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Attitude Toward Society and School

There is a type of student who thinks "oh, what's the use of going to school here, they haven't got a thing." He only comes because of his parents; so naturally he will not study. He will stay out of class as much as possible, resenting everyone and everything. Another may come just because the rest of the gang is here. He might as well do what everyone else is doing.

One boy in a certain gang may not be so bad, but he will be an out-cast if he does not do as others. I have heard of many cases of stealing in the canteen. The first boy snatches a sweater, he passes it back, the next person does also, and so on. This boy I mentioned cannot do anything but pass it on as others did. He may be the last one and be caught.

Some pupils are very rude to parents, teachers, friends and the like. Like in the study halls, when a gang get together, they are just uncontrollable. Yesterday when one of the nominees was giving his campaign speech, he hesitated at the end. The boys in the back, I presume, had heard the speeches over and over. They actually got together and finished the candidate's speech, embarrassing and surely hurting this candidate's feelings.

Many parents think that their child is just an angel. They are so innocent; they do not know anything bad could be done by Junior. What an easy life for Junior. He can do so much without his parents even suspecting.

The attitudes of the people that steal things are just this. What is the use of buying things when I can easily get it free. People who buy are just suckers.

The parents are the ones who may keep the children most to adjust themselves. They should have serious heart to heart talks explaining the circumstances they will face after the war.

The student should try to get away from the old gang and make better new friends.

Barbul  
POD

491  
Male

Anywhere there is always the people who are cynical and against the world because they believe the world is against them. These are the two percent of society. Not only are they cynical but cause others to fall in their category.

The main cause of this feeling is due naturally to evacuation, but also family life, associations, and school has much to do with it. One of the most important reasons is the one word "gossip," which can change a person to become self conscious and many times cynical.

Attitude shows themselves through speech and their actions in every day doings. At home--always <sup>r</sup>umbl<sup>a</sup>ng about life and how they wish they could leave this place. In school they care less about their studies and think what's the use of studying, for probably a mimeographed diploma. They feel teachers probably could not find positions outside and in desperation came to the project to teach. Their attitude toward others who are capable is jealousy.

Adjustments maybe made at home and at school. Since here in camp there is such question among people living closely together. Adjustments should be made first at home, where parents should be understanding. The students should be made in the school where teachers should take an interest towards this two percent. Not that they are problem students, but should if we were to find the feelings and understand the problem that is bothering them. For there is always something under problems.

The school should not always spend time on subject of truancy, but should instead have counselors who will understand student's personal problem. It seems that the office is always worried about truancy. I think counselors should act as advisors of these problems.

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Barbul  
POD

Male

Some type of people's attitude in this school are such persons who don't take this school seriously and don't study their required subjects in the manner he should. This is caused by the school itself because some of the classes doesn't have the required tools to work with, such as books. There was a case in my first period class in which students didn't hand in their work daily or weekly whichever it may be. Of course, these students receive an F.

The excuse these students had were "How can we work without tools." Of course, no one can work with(out) tool, but they should at least attempt to try. They were warned by the instructor, first of the year, that there were no tools and they would have to do their best by borrowing other friends' tools.

There is another case in which students refused to take part in P.E. activities because of lack of equipment. Each day they would take their time going out into the playing field. They were bawled out by the instructor several times and were threatened to be given F's for the quarter if they didn't snap out of it.

I would suggest that student himself consider that we are in war and equipment for the school is hard to get because of war priority and because transportation facilities. The school can help by trying to provide the students with required tools or equipment. They shouldn't have started school in the first place without equipment.

Barbul  
POD

Female

Students who are anti-socialist and are always disagreeing with others are usually very poor in school work or more or less ignorant. When they get behind in their school work, they blame the teacher and others and not themselves. These students disturb class and make sarcastic remarks.

Some students have an ill-feeling toward the society because they cannot face the problem of going without many things and fun which they had before the evacuation. They join a group of rowdy gang and disturb society to attract a little attention.

