

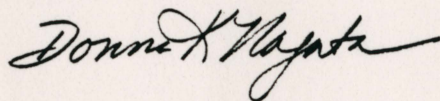
May, 1988

To Those Interested in the Sansei Research Project,

The attached summary presents the preliminary results of the Sansei Research Project Survey. The data entry and analysis for a project this large requires a great deal of time and is still in progress. However, realizing that many of you have waited a long time to see these results, I decided to send you a portion of the findings now, rather than wait until the Project's end. I also questioned what level of detail should be included. Ultimately, I decided to include a fair amount of detail in the summary. Those of you who wish to skim over the details may do so, and those who want to give the summary a more thorough reading will find numbers and percentages to illustrate the comments being made.

To those of you who participated in the survey, my sincere thanks. Your cooperation has made the Project a success and I appreciate your contribution. Thank you, also, for your patience. I hope you find these results interesting. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Donna K. Nagata, Ph.D.

CORRECTION: Page 9

List of camps should include
Minidoka, Idaho

Sansei Survey: Preliminary Results Summary



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NOTE: Please note that these results are preliminary. As the research continues, future analyses will undoubtedly add new information which must be taken into account when interpreting the data in its final form.

I. Purpose of the Project:

The major goal of the Sansei Research Project is to explore the long-term impact of the World War II Japanese American internment on the Sansei generation. More specifically, the Sansei survey examined: (a) the nature of communication which has occurred between the Sansei and their parents about the internment experience, and (b) the ways in which the internment has indirectly affected the Sansei's own lives.

One way to assess the impact of the internment is to compare responses given by Sansei who had one, both, or no parents who experienced the internment. This allows us to begin examining the potential impact of the internment as a function of parental experience. The results presented here are based upon such comparisons. Three groups of Sansei respondents were compared, those who had both parents in camp (referred to here as the 2-Parent Sansei), those who had only

1 parent in camp (the 1-Parent Sansei), and those who had neither parent in camp (the No-Parent Sansei). (Sansei who were born prior to or during the internment years were excluded from the initial analyses since they directly experienced the internment and represent an older age group. Their results will be analyzed in the future and presented elsewhere).

II. Selection of Respondents:

A total of 1250 surveys were sent out in February, 1987 to Sansei across the continental United States and Hawaii. The majority of surveys were mailed to individuals identified as Sansei by their JAACL Chapter. Additional surveys were sent to youth directors from the Young Buddhist Association and to individuals who requested to participate in the study after learning about it through the Pacific Citizen newspaper or through friends and relatives.

III. Demographics of Those Who Participated in the Study:

A total of 740 Sansei returned questionnaires. This represents a return rate of approximately 60%. Of these, 727 were analyzable The following describes the general characteristics of those who returned questionnaires:

Sex: 52% male, 48% female

Average Age: 35 years

Marital Status: 48% married, 40% single, 3% remarried,

9% divorced, separated, or widowed

Ethnicity of Spouse: 52% Japanese Americans,

33% Caucasian American, 4% Chinese American

2% Part Asian, 1% Hispanic, .5% Black,

2% Other

Religion: 30% Buddhist, 45% Protestant, 5% Catholic, 17% Other,

2% None

Education: 3% High School Diploma or less, 19% Some College,

29% Completed College, 16% Some

Graduate/Professional School, 33% Completed

Graduate/Professional School.

Current Geographic Location: 48% California, 17% Midwest,

16% Northwest, 12% East, 2% Intermountain, 4% Hawaii

Parents or Self Interned:

2 parents were in camp =323

1 parent in camp =168

No parent in camp =102

Self in camp =134

IV. Learning About the Internment-Communication About the Camps

Many Nisei and Sansei have commented on how little communication has occurred between them about the internment. Yet, no empirical investigation has documented the extent of this non-communication. Therefore, one portion of the survey examined the frequency and manner of communication which Sansei feel have occurred within their families around the topic of the internment.

A. Age of First Memory: When respondents were asked to recall the age at which they first learned of the internment, significant differences emerged between the 3 groups. Sansei with 2 parents who had been interned reported learning about the internment at an earlier age than Sansei with either 1 or no parent in camp. While the 2-parent and 1-Parent Sansei recall first learning about camp between the ages of 5- 10 years, those with no parent in camp reported first hearing about the internment between the ages of 10 and 15 years.

