

000 COMMISSION ON 00000000  
000 WARTIME RELOCATION 000000  
000 AND INTERNMENT OF 000000  
000 CIVILIANS 000000000000  
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Mr. Tsuyako Kitashima  
412 - 11th Avenue  
San Francisco, California 94118





COMMISSION ON WARTIME RELOCATION  
AND INTERNMENT OF CIVILIANS



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January 11, 1982

Mr. Tsuyako Kitashima  
412 11th Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94118

Dear Mr. Kitashima :

I enclose a draft copy of the testimony you gave at the hearing on August 13, 1981.

Please review this testimony for transcription error and return this copy with necessary corrections to this office by February 1, 1982.

We appreciate your interest and participation in the hearings of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians.

Sincerely,

Katrina Shores  
Special Assistant to  
the Chair

Enclosure



1 MR. MARUTANI: All right, before we get to the slides?

2 MR. NAKANISHI: Yes, sir. The slide is just my  
3 portion of your program.

4 MR. MARUTANI: All right.

5 ASSEMBLY & RELOCATION CENTERS: CONDITIONS AND EXPERIENCES

6 TSUYAKO KITASHIMA: Honorable Chairman and Members of  
7 the Commission: my name is Tsuyako Kitashima. I want to thank  
8 you for allowing me to get a few frustrations off of my chest.  
9 The time I am allotted will not permit me to tell you the three  
10 years and four months of psychological trauma and bitterness I  
11 experienced in a concentration camp.

12 I, as an American citizen, was put in a concentration  
13 camp while German and Italian aliens were free. I was deprived  
14 of basic human rights merely because of ethnic origin. War does  
15 not excuse the violation of constitutional rights.

16 I lived in Centerville, now called Fremont, prior to  
17 evacuation. Because we lived near the main highway we were  
18 constantly approached by the police concerning the whereabouts of  
19 community leaders. At night the police would spotlight our  
20 kitchen window. Whether this was an act of trying to ~~destroy~~ <sup>ANNOY</sup> us,  
21 I will never know. However, it was always frightening.

22 One day when the police stopped by, they noticed a



1 small box of tin on our back porch. On their next trip, the box  
2 was gone and they immediately accused my mother of shipping them  
3 to Japan. It turned out that my brother, who worked for a Ford  
4 dealer, used it to patch a hole in the muffler. His boss vouched  
5 for him, and we had no further trouble.

6 Under the circumstances, it was impossible to ship  
7 anything to Japan. How stupid it was that we burned everything  
8 that resembled Japan. Wished we had the guts that the Sansei and  
9 Yonsei have today. However, with a bayonet in your back we  
10 quietly obeyed.

11 My experience at the Tanforan Assembly Center was a  
12 grim period coupled with frustration and anger. After being  
13 searched like a criminal by the military police, I was served my  
14 first meal which consisted of two slices of discolored coldcuts,  
15 over-cooked swiss chard and a slice of moldy bread. The hum-  
16 iliation and degradation was too much, and I cried openly in  
17 disgust.

18 If that was not traumatic enough, my mother, three  
19 adult brothers, and I were assigned one horse stall. There was  
20 manure on the floor and hair from the horse's tail was stuck on  
21 the rough walls. For our mattress, we were given mattress  
22 ticks and told to fill them with hay. We washed the floors, but



1 we soon found the stench of the manure under the stable unbear-  
2 able.

3 We spent the days outside and only went inside to  
4 sleep at night. The stable consisted of approximately twenty  
5 stalls. There was absolutely no privacy. I had to wait until  
6 my brother left before I could dress. There was hardly any  
7 room to move around in.

8 I could hear babies crying, family arguments, and the  
9 sick coughing throughout the night. It was sometime before we  
10 had a toilet in our area, so I had to go approximately two blocks  
11 to a makeshift toilet, with a cloth hung for privacy.

12 The surrounding area was always so muddy we used  
13 planks to get to it. I got sick with diarrhea during the night,  
14 and was too scared to be walking two blocks to the toilet for  
15 fear the military police would shoot me, thinking I was trying  
16 to escape. The only alternative was to use a gallon can. My  
17 brother got mad at me because the stench was so bad. I took the  
18 can and placed it outside the stall. I had to get up early the  
19 next morning to dispose of it before people got up. Can you  
20 picture yourself in this predicament?

21 My mother's arthritic condition became more severe, and  
22 she was not able to go to the mess hall. My mother's chief



1 concern was her fear of possible separation from her children.  
2 She was one of the old pioneers who survived the San Francisco  
3 earthquake and went into farming, working from early morning  
4 until late at night helping to make California a great agri-  
5 cultural state.

6 Evacuation was strongly supported by the rival West  
7 Coast farmers interested in taking over truck farming. We  
8 suffered a great loss.

9 The Executive Order 9066 denied me of the Fifth Amend-  
10 ment in that it placed me in a concentration camp without due  
11 process of law in a land founded on freedom, liberty, and  
12 equality. Japanese Americans paid a high price on the battle-  
13 fields to prove their loyalty to the United States. Their  
14 families held memorial services for their sons behind barbed wire  
15 fences.

16 Senator Daniel Inouye, dressed in full captain's  
17 uniform, was refused by a San Francisco barber and was told "we  
18 don't serve Japs here." Many of us experienced the same dis-  
19 crimination.

20 I strongly feel that restitution be made, including  
21 monetary compensation of at least \$25,000 for losses, damages,  
22 for false imprisonment, and emotional suffering.



1           It has been said that potential costs for restitution  
2 would be less than one nuclear aircraft carrier. Let us stop  
3 expending money for war efforts. (Applause)

4           There are so many injustices in this country that need  
5 cleaning up. Let us use our money towards safeguarding our  
6 Constitution so that this deplorable experience will not be  
7 repeated.

8           Honorable members, and nine members of the Commission;  
9 I am 63 years of age, and I wish to advise you that I plan to  
10 take vitamins A through Z so that I may live to see this in-  
11 justice corrected. (Applause) Please do not let me get hooked  
12 on these vitamins. I thank you for allowing me to testify today

13           MR. MARUTANI: Thank you.

14           Mr. Nakanishi, in order to minimize getting up and  
15 down, what I thought I would do is complete the oral testimony  
16 and then we'll take your slides at the very end. All right?

17           MR. NAKANISHI: That's fine.

18           MR. MARUTANI: Fine.

19           We'll move right on to Dr. Lester Suzuki.

20           TESTIMONY OF DR. LESTER SUZUKI

21           DR. SUZUKI: Okay. Testing, testing. Can you people  
22 way back there, can you hear me? I don't anybody sleeping back  
there because you need to hear. I want the White House to hear;