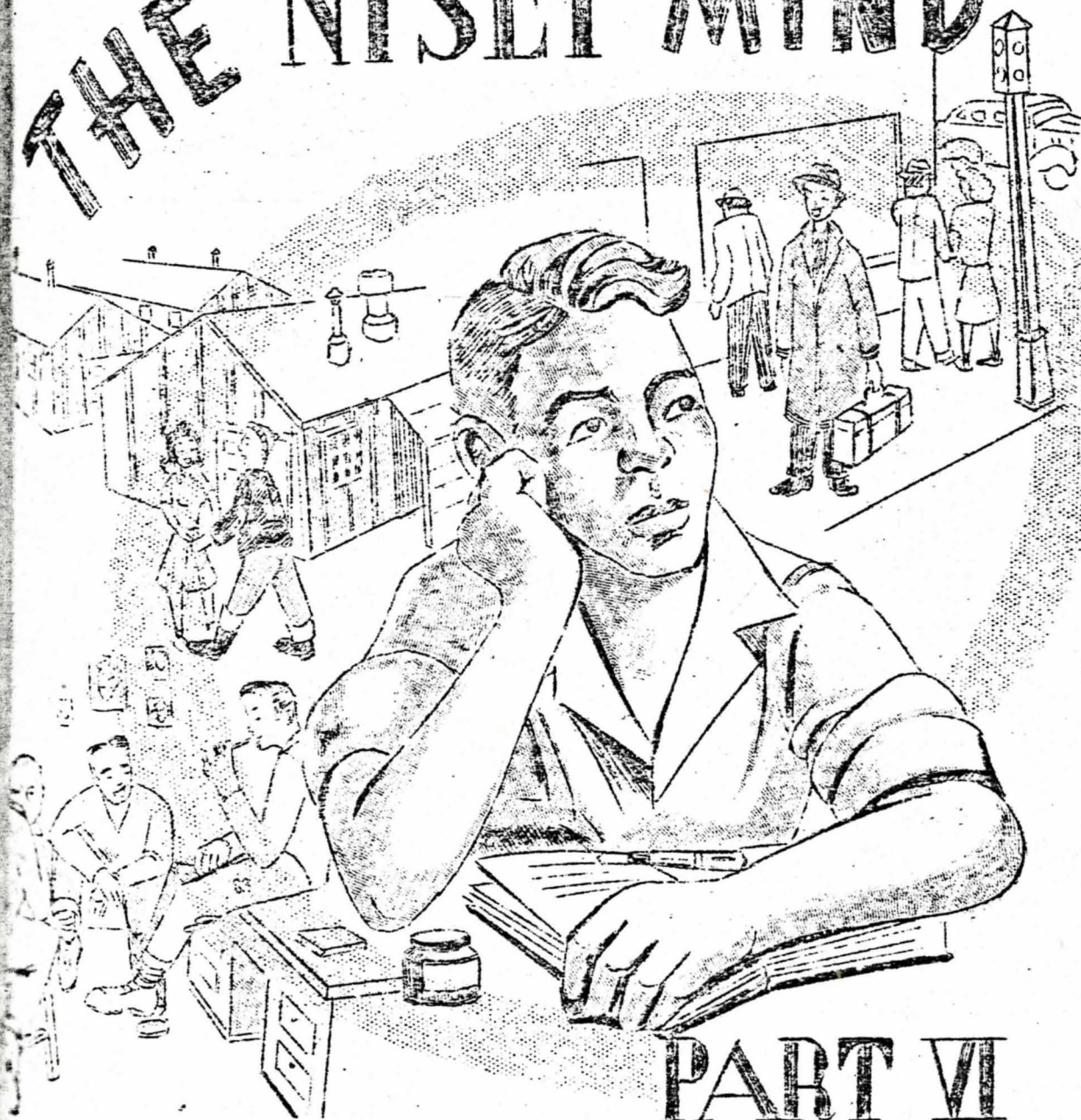
If it is possible to find out a certain interest of these individuals, the school could work toward helping him adjust himself through this certain interest. For example, if this certain individual had some interest for music or art, the school could persuade him to take this music or art class and join clubs pertaining to it. As his interest grows on the subject, he may gradually forget his ill feelings and adjust himself to a normal student. As he joins these clubs, he will meet new students and

