

August 6, 1986

Dear Mrs. Gunderson,

How are you faring these summer days? Japan is very hot and humid, even more so than in Malaysia. At least that's how we feel. I'm trying out the bi-lingual word processor I purchased just today. Actually the Japanese component is the more interesting as it is ingenuous in its conception. The English component is like the usual electronic typewriter we have back home. The advances in microchips permit all kinds of intricate innovations in these machines.

Sun and Junko are visiting relatives (younger sisters and father) in Korea. They will be away for two weeks. I have an elementary school class reunion on the 18th. My Japanese friends are doing this because of my presence in Japan on our 60th year of birth that is so special for us. I will be seeing most of my classmates for the first time since 1939 when we graduated (6th grade). My two closest friends sadly are gone as also is my teacher. One of my friends was a kamikaze pilot and perished at age 17 while training. The other passed away just two years ago.

You asked how we differ from the local Japanese. I think it is our casualness in language and in what we wear. Our approach to people is informal. Japanese seldom make friends without a formal introduction. Interestingly children are different as Junko is experiencing in the local school she is attending. There the classmates are very friendly and helpful. We had thought we would have to send her to an international school, but now after 2-3 weeks of trial she insists on continuing at the local school. Schools are much more tightly organized and they give much more home work. After a year in Japan, Junko will be ahead of her U.S. classmates in math even as she learns to speak

Japanese.

In any case, we are enjoying our stay in Japan in spite of the heat and the high cost of living. Even their staple food, rice, costs 3-4 times more than we pay back home, a consequence of import restrictions (California rice which Japanese themselves admit taste just as good is not allowed here). We are especially pleased that Junko is adjusting extremely well and enjoying school (unlike the experience I had when I first came to Japan when I was 8.)

Nice to hear Stacey is giving you so much joy! She may turn out to be a talented pianist. Give our warmest regards to the family up north.

Regards to Harry Kajiwara. Did he get the JACL presidency? My younger brother Ben who is also active in JACL knows Harry.

Today is the 41st anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Bishop Tutu is one of the participants in this year's ceremony. On that fateful day, I remember reading my high school chemistry text about the enormous power of the atom. I marked the paragraph indicating how I happened to read it on the very day the atomic era began. I wonder where that textbook went? A few years ago a Japanese book that belonged to me and confiscated by the authorities showed up at a garage sale in Sacramento! Someone got it and gave it to Ben who in turn gave it to me. I spent a lot of time studying Japanese while in camp even as I tried so hard to study English in high school. Both paid off. I learned from you what it means to be an American and at the same time improved my Japanese to facilitate my ability to appreciate in depth my Japanese heritage, leading to my present appointment.

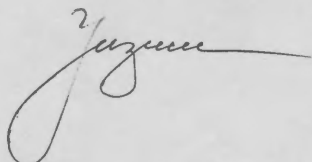
Television is currently full of programs reminding people of the sufferings war brings. The only thing I find disturbing (and I have felt this over the years) is that emphasis is on the Japanese being victims, forgetting that many, many people suffered as much, if not even more, in places where Japan invaded. I have spent nearly all my professional life working in places where Japan occupied and learned how much the local citizens suffered at the hands of the Japanese. I earnestly hope the Japanese who this very day are remembering

Hiroshima have a prayer for those victims who suffered as much elsewhere. The following is a rough translation of a poem I wrote in memory of my fallen friend as I flew over Southern Japan where he perished:

As I fly the Pacific
Where you are no more
I imagine how in flight
Your spirits did soar
Carry on I must for you
Who sacrificed all
To bring lasting peace on earth
East and West o'er all.

Have a good summer!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Yuzume', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

P.S. Our home address until October 1 is:

10-7-101 Shinkoyo-cho
Nishinomiya-shi 662
Japan

(We'll be moving into a university-owned house at end of September.)