Italy formed the Tripartite Axis in 1940, I believe. With this, U. S. attitude toward Japan toughened and declared embargo on all strategic materials such as oil, iron scraps, etc., and all Japanese import firms were placed under a strict license policy. The rumors of imminent war between U. S. and Japan were rampant, but I did not believe at the time that there will ever be a war in the Pacific because both nations will be the losers if and when they go to war. My disbelief notwithstanding, I felt that it was my responsibility to contact Mr. Ishimitsu and explain the situation in the U. S. I talked with him on the international phone (my first such call) and offered a suggestion that the ownership of the Company be made 51% Nisei and 49% Issei so that the loss may be minimized when worse comes to worst. The higher the Nisei ownership percentage the lesser the loss but I thought that Mr. Ishimitsu would not go for it so did not mention it. There was no decision made at the time, nor did I receive any instruction from him later. All would have been vain even if Mr. Ishimitsu had decided to act in favor of my suggestion which will be explained later.

THE WORLD WAR PERIOD (1941 / 1946)

What has happened in the mid morning of Sunday, Dec. 7, 1941 is indelibly imprinted in my mind. It may have had been around 10 A. M., I was sitting at the kitchen dining table and switched on the radio. What I had heard coming over the radio, I could not believe or more likely, I refused to believe. The frantic voice on the radio was saying that some unidentified warplanes are attacking Pearl Harbor ! Insofar as I was concerned, no identification was necessary because who but the Japanese warplanes would attacked Pearl Harbor. My heart sank. I did not want to hear any more, but I continued to listen, turning the volume down



not that mother and Aiko would understand, but I must have done it instinctively so that they would not be worried. They have detected that something was wrong as I had my ear glued to the radio which was not the customary manner for me to listen. I had no choice but to explain to them what has been on the air. Their hearts must have sunk too. If I remember correctly, Mr. Kamiya who lived in the upper flat told us that the FBI agents were rounding up the Japanese community's "leader" living in and around Japanese town. When I heard of this, several things occurred in my mind. One was to destroy all letters although none had anything to do with the war. Second was to destroy my Japanese army record and my photos in army uniform because my military record has been reported to the Federal agency as required by Alien Registration. The other was that I should prepare myself and the family for the possible apprehension by the FBI not because I was a Japanese community leader but due to my entry status as an International Trader and the reported military service in Japan. Later, I had learned that the "leaders" were the officers and members of such organizations as Nihonjin Kai, Kokuryu Kai (The Black Dragon Society, believed to have been a patriotic group), teachers of Japanese language schools, Buddhist ministers and another group called Heimusha Kai, composed of male Japanese of conscription age and beyond but relieved of military duty due to foreign residency. I belonged to none of these organizations.

After the declaration of war against Japan, the movements of the Japanese nationals were restricted even within the city limits. Our office being inbound, I went to the office on Monday morning at the usual time, only to find that it was guarded by a government agent and the door lock was sealed. After identifying myself, I requested entry but was told to obtain a permit from the Foreign Assets Control of the Treasury Dept. I went to the Fed. Reserve Bank bldg., but again my request was denied. This meant one thing, a possibility of Ishimitsu's assets being vested by the Foreign Assets Control.

The days that followed were most depressing, nothing was certain as to our future and having nothing to do or just did not care to do anything. One incident that I recall is the stern reprimand (oral) received from the district warden for our not having the blackout curtain drawn properly. He sure gave us hell.

The Oshogatsu for 1942 was a bleak one as there was nothing to be happy about. Nothing happened to me during December or during the first half of January, so I began to think that I may not be on the FBI's "wanted" list, so my suitcase was unpacked. It was around Jan. 22 or 23rd when I received a call from the Foreign Assets Control, requesting a name of a person who knew the combination to the safe at the office. Naturally, I volunteered but the reply was negative, so I gave him our office secretary's name, Fumi Ota and her phone number. Immediately following this conversation, I contacted Fumi and asked her to report back to me all that might take place at the office. Her report surprised me because the agents (FBI instead of Foreign Assets Control? I do not know) went through the contents in my brief case only and nothing else. Now I was sure that I would be apprehended by the FBI, so I so informed Obachan and mother and packed my suitcase again.

A few days later when I was about to leave the house to walk to Japanesetown just to kill the monotony, I saw a car stop and 3 men come out and walk toward our house. It could not have been anybody but FBI as I was expecting no visitors. They were admitted inside after the usual identification routine. All of us were instructed to remain in the kitchen while they searched the house. Their thorough search produced nothing because I had nothing and had done nothing wrong. I was asked to "accompany" them to the downtown office, and the family was told that I "will be released soon" and they told me that the suitcase was not necessary. None of us believed this as no Japanese having been apprehended on Dec. 7 has been released.



Among the many questions asked of me at the FBI headquarters in 111 Sutter Street was whether or not I would act as a spy for the U. S. My answer was obviously "no" and elaborated to them that I am a Japanese national but that I love U. S. equally as much as I do Japan as I was educated in this country and am thankful for the good life that I have had. And my emphasis was on the fact that I will not do anything that will be harmful for one or the other. The questioning continued from mid morning well into late in the afternoon without lunch, for me and for them. After the questioning, I was taken to the old City Jail in the Hall of Justice on Kearny Street, finger printed and photographed with a number across the chest, same as a common criminal. I was furious at the time. I joined a father-son Japanese in the drunk tank. They were from San Leandro, I believe. We were joined by Mr. Matsudaira of Mitsui & Co., on the next day. Communication with the family was not permitted and I was awfully concerned about the family.