B. First Source of Information: Sansei were also asked to identify where they first learned about the internment. The results showed that having one or both parents who were in a camp

significantly increased the the likelihood that you first learned about the internment through direct interaction with your parents. While 48% of both the 2-Parent and 1-Parent Sansei reported first learning of the internment by talking to their parents (either by asking questions or having their parent(s) discuss the camps), only 29% of the No-Parent group learned about the internment in this way. The majority (43%) of No-Parent Sansei first learned this information from books, films, lectures, or television. Interestingly, a sizeable portion of Sansei in all the groups (39% of the 2-Parent, 30% of the 1-Parent and 28% of the No-Parent groups) first learned about the internment by overhearing conversations between parents and or relatives, and an additional 13% of the 2-Parent and 23% of the 1-Parent Sansei first learned about the camps through books, films, etc., rather than through direct contact with their parents. Therefore, although approximately half of the Sansei who had an interned parent first learned about the camps through direct family conversation, the other half learned by overhearing conversations or being exposed to extra-familial sources such as books.

C. Primary Source of Information Over Time: Sansei were also asked to identify their primary source of information about the internment while growing up. Here, again, there were significant differences between the Sansei groups. Sixty-two percent of the 2-Parent and 53% of the 1-Parent groups reported that direct conversations with their parents served as their primary source of information. In contrast, only 31% of the No-Parent group saw direct communication with their parents as their main information source. Although many of the 1 and 2-Parent Sansei learned about the internment by talking with their parents, a substantial number, (approximately 45%) cited outside sources and overhearing conversations as their primary source of information. For each of these groups approximately 15% of the Sansei relied upon books, films, and lectures as their primary information source while another 25% to 33% overheard parental conversations in gathering information on the camps.

These results indicate that while Sansei whose parents were interned are more likely than the No-Parent Sansei to have learned about the internment through their parents, a substantial number of them did not view their parents as a primary source of information on the topic.

D. Frequency, Length, and Nature of Conversations with Parents: Sansei with both parents in camp reported having significantly more conversations about the internment with their parents than the 1-Parent and No-Parent Sansei. In addition, the 1-Parent Sansei reported having significantly more conversations with their parents than the No-Parent group. On the average, Sansei with either one or two interned parents indicated having had approximately 10 conversations in their lifetime. The No-Parent Sansei reported having 2-5 such conversations. The length of these discussions was also affected by whether or not the respondent had a parent who was interned. While both the 1 and 2-Parent groups indicated that the average conversation about camp with their parents lasted 15-30 minutes, conversations for the No-Parent Sansei averaged only 5 minutes. It is striking to note that although the 1 and 2-Parent groups had more frequent and longer conversations about the internment with their parents, these conversations were still relatively rare and of short duration given the magnitude of their parents' internment experience.

The 2 and 1-Parent Sansei also indicated that their parents were more likely to bring up the topic of internment than the No-Parent Sansei. However, all Sansei in the study reported that their parents initiated conversations about camp less than half the time. And, while the 2-Parent Sansei perceived their parents as being significantly more open to discussing the internment than the No-Parent Sansei, they agreed only slightly with the statement "My father/mother has been (was) open to discussing the internment with me." Mothers were seen as more likely to discuss the internment than fathers for all three groups. This difference was more pronounced for the 2 and 1-Parent Sansei than for the No-Parent Sansei.

Finally, although there were differences between the 2, 1, and No-Parent Sansei in terms of the frequency and length of conversations they had with their parents, there were no significant

differences between the 3 groups in the manner in which parents discussed the internment.

Approximately 50% of all the Sansei stated that the topic of internment was most frequently mentioned by their parents as an incidental topic in passing (e.g. "We knew 'x' from camp").

Twenty percent indicated that the most frequent manner of communication specified the internment as a reference point in time (e.g., "That was before/after camp"), and only 30% felt that their parents discussed camp as a central topic in itself. Therefore, although 2 and 1-Parent Sansei had a greater number of conversations about the internment with their parents than the No-Parent Sansei, these conversations referred to camp in a superficial way which was similar to the communications of the No-Parent families. The limited nature of communications is also reflected by the fact that Sansei who did have a parent interned wished their parents had shared more information with them about this.

V. Level of Interest in the Internment:

Most Sansei express a current interest in the internment. It is not clear, however, how this level of interest has developed over time. It is also unclear whether having a parent who was interned may have affected a Sansei's level of interest. To investigate these questions, respondents were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 to 7, the level of interest they have had in the internment over their lifetime: during elementary school, junior high, high school, young adulthood, and now. A rating of "1" indicated "Not at all Interested" while a rating of "7" indicated "Extremely Interested".