CHAPTER XIII

"ASPIRATIONS"



# THE NISEI MIND



PART VI



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Introduction to Chapter XIII

A younger group of students in one of the lower grades of the six-grade Tri-State High School is asked here to discuss the careers they hope later to pursue and to present their thoughts about their future beyond the war years. There are so few compositions in this section that they can be read productively only as suggesting in a general way the kinds of responses that would be representative of the total enrollment of boys and girls in these grades at Tule Lake in that first year. The small group of students who wrote these brief compositions reveals career interests and attitudes which appear to be very little different from those one would expect to find among students of that age group in other American high schools and junior high schools in that period. Boys' interest in aviation and mechanics is obviously strong; both boys and girls are interested in careers in popular fields of entertainment. In most instances, the careers in which they express interest lie outside the knowledge and experience of their parents. Very frequently in Japanese-American families, strongly contrasting career perspectives and work experience created a gulf between the parents and children. Before and during the War, Nisei often reported that they had had great difficulty in speaking about career interests with their parents. Frequently the occasion for family discussion on the youth's future career came, without much preparation, at the point when some immediate decision had to be made about education, vocational training, or taking a job. Such occasions were sometimes exceedingly painful to all members of the family.

because of the attention they drew to the extent of the differences in values, perspectives, and career expectations. Such encounters were often made more difficult by the demands the occasion placed on the linguistic skills of the two generations.

A number of the essays in this brief section speak very generally about attitudes toward work and career preparations rather than upon specific career goals--as one would expect of youths in the beginning years of their junior high school and high school instruction.

Some of the youths who write in this section--and older high school students elsewhere in this book--speak of the conditions that may exist at the end of the War which might well determine their access to the training they need in order to attain their occupational goals. They write also of the factors that may affect their actual employment once their training has actually been completed. In essays and compositions throughout the book, students frequently express their convictions that the attitudes toward Japanese Americans after the War will be more negative than at present. In part, as some point out, this is because of the cumulative effect of war-nurtured hostility and in part because of the mounting casualties that will spread bitterness against Japanese Americans among an increasing number of bereaved families. Others have less to say about the measure of acceptance that is likely to prevail at the conclusion of hostilities. Even most of those who are most concerned join with the others in emphasizing the importance of their own attitudes, their own preparation for the future, and the purposeful activities in which they can already engage themselves. The predominant orientation toward their careers



in the future--as expressed by high school youths in the various sets of writings in the book--is positive. It is positive in the sense that while the situation is truly difficult, "it is possible for us to affect our future circumstances constructively," or "we have to make the best of it." That represents the prevailing mood on the references to careers and work in these writings although there are some exceptions it is true. More than this general descriptive summary is hard to provide. The question of how representative these compositions are of all school-aged children is impossible to say very clearly; even less clear is the extent to which they might be considered representative of Tule Lake Nisei in general in that first year of internment.

Over and over again in the various classes, students are concerned that "we are becoming lazy" or "we are losing our ambition," or "we are becoming dependent" instead of "improving ourselves" with forethought and determination so that "we may later take our places in normal American society." There is little disposition evinced here to write in self pity or with a sense of personal or collective defeat. Occasionally one writes with sharp bitterness. The tone not infrequently sounds moralistic. The "waste-time-kind" individuals were, in common conversation in teen-aged circles at Tule Lake, condemned for their drifting, indolence, ineffectiveness, or purposelessness. Work habits in camp are indeed important, it is widely affirmed, in creating patterns of behavior that are likely to continue far beyond the period of internment into adult years. Above all, one hears

repeatedly affirmed, it is important to recognize the possibilities even in the difficult circumstances in which they find themselves; the wisest and healthiest way to respond to these circumstances is to mobilize one's personal resources, to be serious about one's plans, and to move ahead step by step. This is the kind of behavior that is most often extolled in the essays and compositions.

The young people who have written the materials in this book seem intent upon acquiring a command of American cultural skills and practical tools which seem to them to be needed for accomplishing their career goals. In this intent they were given encouragement and direction by their teachers.