A few days later, all of us were transferred to the detention station (Salvation Army Officers School on Silver Ave.) and placed under Immigration Service. About a couple of days later, I was informed that there are visitors. I was elated to see the family and at the same time, I was saddened when Tsuneo failed to recognize me. It was only natural, he was only 2 years old. In the course of our conversations, mother told me that Mr. Hosoda and Mr. Nakata were most kind to them in so many ways. This information relieved me from financial concern as what little fund that I have had had been frozen under the wartime law. I am profoundly grateful and feel greatly indebted to them and shall never forget their kindness as long as I live.

Your mother told me that Oba-chan and she were deeply worried about my whereabouts as they were lost as to who to contact. Later, she was informed by Mr. Kamiya, who lived in the upper flat (and a brother-in-law of Mrs. Harada) that I was in the City Jail. Apparently, he got the information from Mr. Mikio Fujimoto (Mike Fujimoto's father) who also was with Mitsui at the time. Your mother can tell you more about Messrs. Hosoda and Nakata's kindnesses as well as how the news of my whereabouts reached her.

A few days later, the detainees were advised that our next destination was a detention camp at Missoula, Montana. There must have had been about 60 or 70 of us. On the day of our departure, we entrained at the old Oakland Mole. Along the route somewhere (Sacramento?), our train joined another which evidently originated in Los Angeles as there were many Japanese detainees on board. Later, I learned that they were mostly fishermen from Terminal Island and farmers from the Santa Maria valley region. This was the first experience to be on the POW train of WW I vintage as they were old and all windows were iron barred with no door for the rest rooms. Armed guards were stationed at both end of the coach and permission was required to leave the seat.

A day later at a train stop (could have been Portland or Seattle), an announcement was made that the group will be split with one going to Missoula and the other to Bismarck, N. D. My destination was Bismarck. Being in February, it was bitterly cold in Bismarck with deep snow on the ground. The welcoming committee was a line of soldiers with heavy machine guns on the ground. All of us were really shocked as we were civilians with escaping being farthest from our minds. Later, we learned that the townspeople were told that we were POWs.

The detention camp was new and the barracks were lined up in the army style. They were well heated and comfortable. This camp was under the Immigration Service. German and Italian seamen who preceded us were also there. The life in camp was better than I had anticipated as the food was good, and all of us managed to find something to do. Some played cards, Mah Jongg. Others collected rocks, stones and tree roots. Some made furnitures and Geta out of discarded materials. Spring came even to the detention camp and the softball season with it.

* Mr. Yatan Ochi, a friend of mine, brought the family to Silver Ave. facility.



Needless to say that all detainees with a family were deeply concerned as to its welfare. Communications with them were permitted but not enough as far as we were concerned. All letters were censored by the Korean staff members. One of them who was a theological student from Boston was friendly and we became good friends. We spoke in English, naturally under the circumstances, but later, I was to find that the knowledge in Japanese for some of them was simply terrible or non-existent. More about this later.

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While in Bismarck, the news reached us that all persons of Japanese ancestry were to be evacuated from the Pacific coast. At the time, it was a great relief for me because they would be under the government "care", and thought of nothing else. This was a feeling among all the detainees. The severe winter passed and came the spring but there was nothing to cheer about except the news of the progress of the Pacific war. Then came the summer and it was announced by the authorities that hearings will be conducted. Hearings progressed without any incident until fishermen were called for the hearing. There were reports that some of them were slapped or roughed up by the hearing officers. We talked with those detainees to get their side of the story and learned that they said or did nothing to offend the hearing officers to deserve such rough treatment. With this information, we met with the Officer-in-Charge to present our protest. An arrangement was made by him for us to discuss this matter with the hearing officers and at the meeting, we were informed that the attitude of the detainees was arrogant and uncooperative. The story was as different as day and night. Therefore, I submitted a request that some of the English speaking detainees be permitted to attend the hearing as observers. I did not expect an affirmative reply, actually, but to my surprise, it was granted and I was asked to be present. Attending just one hearing was enough to convince me that those Korean interpreters had little knowledge of Japanese as their interpretations were neither accurate nor correct. Whether or not they will believe me or not, I decided to tell them of the situation. To my surprise and delight, they promptly asked me if I would care to act as the interpreter. An enemy alien in a detention camp interpreting for another enemy alien is unthinkable, but I suspect that the hearing officers may not have been satisfied with the Korean interpreters for some reason. Be that as it may, I brought this news back to the detainees, and gathered all the non-English speaking detainees, instructing them to say as little as possible and just trust me. Hearings progressed very smoothly thereafter and I was thanked by both sides and I was very happy that I was of some service to them.

In midsummer, announcements were made from time to time of the results of the hearing. Some detainees were "paroled" to their families and some were not. Needless for me to say that the parolees were delighted but others were dejected. After the hearings, my life at the camp was very busy, writing letters to the Justice Dept., requesting rehearing for those that were not paroled and also working as one of several "newscasters" reporting on the progress of the war gathering news from magazines, newspapers and radio newscasts. The number of those letters mentioned above must have run into hundreds. Again, I was glad that I was able to help others. I did not realize at the time but I have made many friends. This is borne out by my being thanked by strangers (there were so many that I couldn't remember) for writing letters or for interpreting. They remembered.

In August, 1942, it was announced by the Officer in Charge an "exchange ship" will be made available for those who wish to return to Japan. Those who returned were almost all employees of the Japanese trading firms. A few local residents volunteered, I was told later. I also learned at the time that there was a list of names submitted by the Japanese firms for the return of their employees, and that my name was on it. Needless for me to say that I declined. Mr. Matsudaira of Mitsui returned on SS Gripsholm, the exchange ship.

Another month had passed, and some of the detainees were transferred to other camps but none knew the destination. I was in the next to last group, probably 25 or 30, boarded the train at Bismarck. A major was in charge of our group and instructed the detainees to choose a spokesman. I was the choice of the group.