All Sansei indicated an increasing level of interest in the internment over time. However, the results showed that both the 2 and 1-Parent Sansei reported significantly greater levels of interest at each of the elementary, junior high, high school, and young adulthood stages (ages 18-25) of their lives than the No-Parent Sansei. For example, Sansei with at least one parent in camp indicated that their level of interest progressed from approximately 2.2 in elementary

school to 5.6 in young adulthood. No-Parent Sansei rated their level of interest in elementary school to be 1.7 and increasing to 4.9 in young adulthood. It appears that, from early childhood on, Sansei with a parent who had been interned had a significantly greater interest in the internment than those whose parents were not interned, and that this heightened level of interest remained throughout young adulthood.

Interestingly, there were no significant differences between the groups when they were asked to rate their present level of interest in the internment. The average level of interest for Sansei at the time of the survey was 5.74. This may reflect an overall increase in Sansei consciousness surrounding the internment due to the recent redress movement.

VI. Knowledge About the Internment:

The previous results show that Sansei who had at least one parent interned have had, generally, a greater interest in the internment than the No-Parent Sansei. This difference in interest level was not, however, reflected in the numbers of Asian American courses taken by the Sansei respondents: most reported taking one or no course of this kind regardless of whether or not a parent had been interned.

The difference in interest level also did not determine the accuracy of objective information Sansei have about the internment. Respondents answered eleven objective questions about the internment as a historical event. There were no significant differences between the 3 groups of Sansei in their knowledge of: the date of Pearl Harbor (December 7, 1941), the number of Japanese Americans who were interned (110,000), the proportion of U.S. citizens who were incarcerated (66%), the number of internment camps (10), the number of the executive order which allowed for the internment (9066), the average length of time spent in the camps (2-4 years), or whether or not the Japanese Americans in Hawaii were treated differently than those on the mainland (Japanese American Hawaiians were not subjected to mass incarceration). Most respondents (74%) could correctly identify the date of Pearl Harbor and were aware of the

average length of time spent in the camps (90% correct) and 87% knew that Japanese Americans in Hawaii were treated differently during the war than mainland Japanese Americans.

Groups did differ in their knowledge of the names and locations of the camps. Twenty-six percent of the No-Parent Sansei were unable to name a single camp, compared with 12% of the 2-Parent and 20% of the 1-Parent Sansei groups. This result is not surprising since the 2 and 1-Parent Sansei were generally able to name, at a minimum, the camps where their parents had been interned. In addition, however, there were significant differences between groups in their ability to identify: (a) the President who signed the order allowing for the internment, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and (b) the significance of the initials WRA. (WRA stands for the War Relocation Authority, an organization formed by the government to implement the internment process.) While 85% of the 2-Parent Sansei knew Roosevelt issued the executive order, only 76% of the 1-Parent and No-Parent groups correctly answered this question. Similarly, the 2-Parent Sansei were more likely to know the significance of the initials WRA. Thirty-eight percent of the 2-Parent groups correctly identified the term, versus 29% and 26% of the 1-Parent and No-Parent groups respectively. Two-Parent Sansei may have been more knowledgeable about these questions due to their increased exposure to conversations with parents about the internment.

Sansei were encouraged to provide their best answer to all questions. It is interesting to note that most Sansei were unable to correctly answer many of the objective historical questions about the internment. Half of the total sample did not know how many Japanese Americans had been interned, even when answers ranging from 100,000 to 130,000 were liberally scored as being correct. Since respondents were encouraged to provide their best guess for all of the objective questions, it was possible to see the range of answers people gave. For example, estimates provided by respondents varied greatly in response to the question of the number of Japanese Americans who had been interned, ranging from 3,000 to 500,000! Sixty-nine percent did not know what proportion of the internees were American citizens and 73% did not know

how many camps were established. Estimates on the proportion of American citizens ranged from 10% to 95%, while the estimated number of camps ranged from 4 to 60. Sixty-seven percent of the Sansei did not know the meaning of W.R.A. Some of the interesting responses on the meaning of these initials included: White Racist Army, World Reform Agency, War Ration Allotment, World Redress Association, War Rights Amendment, World Race Act, and the War Reparations Amendment. Finally, 63% of the sample knew fewer than 5 of the camp names and 80% knew fewer than half of the camp locations. The correct names and locations are:

Manzanar, CA

Tule Lake, CA

Poston, Arizona

Gila River, Arizona

Heart Mountain, Wyoming

Granada (Amache), Colo.

Topaz, Utah

Rohwer, Ark.

Jerome, Ark.

Only 19% of the sample correctly identified the number of the Executive Order 9066 which allowed for the evacuation and imprisonment of the Japanese Americans. Interestingly, most seemed aware that the last 2 digits were the same, and that there might be a "6" or a "9".

