

Showa 19th January 4

Tuesday

At Tule Lake incarceration center

There have never been such foolish men.

There have never been such arrogant men.

There have never been such ignorant men.

There have never been such shameless men.

There have never been such cruel men.

We are fighting against these kinds of men, so it is useless to claim justice or humanity.

We continue to devote our lives to the hunger strike for the honor of the Japanese and the victory of Japan.

Even though Japanese lives are precious, we will choose to die rather than live in shame in an enemy territory.

Our shame is that of the Japanese people and that of Japan.

On the fifth day of fasting my physical strength is gradually dwindling but my spirit is not weakening.

My strength in writing is getting weak but I will continue writing until the very end.

Rain keeps falling and we stand in a snowstorm for a roll call
Fifth day of fasting and our Japanese spirit still remains
American soldiers do not understand this determination of ours
Death or release, we will see which comes

As of Supper Dec. 31-43

We the undersigned have solemnly
vowed to undergo hunger strike until
such time as everyone here in the
stockade is released back to the colony
simultaneously and unconditionally

Camp Tulelake, Tule Lake, California

3, January 1944

Subject, food

Food has been provided (1 days ration) whenever
additional food is needed --- Some will be delivered
upon proper notification

サイン

Leonald G. Schaner.

2nd Lt. CMP

Provost Marshal

January 4th: Cloudy. Fasting. Snowstorm.

Today is the fifth day of the fasting. No one is in the bathroom, which had been crowded every morning. At 10 pm, the chief guard accompanied by three men with guns came to the kitchen and checked the food. I am getting weak at last.

I heard a voice, "Let's have breakfast." As usual, I put some salt into the yellow hot water brewed with orange peel and seaweed. I smile wryly, saying, "I have enough vitamins." Some people from other barracks come to our headquarters every morning. But today, no one shows up. They don't have power to come. Someone questioned us whether death means loyalty. Yes, it does. We are fighting to maintain the honor of the Japanese.

Snowstorm. White snow blows into the room from the space between walls and has piled up. Snow is piled up high at the window, too.

Severe snowstorm. I wear two pairs of pants and two pairs of socks, thinking it would be chilly at the roll call today. I was getting ready to go outside covering myself with a blanket, but instead, the army captain surgeon, the chief guard, and five men (armed) inspected each room.

A man comes into our room and smiles. "There is food in the kitchen. If you need more, we are going to bring some more." And he said, "If you continue to refuse to eat, we will give you saline injections."

They started to use conciliatory measures. This is the strategy that the white race always use.

Caught by this lure, five men, Shigeru Mizumoto, Tsuguo Nakamura, Riki/Chikara Kanda, Yukio Yamamoto and Teruo Konishi said, "We will die. We are going to eat." I said, "It is up to you. But do you know how it will affect the other 200 detainees, and furthermore, the 16,000 people in the camp? Do you want to disgrace the Japanese government that is protesting the US government for us?" "We don't think this hunger strike will work. We cannot win against the army. We will die. It's better to eat and live on. Anyway, we are going to eat. We signed the oath for the hunger strike, but we realize that this will not work. So we will eat based on our own will."

They are driven by their greed. They are arrogant and miserable. Seeing these greedy beastly young men, I felt pathetic for the fact that they are Japanese.

Mr. Mori pointed out. "The admirers of the West tend to see the enemy to be strong and underestimate Japan's power. As a result, Japan was fooled by a bluff. Considering the question of transportation, it is impossible. But they are fooled by the Western bluff. They are using the same strategy now. Are you going to be fooled again?"

But we are in a critical situation. The captains of each barrack and the barrack representatives gathered and held a meeting. Five people and another four or five came into the meeting place and said, "We cannot win now. Now that we know we cannot win, it is useless if we starve to death. Think about the Triple Intervention. If we lose now, the Japanese government will take revenge for us. At this point, it is better to endure and live on." They turned red and pressed upon us.

I said, "What makes you think that we are going to lose? We are winning. Why did they force us to carry coal? Why do they bring us food? Today, they did not have roll call, but the guard brought the army surgeon, smiling at us. Because we are Japanese, they cannot kill us even if they want to. Just wait for a while. Be patient."

"Then do you take responsibility for this? Who will take responsibility if we die from this fasting? If we lose, will you commit seppuku to fulfill your responsibility?" Their claims are full of madness.

"If we decide to allow all sick people to drink, the army surgeon will diagnose all of us to be sick. Then our strike will be doomed. Mr. Hara is your friend. His condition is the most critical, and that's why the leaders come together and decided to give him milk as an exception. Are you discontent with that decision? Mr. Hara insisted that he would continue the hunger strike with us and refused to drink milk. So we had to force him to drink. Even someone in such a dire condition showed that spirit. You are all healthy and vigorous. Why can't you accomplish your task? How would you feel if only you people ate and that patient refused to eat? As Japanese, you cannot eat in this situation. We all want to eat. But we endure this hunger. Under this circumstance, can you just eat?"