He promised without our asking that we would be permitted to disembark from the train at some of the stops and be allowed to exercise. This did not come about so a protest was lodged but no results. With this, I made up my mind to punch him in the nose if I ever encounter him after the war. I was positive I could do it as he was a small man, even shorter than I. Even to this day, I do not know why I was so upset about the incident. Probably my age. Only 34 then. But I was angry and told myself not to shave just to remember the incident. I changed my mind later and did shave, but left my moustache.

We arrived at the destination, Alexandria, La., some distance north of New Orleans. This was an Army POW camp. The facilities were good but the climate was very unpleasant, hot and sultry. There were a large number of detainees already there who were transferred from Missoula.

The life here was little different from Bismarck, the only exception being that we were under the military. One day, we heard a story that there is a Japanese POW #1 is in another compound. It was said that His name was Ensign Sakamaki of the Imperial Japanese Navy who was captured unconscious in a midget submarine, a number of which had attacked Pearl Harbor. Later, we were permitted to talk with him. Sometime later, a guard told us that a group of Japanese POWs has arrived. These men were officers and crew of Japanese Carriers and other ships that participated in the "Battle of Midway". For a while, the internees were not permitted to mingle with the POWs but was later relaxed, and we often played softball games with them. At about this time, the internees began to call themselves "State guests" because we paid for nothing.

We did not remain long at Camp Livingston as internees were again being transferred to unannounced destinations. Again, I was in the late group and on the train, we were told that the destination was Santa Fe, New Mexico. It required 2 or 3 days, I believe, but I did not like the ride as internees took turns in cooking in a baggage car having been converted to a kitchen car. I don't like to cook.

Santa Fe was under the Immigration authorities. The facilities were good, the climate was pleasant when we arrived. There were many old acquaintances there with quite a few from the Bay Area. The internee self-government system was installed for the first time at Camp Livingston and it was same at Santa Fe. The camp layout here was same as it was at Bismarck as all barracks were in one compound whereas, Camp Livingston had a number of compounds composed of several barracks. I preferred the Immigration system as we were free to visit anywhere within the camp grounds. Works were available but somewhat limited. Consequently, many internees enjoyed leisurely life, playing cards, Mah Jongg, Shogi, Go, etc., as well as looking for rare rocks, petrified trees, old tree roots in odd shape and form. Some people made rock into Suzuri. I was really amazed at the dexterity of Japanese people.

Because of high elevation, the climate in Santa Fe was very pleasant even in summer as the air was dry. The winter was severe, however, with the grounds were covered in deep snow and icicles hanging from the eaves to the ground. Softball was popular among the younger internees and a league was organized and I participated as one of the umpires as I failed to make the team.

Two things remain clearly in my mind about the camp life here. There were many ministers of all faiths, among them a large number of Buddhist ministers mostly in late 20s or in early 30s, and from Hawaii. Their conduct was most distasteful, unbecoming of ministers. Conducts of the Christian and Shinto ministers were better but nevertheless, I have lost all respect and up until then, I was addressing them as "Sensei" but changed to "Mr." ever since. The other was the fire in the camp kitchen. For many days until the kitchen was rebuilt, we were served the foods prepared at the State Penitentiary. I do not quite remember if I liked them.



THEY WERE FROM FLEXIN

There was an opening in the Mail Censors' office and I got the job. It was a simple work, opening all incoming mails and recording all incoming and outgoing mails. The pay was same as any other job, \$19 per month, I believe. Everyone from Officer-in Charge on down to Border Patrolmen were friendly and pleasant. The Censors were Niseis. One day, a letter from your mother was received, and in it was a snapshot of both of you. Took one look but could not believe my eyes as Akio's face was long and had somewhat sad expression. Akio that I knew was chubby and always smiling into the camera. Tsuoneo hadn't changed at all, round faced and serious expression.

Sometime in 1943, a few selected internees with families in Topaz Relocation Center were permitted to visit there, and I was among them. One internee that I remember was Mr. Tanimura of Nichibei Securities but I cannot recall the others. I do not know how the internees were selected. Accompanied by a guard, we made the trip and it was one of my happiest days when I joined the family after 2 years of separation. Oba-chan was in good health thanks to your mother and to many friends who were so kind and considerate. My days at Topaz were busy ones, calling on Messrs. Hosoda, Nakata and Isaki as well as others to express my profound gratitude and appreciation. Only under adverse condition, will one know who the true friends are.

The end to the visit came too soon, and the internees boarded the bus for the train station. Everyones family was there to bid farewell, and I vividly remember the tearful scene where Mr. Tanimura's son cried and refused to let his father go. Enroute back to Santa Fe, we changed trains at Denver and had time enough to visit parts of Denver and had a lunch at one of the restaurants where I ran into Mr. Kako of Nippon Company. There is actually nothing to both incidents but have remained in my mind.

Another winter came and it was announced in January of 1944 by the Officer-in-Charge that the internees with families may join them at Crystal City Family Camp in Texas if they so choose. I am wondering to this day as to why some internees did not choose to do so. The contingent of family joiners left Santa Fe in heavy winter clothing and the warmth of Texas winter made things awfully uncomfortable. On arrival at Crystal City, we were welcomed by acquaintances and strangers. It was good to see women and children. The family arrived a day or so later from Topaz.

Unlike other camps, this family camp was well planned and equipped. There were no barracks, as living quarters were built in duplexes, triplexes and quadruplexes, with all units equipped with cooking facility and an ice box. There were food store, clothing supply house, a high school, elementary schools for English and Japanese classes, kindergarten. The school house was used for the religious services on Sundays. Each family was given coupons according to the number of persons in the family to "purchase" foods. In my opinion, the food supply was adequate, including all the rationed items in "Shaba" or, outside. Supply of clothing was more than adequate for the adults, but a family like ours with growing children, has had to augment with purchases from outside, in this case, Montgomery-Ward.

