

My Future Plan by Michiko Mikami

1998.38.17

Michiko Mikami
Sr. Problems Per VII
February 24, 1943

My Future Plan

There are number of things that come to my mind about the future, however, probably the standing of the Nisei in the future is the most important one, which involves me.

As I look back at the days when I was in Los Angeles, at times of peace, I recall very clearly that I was treated just like any other citizen, and I can imagine every Nisei was too. Even after the war was started between American, and Japan, the people were very kind to me, and tried to help me in every way. At that time I did not wonder about the future but after coming to camp, I was wandering what was going to become of us nisei's in the future.

As the months went by every so often I hear of my friends being taken by the F.B.I. Then came the month of March, the month I will never forget. My brother was married, and soon after my mother came down with fever. I had to stay home, from school, to take the place of my mother in our grocery store, as butcher, although I was an amateur at it. Then suddenly on March 13 my father was taken by the F.B.I. in connection with the Japanese school. Also that day a man from the taxes bureau came down and said we did not pay enough of some kind of taxes and so fined us hundreds of dollars. Finally came the day I had to quit school, because I missed so much, and I knew I could not make it up even though I went back. Then came the talk of evacuation. I thought I could not stand any more things happening, but I knew everybody else was in the same boat, in fact worse. It seems as though what happened after that is just like a nightmare, selling the stock, taking inventory until three in the morning, selling our car and truck, getting ready for evacuation, moving to another part of the city, etc. Even now I can not recall all the things I did at that time.

I was very bitter about my father being taken, at that time when I needed him most, for no reason at all. I did not think he did anything because, all he did for the Japanese school, we went to, was to help collect funds for the community and take care of affair's that arised about school problems. He also collected funds for various charity such as, Red Cross, Community Chest, and many other important charity organization. I thought that this was a worthy cause to help people in need? Instead it gets my father into a concentration camp. I guess the F. B.I. had good reason for taking him. Nevertheless he was released many months after I came to the Manzanar camp. Even to this day my father nor I know the reason why he was held!

Henry L. Stimson Secretary of War thinks very strangely that every Nisei should be sent back to Japan after the war to avoid the possibility of another espionage act by us. However, in my opinion all the nisei's should not be sent back to Japan.

The United States of America is a rainbow in other words. It is a blending of many colors and creeds and culture. During the past four hundred years the native Indians were almost outnumbered or taken out by the streams of people who have poured in from every country of Europe Irish, Germans, Italians, Scandinavians, Russia, Poles, Czechs, Serbs, Greeks, Turks, Jews, and from the orient, Chinese and Japanese. Some of us think of America as owned by a single racial stock or cultural group. It is far from it, America, is the home of all the many very different races, and people who came here seeking freedom and opportunity, and stayed here to build a great democracy. The thought of this country being the home of many races, are not in the minds of many people so I see. That means regardless of color or race everybody is equal. But that does not hold out now. We, the people in camps, for example, are not free we are not being treated as other Americans are. If they left us alone, in other words, without evacuating us, I do not think I would feel the way I do now. I have also seen other nisei's change their feelings toward America, as I have. I am not against all American people because there are lots of people who have helped me and my parents in times of need, and in many difficulties.

The citizens of United States should not be deprived of their property without considering proper agreement, this naturally mean the nisei's holding land or property would not logically like to sell their land but they would be forced to do so if sent back to Japan. The nisei's who stay in America will not be able to go back to their normally living like they have been, during the past thirty or forty year. If we cannot have the rights as citizens of United States, as they have deprived us of our citizenship by putting us in concentration camps, torn away from families and friends, we might as well go to Japan where we will be treated equally. If we cannot enjoy the rights as all citizens are, I don't think any other person with American citizenship should either. Because we are all suppose to be treated the same. We were all born and raised in America. We have learned the ways and customs of American style. We were taught in school, the language of this country because we were part of this country. But, how can we help solve the daily problems of our economic and industrial field, if we are deprived of our right. The things we have learned and the things that are in our minds today. My father and millions of other childrens fathers have come to America to help raise better crops for the people of the nation, so they can have nice, fresh vegetables, which are needed in our daily diets. Even now, the farming is a problem. The majority of Japanese have been working on farms to raise crops of various kinds. But what good is that going to do to the people of this country if people who have experienced and failed, but have kept going for ages on raising crops are cooped up in a camp where it will do them no good.

If this country gets so everybody is not treated equal, this country will not longer be a democratic nation but soon will form into and develop into a communism or dictatorship country, no longer will the citizens of United States be treated equally like the Japanese have suffered. If California or the coast states were to forbid Japanese inhabiting the country and nation will not be formed into a democratic one but forty-eight different republic, each having a different law and pushing equal citizens around as if aliens.

I as a Nisei feel very strongly towards facts brought up and can only hope these acts cannot happen.

I had many hopes of the future when I was in Los Angeles, but after coming to camp, I did not lose my hopes but it has changed considerably. Changed just like everything else has during the past year. My intention at this moment is to take care of my mother and father. If they go back to Japan, I will go back to take care of them. My brother is now married and has a family of his own. That leaves just my sister and myself to take care of my parents because they are getting gold, and need somebody to take care or look after them. My parents naturally would like to go back to their native country just like any other race. That means I too will go. As far as I known now, my plans are as I have just described. But everything changes so much as time go on that I cannot tell when the war is over. I had intention of going to Japan for a visit before this war started but was not able to go because we opened a grocery store before the war. I am happy in a way, that I will at least see Japan, where my parents were born, and also to see all my cousins, and friends I have not seen for many years. I think it will also be good experience to travel such a long ways from what I used to call home. And can only hope the United States of America will be a better world to live in when I can return.