

Miles E. Cary High School
Valedictory Address, June 1, 1945

By Pete Kazuo Hironaka

Class of 1945

Today's youth of America are the men and women of tomorrow. They will be the leaders---who are to guide the destiny of our Great Nation in a new era.

Yesterday, the world was built on a foundation that rested on shifty sand. There were some nations which used inadequate building material. So---at this very moment, on the various battlefields, lives of our gallant men are being sacrificed in order that the youth of today may build a solid and firm foundation for the generations yet unborn.

The defeat of the Nazis in Europe is but part of the battle. The final collapse of our other remaining enemy will take a long and costly struggle. Japan's defeat will also be only a part of the greater battle yet to be won.

Fascism and imperialism were cheap materials to be used in building the foundation of this world. With the poor construction material taken out of the mixture, the stronger and firmer elements would unite to cement together a rock solid foundation on which the generations to follow would stand.

Yes....We have a war to be won. In time, V-Day should arrive. What then? Our final victory over our last remaining enemy would only signify the fact that there is still a more important struggle...the struggle to attain and secure a world of everlasting peace and security.

Dumbarton Oaks and San Francisco have brought the dreams of a firm international organization closer to reality. Our great leaders are depending on the youth of today to carry on. ~~To our generation, they are leaving the task of finishing the job.~~

We...the Nisei, the Americans of Japanese ancestry, have even a greater problem than the average youth of America. We have enemies abroad and enemies within!! It is true that the majority of the people throughout the nation have been liberal and often, a little extra nice, to the Japanese-Americans. But...always...as in a cart of apples, a few bad ones may spoil the lot.

In the past years, we Americans of oriental features have been striving to achieve and share the level of our fellow Americans.

Since the outbreak of the present conflict, we have witnessed and experienced seemingly and undemocratic practices. However, we must remember that America is not a complete democracy!!! No nation on earth can claim to be a complete democracy! But ---rather...America is continually striving towards that goal. Through the pages of history we learn that America is progressing rapidly towards that golden achievement.

Sure!---We were sent to camps---We read the Hearst papers! We hear of certain anti-Jap groups! But, we know that they are the few bad apples!

Just as a Nisei is fighting fascism---side by side---with his Caucasian comrades on the battlefields, we back home must work hand in hand with our Caucasian friends in the battle against fascism within our own midst.

America as a whole did not lose faith in me and we kept our faith and loyalty in her.

Many of our boys joined the ranks of our fighting men. In due time, G. I. Nisei became known as one of the fightingest men in the world. The outstanding record of the famous 100th Battalion and the 442nd Infantry gave the nation little doubt as to the true loyalty of the Japanese-Americans and their love for their land.

The blood---tears---and sweat that our courageous boys have shed will not have been in vain. We who remain---yes---we the youth must see to that!

We, the Nisei---as the youth of America---have a challenge. We must complete the foundation for a new and firmer America and a solid and secure world.

The right and duty to struggle for a democratic world does not belong to one race. It belongs to all people in America and the world.

In a recent letter from Dr. Miles E. Carey, former Director of Education here in Poston, he wrote----

"...I wish you success and happiness in your new life. Don't give up faith in the democratic ideals. It is the only social idea and way of life that offers the common man everywhere a chance to enjoy a full sense of dignity and personal worth. But this movement will not go forward automatically. We common people must work for this larger life and opportunity and, on occasion, fight our enemies if we are to make progress in this direction.

"You young people of Poston, and the other centers, know what democracy is... and what isn't...through personal experience. I expect you to make a real contribution towards improving our America and.....perhaps.....the world in the years to come....."

We....The youth of America will meet that challenge!!