At this point, I must remember Mr. Arthur Rude of San Francisco. Mr. Rude was my business acquaintance who was in brokerage business and through him, I had purchased soybeans when use of domestic soybeans among Japanese became widespread. He was very sympathetic with me and the family when I was interned, and paid me a visit all the way up at Bismarck, and offered me his assistance any way he can. As it was in the early days of my detention, my concern was the money for the family's livelihood. Doubtless, he has put up a convincing argument with the Treasury Dept., to have had succeeded in having my funds, though frozen, separated from those of Ishimitsu Company's. Owing to tough financial situation for the Company during the conversion years, I had not drawn full salary for a number of months, and I was and still am, deeply grateful to Mr. Rude in having those undrawn salaries into my account. Needless for me to say that Mr. Rude was among the very first persons whom I had called upon to express my appreciation upon returning to San Francisco after the war.



The internees' daily lives at Crystal City was little different from outside as the Camp was a mini-community with self-government, works for the able bodied men, schools for the children. Men had choice of work by preference or ability. Even the high teen agers were given work such as ice men. If I remember correctly, all jobs paid the same, \$19 monthly. Adjacent to the camp grounds was a citrus orchard taken care by the internees and the fruits were "sold" at the camp food store. Large land was also available where internees farmed.

Having something to do was good for our morale. There were all sorts of sports for the youngsters of all ages. A sizeable swimming pool was built with the government funds and internee manpower. A young man, Mr. Takeda, was fond of Sumo and the kids, and he gathered children from 7 or 8 and on up to teenagers, taught them Sumo and often put on a tournaments for the enjoyment of all. Akio was old enough to participate and he was good at "Oshi" or pushing. It was the custom of Oba-chan to watch from our front door and a cheer always went up when he won. Very little is mentioned of Tsuneo during these camp life but he was too young to participate in outside of school activities.

As was the case at Bismarck, there were Germans and Italians, all males, at Crystal City. None was seamen. They were permanent residents but not naturalized and interned for the duration. As they were English speaking, I had opportunities to talk with them, and learned that the German customs, family system and philosophy were practically identical with those in Japan. However, it was entirely different with the Italians. They had no backbones. Consequently, the Japanese internees had little to do with the Italians.

As our children were very young, a ^{REASONS WERE FROM HAWAII.} matter of education was no problem. I had decided to send Akio and Tsuneo to Japanese school and kindergarten, not because I was Japanese, but with the thought that this would be the opportunity for them to learn Japanese language hoping that the knowledge would stay with them. It did not work out the way that I had hoped as both had lost most of it, but Akio did talk in fluent Japanese in a Christmas program at the old Pine Church in 1946 to the amazement of the Isseis present.

My job at Crystal City was a newscaster, working under Mr. Ohashi who was from Peru. It was right down my alley as I was bilingual and also had a booming voice. The sources of news were daily newspapers, weekly magazines, radio newscasts a shortwave radio. I do not know how it was smuggled into the Camp. I never asked, but do have a feeling that the guards were good enough to look the other way. I enjoyed the work for a while but as the war's tide turned, it became a chore. But it was a job so I stayed on.

Then came the fateful day for all the Japanese. I am not sure of the exact day but it was in early September. The factory whistles began to shriek and church bells began to toll. I knew from the newspapers that they signified the unconditional surrender of Japan, the J-Day. I turned on the radio. All stations were broadcasting the end of the World War II. It was a dinner time in the camp but a number of people came to our duplex asking about the whistles and church bells. I asked them to wait until the newscast time adding that all will be explained at that time. My wish at the time was that it was not my turn for newscasting. For the first time, I realized how difficult it was to tell others our country has surrendered in the war. The reactions of internees were varied, some showing belief and resultant dejection, some did not want to believe and a few called out "liar" at me. Soon thereafter, the guards began to patrol the compounds, but fortunately, cool heads prevailed and there was no incident of any kind.

With the end of the war, the internees split into 2 factions, the "realists" and a "Katta Gumi", a group of peoples that refused to believe that Japan has surrendered. The latter faction wanted to have nothing to do with the "realists" while the realists had no animosity toward the fanatics. There was no visible change in the daily life, everything going along quietly as usual. It was in October, I believe, that the announcement came from the Office that the hearings will be conducted on both internment and immigration matters.

MUTUAL SAID THERE WERE 3 STRAIGHT 10' DAYS IN A ROW! MADE NOISE WITH
CPVT ISSUE WAKAME.



I had my hearing in November. There were no embarrassing questions so I thought it was just routine.

In the meantime, there was another announcement that there will be an exchange ship for Japan sometime in January of 1946, and those internees and their families wishing to return to Japan should apply. The leaders of the "Katta Gumi" were circulating the camp urging internees to repatriate. We "realists" could not believe our eyes and ears because Japan was in ruins with severe food shortage. Under these circumstances, repatriates would be more or less unwanted, but the "Katta Gumi" insisted that the Japanese government will welcome them back with open arms. All of these were beyond our comprehension. A few of us "realists" got together and decided to do something about this situation. We knew that we would be unwelcome callers but most of the would be repatriates, but to our deep regret, we could not convince any of them. We were not about to give up the idea in spite of total failure the first time around. Our next step was to talk to the children of those would be repatriates. Apparently, these children were thoroughly brain washed by their parents as again, we failed. Those few of us who attempted to persuade the young Niseis were truly shocked and amazed at their negative reaction. For the time being no further attempts were made to have both the Isseis and Niseis change their minds.