The evacuation set into motion influences which aided in releasing the Nisei from the strict control of their parents and the constraints of Japanese community pressures. In experiencing these broad changes, the Nisei were able to make wider and more varied occupational choices than would have been possible before the evacuation. The evacuation forced the dispersion of the Japanese population from its pre-war concentrations; although the vast majority returned to the West Coast, the old communities were never re-created. The Nisei, as they moved into their adulthood in the post-relocation-center years, gained a new autonomy and mobility. Because of the inter-play of a number of important factors, the Nisei were to experience a measure of upward social mobility that is striking in the annals of American minorities. These circumstances are reflected in the findings of a recent study that about half of the Nisei population believes that the evacuation in the long run was beneficial to their interests.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Kiefer, op. cit., 67.

In the early 1970s, decades after the essays and compositions in this volume were written, the Sansei according to some observers had come to view the parental generation stereotypically as being overly-concerned with their upward social mobility and with the symbols of success. In supporting this Sansei stereotype of the Nisei generation, Kiefer writes that the single most salient characteristic of Nisei personality is "their grim determination to achieve a comfortable level of wealth and prestige."<sup>1</sup> If it proves to be true that Nisei can be so characterized and that these stereotypical notions have indeed some basis in fact, the question still remains as to whether they are markedly different from the same generation among the Caucasians and others among whom they now work and live. The intriguing question remains as to how much in their values and behaviors they were influenced by the experience of the evacuation and the period of impoundment.



(Female)

## Life

I am fifteen years of age, and by this time I think I know something about life. When I was a little girl, I thought life gave anything you wanted on a silver platter. Now I am mistaken. If you want anything you must work for it and work you must. Life is indeed a mystery as no one knows when he is going to die or what. As I must fulfill my life for years yet to come, I must make the best of it.

(Male)

My future is aviation. If I do not pass as a cadet in the U.S. Army, I'll just go as a mechanic. My career is to fly a transport of one of those heavy bombers in the army. In learning to be a mechanic is a good thing to learn in the future. After retiring from the army or airline company, you could start an auto garage fixing automobiles.

In flying one of those new planes is lot of fun, I think. Most of the people are going into aviation. In flying a high-powered P-40, P-38 are lots of fun to make a dive at 20,000 feet high. In watching the army boys handling the plane, they think nothing of it.

(Male)

This camp life is getting me down, doing nothing. Maybe if I was outside, I may be able to help Uncle Sam in defense work, which I always wanted to do. Staying in this camp is tiresome and monotonous. It sure wrecks us young Nisei. I used to think a bit about U.S.A. before this war occurred, but my hope is losing. If I was home I could have gotten most of our apples and pears picked. Right now at home they are having a hard time getting workers to pick fruit. Many 1,000 of boxes are wasted.

Cora Uyeda

Since the evacuation the lives of many thousand have been uprooted. This vicissitude has changed the mode of living, and is vividly revealed here in this camp. The family life in Tulelake is quite contrasting from what it is outside. It is simple and yet complex. There are many points to consider. I shall try to discuss the numerous problems that is prevalent throughout the camp.

We're among one race of people which makes us likely to become more Japanesey. We speak more Japanese or a combination of the two languages. Many of the things are adopted more or less in a Japanese fashion. Of course, mingling among one race of people will eliminate race prejudice, but what about the future. Should we get out of the camp, we should be so Americanized to minimize the race discrimination. I think after the war there will be a bitter hatred toward the Japanese, especially those people who had their husbands or sons killed during the war.

This camp life is leading many of the people "to take it easy." As long as one is in camp there isn't too much of a financial worry. When one has a job, life in camp is easy as the government is providing food, clothing, and shelter. The "I don't care" attitude is common because one thinks there is no future. The stagnant mind and a long period of dependency will result into hardships later on. Is it possible to take responsibility once again after the war without extreme difficulty.

Are we developing our personality? In my opinion I think the old men and women seems to be gossiping all the time spreading and originating rumors. The kids are getting bold and more loquacious. The manners aren't improving. The young boys' and girls' table manners are absent. I know in few number of cases where the mothers are so busy conversing among themselves there's no time to tend to their youngsters. Many of the boys have adopted the smoking habit early in youth.