We discussed just this one problem from three to nine o'clock. But we are at a critical stage. If someone gives in, the enemy would step forward against us. Finally all decided not to eat, but definitely these kinds of problem will arise one after another. I have always thought that these five men are arrogant, selfish and lazy at work, and lacking the cooperative spirit. The sincere people are enduring without complaints.

"Those men are not Japanese. They could have honestly said that they just wanted to eat. But they are giving various nonsensical reasons. Though I have had long discussions with them, I don't want to talk to them anymore," said Mr. Sakamoto.

Today the army again did not supply us with food. We do not eat, so the food from yesterday are still sitting there. They only gave us food twice since the 31st. We shared the cookies that were not stolen from us and we all had half a piece each. Usually I never take interest in eating cookies but how delicious the half-cut cookie was. I can't even describe the taste.

Because four young men (Higashi, Shibana, Kinjo) was forced to carry coal, we decided not to use it. But it was cold. Like the food problem that we barely managed to settle down today, the complaining might arise again. Then our solidarity might be broken. The four men asked to burn the coal. They said that they would go and get more coal when we use it up. I hate to waste the scarce coal. But in this severe cold weather, old men will be ill and young men will start complaining again. Reluctantly we decided to use the coal.

We planned a party after our release. Though it sounds unrealistic, at the same time it shows how we live now.

Abalone with a mixture of vinegar, soy source and sugar, sashimi, sushi. After a long discussion on how we cook the chicken, we decided on teriyaki. Soup will be made from bony parts of fish. The guests must accompany their wife or a girlfriend. The fee is 1 dollar and 50 cents per person, 3 dollars for two. A guest without company pays 10 dollars. While we are talking like this everybody starts feeling happy and we all smile.

Two people fell ill at about 11 o'clock. One of them (Mouri) had a stomach cramp and the other (Kawakami) was weakened. He is elderly, so I notified a sentry. The snowstorm doesn't stop.

January 5, Wednesday. Snowstorm. Fasting. Endless white snow.

I woke up at about 9 o'clock. My steps are unsteady. I heard that the army surgeon came at three o'clock in the morning. This is good news. It is natural that a doctor comes when there is a patient. But we have to think of it as good news under this condition.

I think we can see it as the sign of progress we are making. Yesterday the army surgeon threatened us that he might give us saline and nutrition injection if we continue to fast. He said that we would last for at least two months without eating. If we really can live without eating for two months, how convenient human lives are. I doubt if the army has such amount of injections enough for two hundred inmates.

I can read people's mind well in this severe situation. It is a good chance to improve myself.

A man threw up blood because of a stomach ulcer. The army captain surgeon came with eight armed soldiers.

It is still snowing. My children must be so happy. If I were with them, I would make a snow man for them. They must miss me. Why are we going through this...?

Today, many soldiers and the staff from WRA came to visit. They checked whether the food in the kitchen is eaten or not. Mr. Tsuda had a meeting with the officers.

It seems that the officers acknowledged that we were not a gangster group. We are in this situation because the army considered us to be gangsters. (My spirit is gradually becoming weak.) The officers told Mr. Tsuda that they would consult with their commanders and would get back to us. Mr. Tsuda looks tired.

Some people try to persuade others to give up and the others are starting to whine. Yet others argue that this hunger strike is useless as there is no hope to win.

The victory depends on how we fight in the last five minutes. We will lose if we step back now.

"Imagine the torment of the Japanese Imperial soldiers, soaking deep in water, fighting at the front lines without food or drink. How can you give up in such a light challenge?"

Again they did not provide us with food today.

As a strategy, it was not a good tactics that Mr. Tsuda asked to see the officers today. The barrack composed of the most radical leaders is the least sturdy. Men from that barrack are saying, "We should not die. We will eat even though we have to stay here during the entire war time. We will wait for the day of release. We have children and we had better stop this hopeless fight." Those who were talking about feast at first, now their bluffing is completely exposed.

I visited Nisei, Tahara and Hayashida. Their spirit is bright even though they are physically weak. I am proud of them.

I guess I cannot release myself entire at once means that my body is losing strength.

Kaishu Tsuda, an empty pistol, should negotiate successfully tomorrow. Otherwise it is entirely possible that the entire strike will be over.

This makes me think. This makes me think. I thought and thought.

At last, after failing to persuade us, they claimed that we must take care of the sick. The sick people will die. They insisted that we cook and feed them while they still have some energy. We said, "So, you came here because you worry about those who are sick." "That's right." "Then, it is okay if only the sick people eat enough," asked Mr. Tsuda. They could not respond. "A young man from Hawaii died. And now another man from Hawaii is ill. That's enough. We don't want to have any more casualties." They tried to persuade us from a different direction.

"But the army surgeon are taking care of us. If someone dies, the army should take the responsibility." "But they don't let us go into hospital." "Mr. Nogawa was taken to hospital on the 31st. At the time, the lieutenant colonel came and was very angry, but Mr Nogawa was hospitalized. They can't let us die. If they think we are in danger, they will take us to the hospital."

Then again, they argued from a different angle.

"Now, only Mr. Hara allowed to drink milk. This is unfair. If he drinks, all the other sick people should be allowed to have milk. I hate to say this, but I was bleeding after an appendix operation, when I was sent here from Topaz."