Meanwhile, I heard a rumor that was circulating in the Camp to the effect that the "realists" ever repatriate on the same exchange ship with the "Katta Gumi" will be dumped overboard. I simply could not comprehend the thinking of those peoples, and just ignored it. The "realists" were also called "Kokuzoku" or traitors by the "KattaGumi" group. All the while, we selected some Niseis whom we considered more realistic and tried to have them reconsider but without the hoped for result. Considerably later (in 1946), I had read in Japanese newspapers that the situation in the Japanese communities in Brazil and in Hawaiian Islands was much worse after the surrender of Japan. Some "realists" in Brazil were murdered and friction between the "Realists" and "Katta Gumi" continued for a long time. No murders were reported in Hawaii but there remained antagonism with one another for quite some time. To love his country is one thing but to close his eyes to the fact and to refuse to recognize the reality were beyond me.

The day of departure from Crystal City came for those repatriates. Mr. McAlexander, the liaison officer, told me that the Officer in Charge, Mr. O'Rourke was on the train, once again but for the last time, told them that it is not too late for any of them to change the mind and to remain in the States. To our deep regret, there was none.

There was harmony once again in the Camp after the repatriates had left but somehow, things were not the same. The results of the hearings were being announced all the while, but the release of "parolees" did not begin until after the departure of repatriates. All internees were very happy to note that there was no adverse result for anyone.

Reverting to the hearings, it has been mentioned elsewhere that there were a considerable number of internees from Peru and some from Panama, and their families. Why they were sent to the States, no one knows. They told me that their properties were confiscated by the respective governments. All of them spoke fluent Spanish but very few spoke English. This posed a problem in the conduct of hearings. I was requested to serve as an interpreter and I most gladly accepted. After one of the hearings, the chief hearing officer asked me why a person like myself who spoke fluent English is doing in an internement camp. I told him in details what had happened to me since the war and that I am at a loss as to why I was detained with the exception that I was in U. S. as treaty trader. We became good friends since this first conversation, and later, I told him of my plight that I was under a deportation order. It was one of my happiest moments for me when this immigration officer offered to do whatever he can to have the deportation order rescinded.

Sometime later, an order rescinding my deportation came through, to my delight proving that to help others is to one's self.



Soon after the releases of internees began in early 1946, I was asked to serve as the Spokesman for the remaining Japanese internees. I accepted with reluctance as it is a thankless job to act as the go-between. It was in early February that I was advised by Mr. O'Rourke that a contingent of internees from Tule Lake Camp will be joining us. Apparently, the Camp officials were apprehensive because the internees there were known for their nationalistic and non-cooperative attitudes. It was a great relief for me to see Mr. Iwao Shimizu (presently, president of Hokubei Mainichi newspaper) at the head of the small contingent of about 25. My warm greetings to Mr. Shimizu and the others helped relieve Camp officers' apprehension. There were no incidents of any kind and the Camp life was same as before their arrival.

Almost 8 months after the end of the war, notice of my release was received. Prior to this, I had contacted my cousin, Mr. Ed Matsuda who was living in Denver and was a partner in Modern Food Products at the time, concerning job prospects. It was his suggestion that I see Mr. Wesley Oyama, another MFP partner, who had his office in San Francisco. Having heard about the lack of good housing for the returnees in the Bay Area, I had asked for help by writing to Mr. Saichi Mizono (father). He was so kind as to reserve a vacant apartment with Mr. Suenaga who owned a large duplex across from Mr. Mizono's home on 900 block of Steiner St. So, I had considered myself as one of the fortunate ones, having a place to live and a job prospect.

SEGREGATION IN THE SOUTH

A few words about the segregation in the South as I had seen it. On the day of our departure from Crystal City station, I noticed "white" and "Blacks" signs posted in the waiting room, rest rooms, water fountain, etc. Coaches of the train was also segregated, with a small section set aside for the blacks. Frankly, all this did not bother me, nor did I feel compassion toward the blacks. Then came the dinner time on the train. As is customary, the black waiter made the rounds of the train announcing dinner time, so we made our reservation. I remember that it was after 9 P. M. when we returned from the diner to our seats. The blacks were still waiting. They were not permitted in the diner until the last white passenger had finished his meal and left the diner. This was when I felt very sorry for the blacks. When the train left El Paso, the last stop in Texas, the screen dividing the white and black section was removed. This gave me an undescrivable strange feeling.

As we were to change trains at Los Angeles for San Francisco, we spent the first night in L. A. at the old and decrepit Miyako Hotel at San Pedro and E. First St. The Little Tokyo of Los Angeles was yet partly occupied by blacks and run down. We finally arrived in San Francisco and settled into our apartment with 2 rooms and a kitchen with community bath and toilet as the upper floor of a duplex was converted into several apartments. Ours was small, but considered adequate because of the housing shortage. Several days passed before I paid a visit to K. Sakai Co., to consult Mr. Tamotsu Sakai as to the job prospects, and coincidentally with Mr. Matsuda, he also suggested that I see Mr. Oyama. The Nihonjinmachi in S. F. was even in worse condition than L. A., as there were a large number of blacks still occupying the houses along Post and other streets.

When I went to see Mr. Oyama who had his office at 12 Geary St., he hired me on the spot at \$300 per month. Frankly, I did not know if it were a good pay or not as I had no idea of the going wages in 1946. Regardless, however, I was very happy to have gotten a job with MFP because it was engaged in some manufacturing of Japanese type of food products, a wholesale business and was doing some export to Hawaii in which I had plenty of experience and knowledge, except manufacturing. On the very first day, I started to pound out letters to those customers in Hawaii with whom I had done business during the Ishimitsu days. Many responses were received, some with encouragements and some asking me to make offers on certain items. It was very heart warming to me to say the least and I felt overwhelmed by the kind words with which so many of my customers "welcomed" me back into business world.



