

Tule Lake *Constance Murayama*
Pre-segregation

Jimmie-san -- The lucubrations, for what they are worth. They're a good deal meagerer than I had thought they would be.

8/2/42 -- This even, went to a meeting of young christians, which was ghastly. L'esprit nisei just isn't lively enough for me. One told a tearful story of a young girl with a father and a mother (imagine) and they are terrible people. But all that is to the good, the young girl remaining christianly courageous and patient. So then, it is necessary that we bw also as courageous as this brave child because one ~~EEEE~~ can see that it pays to be courageous, etc. etc. I could have told the whole story before it was told, and the whole moral too. I kept wondering during this whole nauseating process what _____ would think, with his ideas on the nisei. All that happened was a confirmation of what he thinks of them. Of course, his idea is skewed too since he is kibeï. How complex things are. Tut.

I will never go again.

8/3/42 -- They wish to include among the courses to be offered at the high school one in etiquette. But truly, it will be impossible to teach the youngster even the simplest rules of behaviour. At times, I must employ all my will-power not to see them in the dining hall. Doubtless, they come from the farms where decent conduct (bonne mime) doesn't ~~make~~ figure as an important thing. If they ask me to take one of these classes, I shall refuse.

What is one to do. At times I want with all my heart to rid myself of this camp. But one must realize that above all one is of the color of one's birth. What can one do outside of one's group or of one's nation? Must realize that clearly. So then, it is a matter of education, and if I have ideas to propagandize, what better means than the schools. This is all too superficial, too unthinking, too conscious of appearances -- in short, too too. There's the sore point. Even those who think in large terms find themselves lost, out-side of cliques, marked by the people as a little odd. To put it in a nutshell, the nisei are tiresome.

8/6/42 -- Monday night went to a meeting of writers. Ten people: 4 women, the rest men. One was in the process of reading a short history by Farrell, whose Studs Lonigan was much admired by Hand. This story is full of cuss words and disreputable women. Everyone did their best not to appear put out by all this. The ~~pronouncement~~ pronouncement was made that Farrell had much "social consciousness", that he had an "admirable" style, and then another story was read. Same procedure. What a farce. Always it seems to me that I hold back, that I can never say exactly what I want to say. But finally, that evening, I had to say that in my view, a certain author used too many words to describe what should be said indirectly through the actions of the character. Too true, says the leader, but perhaps the author didn't want to do that. Finish. Ah me. And this group are the intellectuals among the Nisei? What is one to do. And if I insist upon an examination less superficial of things, it is very possible that one will find me insufferable pedantic, full of ambition to trot out my little measure of intelligence. Where can I find a milieu to my taste?

Also went to a class in human relations, according to rumor. The instructor is perhaps twenty-five. The dangers of petting were discussed. The instructor was much discomfited; after many hesitations, he confided to the class that he wished to teach economics and not human relations. Followed the fatal explanation. It was horrible.

Monday evening, another meeting of these so-called writers. Scored immense triumph as this abominable Cook smiled upon my offering. But it is his function to admire all that he can. This gangly _____ read also; he has a veritable flair for words, but what he read struck me as too flamboyant. Scenes of love a la Hollywood, and actually in Hollywood. He is perhaps twenty-five. But of all the writing, I like his the best. He knows the way of words and how to play with them.

8/14/42 -- Already the 14th. Surprising how quickly the time passes. Yesterday _____ came to see me and we talked. She's a very intelligent young girl, but if one passes time with her, one becomes bored. Why, I don't know. I suspect because of her triviality masked under this intellectualistic jargon which she has absorbed parrot-like at school. A judgment perhaps a little severe, but I certainly am not aware of any prejudice against her.

It's very warm these days. In the afternoons, I am so sleepy, I doze, must doze, and even in the class-room. Not so fitting.

I have now a class of kibe -- very intelligent. The majority are students from college in Japan and surprise me continually because they know grammar so very well. But, just as I experienced in studying a language, they are troubled by the simplest things. For example, the use of the definite article, etc. For example, one can say very correctly -- the dog is ~~xx~~ a useful animal, but one can't say -- The milk is good for children. They ask why. Long explanations on usage and idiom, etc. At the beginning, they took me rather grudgingly. But I marched out all my great knowledge of this and that, and they are better to me now. There is among them a poor Mr. _____ who seems proud of never having gone to school. Undoubtedly a pretence. He is unhappy because we speak too much of grammar. But the knowledge of the others surprises me.

8/23/42 -- Last Sunday, there was a great meeting of the farm-workers, which was an experience for me. Word of the meeting was passed along by word of mouth, it seems and people simply congregated in one spot. No formal organization, etc. The poor stage hands, there for a Y.P.C. meeting, were in a spot. They yelled for the leaders of the meeting and finally seemed to get just a little hysterical with their insistence that they were only stage hands. Finally some young fellow got up and called for quiet, saying, "From now on we'll speak in Japanese." I got the impression that he, at least, was rather put out because English was spoken so much. Of course, his resentment was due to the fact that he couldn't understand English. How many others feel so? Some guy named Kato got up -- very moderate. "Come on, gang, let's wait until we find out exactly what's what on the food situation, before we do anything." Fully expected to see him booed off the stage, but no noise. The crowd seemed rather surprised at its own size, and just a little afraid of its own power. So we just stood around. Other speakers got up -- all moderate. One mangai -- really good. "After all, we can't expect the American government to give us all its attention, since it would appear that other affairs are keeping them busy." Laughter. Of course, a few called out remarks, etc., but on the whole a well-behaved crowd, not because it wanted to be but because it simply was. Then the meeting seemed to have been called off -- but a great noise. We went back. Some poor fellow up there, all alone, doing his best to keep the crowd cool -- voice cracking a little. "Come on, people, be good." Someone had said that such and such a mess hall had no food for tomorrow. "O.K. What's the number. We'll go down and get food,

School. As for Adult Ed, there is this to say: they come to class because they wish to come. The others, because they will have to come. But "outside", it will mean more when one says one taught in High school, I think. And it will be a good experience for me; one goes around picking experiences as if they were daisies. But according to what _____ says, they will close the class of Kibei. Which would be a shame. They are so eager and it would be a bad thing to close this.