Examples of some of the incorrect responses included: 9088, 5066, 1099, 1066, 9099, 90166, 4077, 4066, 9600, and 3099. Others provided completely incorrect numbers such as: 10, 135, 4, 461, 17, 200, and 258.

All Sansei in the sample reported feeling that they should know more about the internment than they do currently. They also felt that it was more their responsibility to ask their parents about the internment, than for their parents to approach them. Yet, it has already been stated that

very little communication has occurred between the Sansei and their parents. How might we account for this?

VII. Degree of Comfort in Discussing the Internment:

We have seen that Sansei respondents from all groups reported having had generally brief and superficial conversations about the internment with their parents, despite the fact that they have had an interest in knowing more about it. One possible factor contributing to the brevity of these conversations is that the Sansei themselves did not feel comfortable pursuing the topic of camp in any depth. Respondents were asked to assess, again on a 7-point scale, their degree of comfort in discussing the internment with their parents, other Japanese Americans, other minority group individuals, and Caucasian Americans. A "1" on the scale indicated "Not at all Comfortable" while a "7" indicated "Extremely Comfortable". There were no significant differences between the 3 groups on any of these dimensions although there was a consistent pattern of responses for all Sansei which indicated that discussions about the internment were most comfortable with parents (Mean response=5.58). Discussions with Japanese Americans came second in terms of level of comfort (Mean=5.49), followed by discussions with minority individuals (Mean=4.85), and discussions with Caucasian Americans (Mean=4.49) were seen as least comfortable. Most Sansei reported feeling a moderate level of comfort discussing the internment with their parents and it does not appear that having a parent in camp significantly affects this. Perhaps, then, the lack of communication has occurred not because of the Sansei's own discomfort in talking about the camps, or their lack of interest, but because their parents have been hesitant to engage in such discussions freely.

VIII. Impact on Attitudes

The impact of the internment upon the Sansei is likely to be multifaceted. Therefore, a series of attitude statements were included in the survey which tapped a broad range of issues where the effects of the internment might play a role. Respondents were asked to rate each of 27

statements on a scale of 1 to 7 (with 1="Strongly Disagree", 2="Moderately Disagree, 3=Slightly Disagree, 4=Undecided, 5=Slightly Agree, 6=Moderately Agree, and 7="Strongly Agree"). An additional 13 repeated statements were interspersed with the original 27 to assess the consistency of respondents' answers.

One group of statements focused on attitudes toward ethnic affiliation since it was hypothesized that having a parent who was interned might influence one's attitude toward ethnicity. Overall, there were no significant differences between the 2-Parent, 1-Parent, and No-Parent Sansei on attitude statements regarding: feeling more at ease with Japanese Americans than Caucasian Americans (Mean rating=4.103), preferring a Japanese American professional for services over a Caucasian American (mean rating=4.205), feeling more American than Japanese (mean rating=5.192), or feeling that Japanese Americans are more trustworthy than Caucasian Americans (mean rating=4.614).

Additional attitude statements focused upon Sansei attitudes toward the United States. Respondents from all 3 groups indicated that relations between the U.S. and Japan concern them more than the average American (mean rating=5.193). However, a significant difference occurred between the 3 Sansei groups in response to the statement "I feel uneasy when I sing the 'Star Spangled Banner'". Although all respondents tended to disagree with the statement, both the 2-Parent and 1-Parent Sansei showed less extensive disagreement (mean rating= 2.07 and 2.23 respectively) than the No-Parent Sansei (mean rating= 1.54). Approximately 15% of the Sansei who had had a parent interned agreed to some uneasiness, contrasted with only 7% of the No-Parent group. A separate statement, "I am confident that my rights as an American citizen would not be violated in this country", also revealed group differences. Although all respondents expressed uncertainty about the security of their rights (overall mean=3.589), the 1-Parent (mean=3.363) and 2-Parent (mean=3.501) Sansei were less secure than the No-Parent Sansei (mean=3.900). While 48% of the No Parent group agreed that their rights were relatively secure, only 24% of the 2-Parent and 33% of the 1-Parent Sansei agreed.

Respondents were split in their responses to the attitude statement "It is possible that Japanese Americans could be interned again in this country if war were declared against Japan". Within each of the Sansei groups, there were sizeable numbers who both did and did not agree. Two-Parent Sansei, however, were most likely to see future internment as a possibility. Forty-four percent of respondents in this group indicated agreement with this statement to some degree, while 51% tended to disagree. Agreement was less strong in the 1-Parent group. There, 34% agreed with the statement while 41% disagreed. Finally, in the No-Parent group, 37% agreed that future internment was possible and 53% disagreed. This, taken in conjunction with the previous results indicating a lack of confidence about the security of one's rights in this country, suggests that a parents' internment may have played a role in diminishing the confidence the 2 and 1-Parent Sansei have about their status in American society.