Evidently, Mr. Oyama was impressed with those correspondences that I received, and sent me to the Islands in July where I spent about a month, renewing acquaintances and to establish business connections. This was the time when I told a fib to Oba-chan when I told her that I was "sailing" to Honolulu when in reality, I was to fly by Pan Am, and sent home a card about a week after my arrival there. I do not quite remember if I had let your mother in on this at the time. Most likely not, just to keep her innocence.

It was sometime in 1947 when businessmen in the States were permitted to purchase Japanese merchandise through U. S. Commercial Co., a government agency set up in Japan. All purchases were made by way of bids. One item that still remains in my mind is bamboo fishing poles for tuna fishing. Knowing that the market was completely dry after more than 4 years, I went all out for it in the bid, and was successful in the bid. I do not remember the quantity involved, the amount of my bid, but I do remember that it was in middle 5 figures. Then I picked up the phone and contacted Van Camp people in San Pedro first and West Gate in San Diego next. I remember that it was the West Gate Packing that accepted my offer, which was all or nothing deal (seller's market). I believe that I nearly doubled the cost and the merchandise was sold before its arrival. Business was really sweet then. By this time, I was admitted into partnership in MFP with 10% share for \$10,000. Having no cash, I had cashed my life insurance and borrowed the rest from Mr. Ed Matsuda.

Later, when businessmen from U. S., were permitted to enter Japan, Wesley asked me to go. I desperately wanted to go as I could have killed 2 birds with one stone - to do business and to see all of my relatives. I have had to decline however, because of my immigration status - that of a parolee - with responsibility to report to the Immigration on quarterly basis. As a consequence, Wesley decided to go and go he did. With guts, which he has plenty, he bought and shipped anything and everything that could be sold here. We have had no competition for sometime as Wesley was the only person from Northern California that went to Japan at that time. Everything he shipped we sold, practically doubling the money, sometimes more. As the saying goes in Japan, we couldn't stop laughing. A year or so later, Pacific Mutual Sales, organized by Messrs. Kuwada and Hamai came into being but they too are good businessmen, they were also getting all that the market could bear. Mr. Jozo Sugihara joined them later when they needed additional capital.

Business continued to be good but there was a slight slack period in 1949, and then came the Korean War in 1950. Business began to boom again as Japanese merchants were fearful that the shipments from Japan might stop. It was a seller's market once again as everybody was scrambling for merchandise. One day in 1951 or 1952, can't remember exactly, Mr. Bob Pringle a business acquaintance of Wesley's who had his office in the same building, 25 California St., came to our office (Mr. Pringle was a military broker then) and lamented about the lack of canned tomato products due to scarce crop that year. While I do not remember who mentioned it (most likely Wesley) but it was decided that we buy and sell the Mexican products. The Military, who insists on American products, relented to accept the Mexican products with the condition that the cannery and canning must be under the supervision and inspection of U. S. Dept. of Agriculture. If I remember correctly, Bob Pringle as a broker was to maintain contact with the Military, Wesley was to establish connection with a dependable cannery in Mexico, Clem Oyama was in charge of our end of the canning operation to see that we will get our required quantities of tomato products, and my job was to obtain supplies of empty cans and its shipments to the Mexican cannery and to maintain contacts with Bank of America for the required financing. Everything went along very smoothly and MFP ended up with very large profits that year. It should be mentioned here that Wesley is a considerate and a very generous man, notwithstanding the rumors and stories being circulated concerning his certain activities in Japan, as he offered to his partners extra dividends out of his pocket, stating that it is far better to give us the extra dividend than to pay large taxes to Uncle Sam. There are very, very few people who would do this.

The Bank of America (Mr. Thomas Blake, presently Vice President) had been very generous in financing MFP's many business deals where financing was required.



There was one instance, however, that we were very disappointed but later turned to our gratitude to Bank of America. I recall that this was in 1948 involving some \$250,000 worth of canned crabmeat in London but packed by the Russians. As we had done so well with the Japanese crabmeats, we wanted to bid on the Russian crabs as well. Naturally, we turned to Bank of America for financing in the event that we were the successful bidders. The B/A agreed conditionally because of the amount involved and the condition was our Net Worth. Our books were audited by the bank auditors. Mr. Blake informed us that the bank must decline to finance the deal as our net worth was somewhat inadequate. We were terribly disappointed to say the least. Jensen Co., in Seattle turned out to be the successful bidder, and the merchandise was shipped from London to Boston. Because of the cold war going on between U. S. and the Soviets, the Longshoremen's Union on the East Coast refused to unload the shipment. As a consequence, Jensen Company has had to ship the merchandise back to England, and took considerable loss. We had never anticipated such a situation either, so we would have suffered substantial loss had we been the successful bidder. This is the reason I stated that we were grateful to B/A for refusing to finance this deal.

All the while, Wesley was really active in Japan. In addition to buying and shipping merchandise to U. S., he had organized American Drug Corporation, the American Pharmacy and engaged in other business activities. These businesses flourished as only the American citizens were permitted to import merchandise into Japan at that time

INVOLVEMENT IN THE JAPANESE COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

During my high school days, Mr. Ishimitsu on occasions advised me against becoming involved in the Japanese community affairs because one will just be taken for granted if all goes well, and will be subjected to criticisms in the event of a failure to accomplish the objective. I was not at all interested in the community affairs even in the the period just prior to the war as business came first with me. Consequently, I joined no organization in the Japanese community.

In the fall of 1948 when Japanese businesses had been on the increase, a suggestion was brought up by Mr. Aki Moriwaki and other Issei and Nisei businessmen that a Japanese Chamber of Commerce be revived in San Francisco. After a number of meetings, a charter and by-laws were drawn and the Japanese Chamber came into being. The name selected was Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Northern California so that the Japanese businessmen and professional men in any part of Northern California may become members. (The year may have had been 1949). I declined the presidency because of business pressure but my request was denied and was installed as the charter president.