There is something in me -- I don't know what -- which makes people uneasy when with me. E.G. _____ who is very nice but not at ease when she is with me and yet comes. Why?. I like people who can offer a tussle energetically.

9/14 -- Joyouse news. A scholarship has come through. In Massachusetts, near to _____, which will be nice. Strangely, I am not so happy as I should be. To pick up and go, start all over. Departure from the familial bosom. Must be done.

9/17 -- Have left the high-school as it isn't good for the kids to have a person for one or two weeks and then someone else. But for the time there, I was completely disgusted. No system, no books, nothing. Monday -- that is to say, the first day of school -- at three o'clock a meeting of the teachers. _____ tells us that books must be ordered before five o'clock. But what do I know about text-books. For the sophomore classes _____ ordered the books, consulting, so to say, with Miyako and me. But for the senior class -- what a mess. _____, a model of efficiency, tells me it's up to me. So then, the books must be had or there will be none. I make up an order. What a farce. _____ tells me it's the same story in the grammar school. _____ has lost his head. Kay tells me he had her write the book orders five times. Walker became furious. _____ says it's absolutely stupid. Fuss, fuss. But it is a new school. Perhaps there are some excuses.

The army permit does not come through.

9/18 -- Here is _____ in a new role. He gives me a job, with wide and generous dispensation. Very interesting as I am to type out copies of the confidential reports of block managers. The difficulties revolve about: 1. wood; 2. the dining room; 3. the latrines; 4. the confusion in authority and procedure; 5. lack of necessary utensils (mosp, etc.).

10-1 -- Today comes out my poignant story of love lost. _____ tells me it must be autobiographical. He says it with such grand assurance that answering is useless. At times he is too heavy about his brand of psychology. But charming.

No permit yet. Monday _____ left. Looking very much -- facing the brave new world with courage, etc.

If that damnable permit doesn't go through, I will go mad.

Dear Jimmie: -- I realized with a shock after sending my request for Frank Miyamoto's address, my shameful irresponsibility. For whatever it's worth. Some of the remarks are quite pointed; I'd appreciate a decent anonymity to the whole. Thanks.

because the Administration has promised no one shall go hungry." The Ad seems like a great white god. Random calling out of numbers. One voice saying that none of the mess-halls had food. "O.K. Will the people who know there isn't any food please come up here on the stage." Dammit -- not one. Irresponsible trouble-makers. But still the crowd wouldn't go home. Milling about, seeming to take pleasure in it. Finally a darling, Bible-like old man -- overalls, dirty brown coat, salt and pepper beard -- got up. "I'm just a conceited old man, to get up here at all, but don't you think we've talked enough tonight? It's getting late. Let's go home, no?" And so we went home. Since then, food 100% better.

The revue has made its appearance. The little story of _____ seemed more interesting, less naive, when I read it in the review. The power of the printed page.

At the meeting of the U.C. club met _____. A tall man, thin, black hair, well-defined eyebrows -- in a word, well-put together. And with a sense of humor. Forgot all my timidity, spoke as words came. Very funny. He told us _____ wishes the W.R.A. to give us clothes. I asked him if such a gift would not rob us of our sense of independence. He said he did not know.

Monday evening -- writers. The editor of the newspaper _____ came. Very gentle, eyes ~~xx~~ a la Peter Lorre. Smoked a pipe, didn't say much. He pleases me. We discussed the meeting. I quoted _____ on the error the administration has made by not allowing a Japanese newspaper. Consequently, the Issei don't know what happens. Three days later -- an editorial signed by _____ discussing the same idea, without giving _____ or anyone else a word of acknowledgement. Mr. _____, how could you.

9/4/42 -- Encouraging letter from the National Student Relocation. Candidate at Smith for scholarship. I find myself picked up by the news, but not flying. Many a slip between, etc.

Now is a very black period for me. Without aims, without interests. One must wait. Doubtless everyone finds themselves from time to time in this fix. There is nothing that can be done for a temperament like mine.

_____ came at last. We talked of this and that. The next evening he comes to build us a bench. And yesterday, his sister, he, and I go to hear this famous _____. But there is something wrong, a certain mal-aise. He tried to take my hand, but I said no. I think really that he expected to find me as before. But this is not my responsibility. He tried to force the issue, to bring it to a head, at a bad time. And he is not as he was in _____. Less careful, more gross, less common sense. His attitude is subtly different. Which hurts me. Not he -- but this change in him.

Present at a meeting of high-school teachers. Very tiresome. A teacher gives us instructions in exercise. Lord love us. And the caucasians have for the most part a patronizing attitude toward us. For example when _____ (a nisei) gave a little talk, Gunderson praises him for his grammar, his vocabulary, his diction etc. But why? When the others spoke, he was not moved to praise them. Surprise at the competence of a Nisei? And this abominable Cook. Same attitude. Save _____. He is unpretentious, himself, a human being.

9/12 -- How tiresome. To remain in Adult Ed or to go to the High