It is interesting to note too, however, that If Japanese Americans were ordered into camps today, the respondents in all the Sansei groups strongly agreed that they would actively resist (mean rating=6.146).

Attitudes Toward Redress

Sansei from the 2-Parent, 1-Parent, and No-Parent groups were also in general agreement on the issue of seeking monetary redress for those who were incarcerated. When asked what their own views were on this issue, approximately 80% of the 2 and 1-Parent Sansei stated that they favored monetary compensation and 74% of the No-Parent group agreed with this. (Although the percentage for the No-Parent group was lower than the other groups, this difference was not statistically significant.) The proportion of respondents within each of the 3 groups who opposed or were undecided about monetary compensation was also equivalent. Nine percent of the 2-Parent, 8% of the 1-Parent, and 11% of the No-Parent Sansei opposed monetary compensation, while 11% of the 2-Parent, 13% of the 1-Parent and 15% of the No-Parent Sansei were undecided on this issue.

There was, however, a significant difference between the Sansei groups in the strength with which they supported the idea of redress. Two and 1-Parent Sansei agreed with the statement "The United States should pay monetary compensation to those Japanese Americans who were in camps" to a greater degree than the No-Parent Sansei. On a 7-point scale, with "1" representing "Strongly Disagree" and "7" representing "Strongly Agree", the means for each of the groups were as follows: 2-Parent Sansei=6.171, 1-Parent Sansei=6.000, and No-Parent Sansei=5.762.

Sansei who had parents interned not only felt more strongly about supporting redress, but also tended to report that they knew more about, and were more involved in, redress efforts than the No-Parent group. Interestingly, even though the 2 and 1-Parent Sansei reported being more involved in the redress movement than their No-Parent peers, their level of involvement was relatively low. Sansei were asked "How active have you been in the movement for redress?" and given a scale from 1 to 7, with "1" equal to "Not at All", and "7" equal to "A Great Deal". The mean responses for each of the 3 groups were as follows: 2-Parent Sansei=2.80, 1-Parent Sansei=2.59, and No-Parent Sansei=2.21.

Results discussed previously in Section V indicated that Sansei from all 3 parent groups have a current interest in the internment. The survey results suggest that this interest has been heightened by the recent redress efforts, particularly for the No-Parent Sansei. Given this, the issue of redress is likely to have served as a catalyst for discussion in many Japanese American families. Although the No-Parent Sansei reported the greatest increase in level of interest around the internment since the redress movement, they were significantly less likely to have discussed the issue of monetary compensation with their parents. Eighty-nine percent of the 2-Parent and 84% of the 1-Parent Sansei had discussed the issue of redress with one or both of their parents, while only 54% of the No-Parent group had done so. Those who did discuss redress with a parent were more likely to discuss it with their mother than their father.

Conclusions and Summary

Overall, these preliminary results highlight several important issues. First, they document the degree of silence and non-communication which has surrounded the internment. The "average" Sansei whose parents were interned has had approximately 10 conversations lasting an average of 15-30 minutes on this topic. Even when these conversations did take place, camp was mentioned only as a passing reference without elaboration and was rarely a central topic of discussion. This non-communication is striking given that the internment represents such a significant historical and personal event in their parents' lives.

Despite the apparent silence, and the fact that they know generally little historical detail about the internment, the Sansei have maintained a strong interest in the topic. They desire to know more about their parents' experiences, but view their parents as somewhat hesitant to discuss these experiences openly. The data also suggest that the impact of the internment, from over 40 years ago, may still be seen in the Sansei generation of today. While 75-80% of the Sansei in this study support the current redress movement, the strength of conviction about monetary redress is strongest in the Sansei who has a parent who experienced the internment. In addition, Sansei whose parents were in camps tended to be less confident about their faith in the U.S. government. Finally, it is especially sobering to note that the children of former internees are more likely to consider future internment of Japanese Americans a possibility than Sansei whose parents were not interned.

Future Analyses

Additional analyses of the Sansei Research Project Survey data are currently underway. Analyses will include explorations into the differences between: (a) male and female Sansei respondents within each of the 2-Parent, 1-Parent, and No-Parent groups, (b) respondents from different geographic regions, (c) Sansei who were interned themselves as young children versus those who were born after the war, and (d) Sansei whose parents were interned as young children versus those whose parents were interned as adolescents and adults. These results should further enhance our understanding of the internment's cross-generational impact.