The ensuing 15 months may be considered as my busiest period of my life. As mentioned elsewhere, MFP became very busy with the outbreak of the Korean war, U. S. and Japanese relations were gradually being returned to normal, Japanese Government Overseas Agency, a forerunner of the consulate, was being established in San Francisco and as a Chamber president, assistance had to be extended to them, Japanese freighters began to call at San Francisco and I have had to represent the Chamber at all receptions and the peace treaty conference in San Francisco. It seemed as though everything happened in 1950. There are a number of photographs taken during that year in my albums.

There are innumerable events since that time in which I had participated in some way, but the situation under which I assumed the general chairmanship of the welcome committee for the Crown Prince Akihito of Japan deserves a mention here.

One day in 1953, I believe, I received a phone call from Consul General Katsuno for a conference. To my surprise, the conference turned out to be his request for me to become a general chairman of the welcome committee. Needless to say that I declined stating that there are many "capable" leaders in the Japanese community. After several meetings, Mr. Katsuno finally told me that all the leaders wished to serve as the chairman, and



as a consequence, the Ad Hoc committee could not agree on the chairmanship. Strangely, however, they would have no objection to my becoming a general chairman. Inasmuch as the time was of essence and to relieve Mr. Katsuno from any embarrassment, I reluctantly accepted the position. The weeks of preparation were tough because no "miss" or "error" for the event such as this will be permitted.

On the day of the welcome reception, I went out to the Sigmund Stern Grove in early morning for the final checkup of all preparations. It was a beautiful and a warm day and everything went along very smoothly without any hitch. At the end of the day, I was completely exhausted that I was unable to eat my dinner. Just took a bath and hit the hay. I was most grateful to the committeemen who worked so hard to make it a memorable one for the peoples of Japanese community who attended, including Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. My gratitude also goes to your mother for preparing my welcome remarks on such a short notice. It was a beautiful speech as I received many favorable comments from peoples that I did not even know. Your mother has become my speech writer since then, with no pay.

CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL / NIHONMACHI MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION

My voluntary participation in the Nihonmachi festival has the origin back in the early days of the Japanese Chamber. It was under a financial pressure due to a small membership, and for few years after its revival, Mr. Keni Kasai, owner of Kasai Securities Co.) and I called on prospective new members, soliciting their membership in the Japanese Chamber. A few words about Mr. Kasai at this time. Mr. Kasai was a gentleman of integrity and of high moral standards, who always has had the interest and well being of the Japanese community at heart. He has never sought honors nor did he seek publicity for his contribution to the Japanese community. For being a man of outspoken words in his beliefs, he had made some enemies, but I had always have to this day admired him. He passed away about 10 years ago. In my opinion, Mr. Kasai is one of the most deserving man in our community to receive a decoration from the Japanese government, but unfortunately, this award was revived after his passing and that the government of Japan does not make awards posthumously (or so I have been informed, not by the Japanese Consulate General directly but by an informant).

During these rounds of calls on the prospective members, we were frequently asked and told that the Japanese Chamber of the pre-war years did nothing for the local business or the community and what do I get out of being a member of the Japanese Chamber. Being fully aware that the prewar Chamber contributed practically nothing to the local Japanese business and community, I had made up my mind to do something about this as a Chamber's project when the opportunity presented itself. Nothing at the time would help the Nihonmachi as many blacks were still there and not many retail shops were back in business.

A few years later, it was made public that the Western Addition is in the redevelopment area and I was invited to the meetings held in Nihonmachi to discuss the possibilities of tackling the redevelopment by the Japanese. My proposal for consideration was to organize a non-profit corporation and attempt to raise funds as this procedure will more or less put to test the feasibility. To my disappointment, it was not approved by the Ad Hoc committee; therefore, I resigned. I had continued to watch the developments in Nohonmachi but there was none, all talk and no positive actions. Later, a syndicate, composed of Japanese and an American from Honolulu with an ambitious plan won the approval of the Redevelopment Agency and eventually won the bid for the area known as A-1 covering a 3-block area from Laguna to Fillmore bounded by Geary and Post. Disappointed as I was to see an outsider taking over the development of Nihonmachi, I was most pleased to know that a new Nihonmachi will emerge in not too distant future and that I may have the opportunity that I had been waiting for to do something for it upon completion of construction.

I believe that it was in January of 1971 when I began to organize the Ad Hoc committee by requesting all organizations in the Japanese community and the churches to send representatives to the committee meetings. I took the initiative in this instance, and meetings were held once a month. In the meantime, I has requested that the Japanese Chamber of Commerce



sponsor this project and that the Chamber membership offer the financial aid, outlining the reason, and easily won its approval. The first task was to choose the appropriate name for the event, second being the program and the other was the finances. The selection of the name was relatively easy as cherry is the national flower of Japan and that the event was to take place in the spring as completion of the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center was scheduled for late February of 1968. As for the programs, we have had to start from the scratch so the committee has decided to look into such similar festivals as the Nisei Week in Los Angeles, Cherry Blossom Festival in Honolulu and the Chinese New Year Festival in San Francisco. In the meantime, I was selected to serve as the General Chairman and I gladly accepted. While the committee was working on various aspects, your mother and I visited the Nisei Week Festival in August of 1967 to personally see what, how and why of various events held. Mr. Ed Matsuda had served on the Nisei Week committee for many years so his advices and through his introductions, advices from many other committeemen were received which proved to be of tremendous help. Some advices were received from the Chinese New Year festival committee also, but they were somewhat reluctant to talk freely for obvious reason - competition. To finance this Festival, the subcommittee had decided to print the souvenir programs with advertisements (same as in the Nisei Week). Inasmuch as the committee was groping in the dark insofar as the amount that can be raised through this method even though it had the endorsement of the Japanese Chamber, the program committee was asked to plan all programming on minimum of costs. Having learned that the Chinese New Year Festival receives financial support from the City, we visited the S. F. Visitors and Convention Bureau to request a financial subsidy. The director was most understanding and introduced us to the City's Chief Administrative officer, Mr. Brooks. I am most grateful to Mr. Brooks for granting us \$3,500 (I think this was the amount) subsidy. This was extraordinary in that the city subsidies for various events are setup at the beginning of the Fiscal year (July) while we met Mr. Brooks in the late fall.

With the city subsidy assured and programming making progress, things began to look brighter. The finance committee still had its work cut out for them but I was hopeful that the Chamber members will come through. The festival queen pageant was on the program and among the candidates was Miss Terry Iwasaki, a daughter of Mr. Kojiro Iwasaki who was a member of the Nikkei Lions Club who sponsored her notwithstanding the fact that Mr. Iwasaki was with the Bank of Tokyo of Calif. As a committee chairman, I accompanied the queen candidates to meet with Mayor Alioto for the official picture taking ceremony. I must admit that its a good feeling to be surrounded by beautiful and intelligent young ladies. Preparations became hectic and committee meetings were held on weekly basis for 2 months prior to the opening day. Then came the good news from the finance committee that it is most likely that the income from advertisements would exceed the budget (\$10,000 approximately). This was a tremendous relief to me.

Came the opening day (Friday) which was attended by many dignitaries including the Mayor, Consul General of Japan, the director of the Redevelopment Agency. The entire committee was overwhelmed with happiness that at last a Festival was being held in Nihonmachi. The climax of the Festival was the Grand Parade, an all Japanese parade which drew a substantial number of viewers to Nihonmachi which was never accomplished in the past. We were blessed with a good weather as it was bright and warm all through 3 days of the festival, and it rained on Monday, the day after the final day!

It was one of my happiest days of my life, having been able to bring to a successful conclusion the very first Cherry Blossom Festival, with the assistance and cooperations of very hard working committeemen and the members of the Japanese Chamber and I am eternally grateful to them. I was also overwhelmed by sincere congratulations offered me by friends and by those that I did not even know. Needless for me to say that the Festival could have been better and that there were flaws due to no experience. Imperfections as noted by the committee and by the public who were kind enough to write or phone us, have been recorded to be passed on to the committees to follow for their references. The committee was happy too in that the Festival had a small surplus (about \$2,000) which would be passed on to the next committee. This was some achievement, I think, thanks to many contributors.



To each and every member of the committee who worked so hard and so faithfully to bring this Festival into being goes my everlasting thanks as I know that without their unselfish help and cooperation, I would not have been able to achieve my wish of "doing something for the Nihonmachi". We have had pleasant as well as unpleasant moments in the course of meetings, but we were always work out the differences to the satisfaction of all concerned.

My special thanks go to Mr. Hisao Hoshino, who served as the subcommittee for the Grand Parade chairman. This was the most difficult task of all among the program and realizing that, he literally worked day and night on the plan and to get the cooperation of many organization to participate in the parade. Being the only all Japanese parade, it was entirely different from any other parades held in San Francisco each year, and in my humble estimation, it was truly a hilite of the Cherry Blossom Festival. Being a very first Festival, we were not able to get the publicity desired in the local newspapers, radios and the TV stations, but in spite of lack of publicity, the turnout for the parade far exceeded our expectations, and repoted as the unparalleled crowd in the Nihonmachi by the ethenic newspapers.

THE NIHONMACHI MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION

While working on the Cherry Blossom Festival, I learned of the friction between the merchants located in the Japanese Center and those outside of the Center for petty jealousy. I thought that this was ridiculous because I had made it my business to tell the merchants on the opposite side of Post Street that the Center will eventually become a tourist attraction and will bring added business to all merchants in Nihonmachi. Really, I could not understand why they were unable to see that the visitors will go through the Center as well as the opposite side of the street once they are in Nihonmachi. Be that as it may, I was afraid that the Cherry Blossom Festival in the ensuing years may encounter difficulties if the friction persisted. I could have served as the go between, but thought that a neutral person who commands respect of both sides and who is located in the Nihonmachi would serve the purpose better. Mr. Nagamura, manager of Japan Center office of Bank of Tokyo was the person I had selected. I discussed the matter with him thoroughly and asked him to initiate the formation of Nihonmachi Merchants Association. Fortunately, he accepted the responsibility and did a good job of it. All merchants that know Mr. Nagamura is very grateful to him, and none of them know that I was behind the whole idea. That's the way I wanted it as all the credit should go to Mr. Nagamura as he did all the work.

It is very gratifying to see that the Nihonmachi Merchants Association is working smoothly and in harmony, planning and staging many events in and around the Center to attract people to Nihonmachi.

The Cherry Blossom Festival and the Nihonmachi Merchants Association are just 2 of many examples to prove that when determined peoples who seek no recognition with a worthy purpose to accomplish, will and can get things done. There were a number of recognition seekers among the Isseis, but to their credit, they too, go some contributions to the Japanese community.

On the other hand, the older Niseis (in the 45 year to 55 years old age bracket, and older) it seems to me are self centered and seemingly have no concern for the community. Many of them are successful businessmen and professional peoples and very well to do. I simply can not understand their way of thinking in this regard. Probably this attitude of the older Niseis brought about the admirable actions on the part of such organizations as Kimochi group, etc., to do something for the Isseis and for the community. I have actually seen the Kimochi group in action and I do say that its leaders and members have by respect.