



# KOKORO KARA

*"from our heart"*

SPRING/SUMMER 2020

HEART • MOUNTAIN • WYOMING • FOUNDATION





Cover image:  
Heart Mountain Hospital Complex  
Photo by Cally Steussy

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website to read all past issues of *Kokoro Kara*!

[www.heartmountain.org/newsletter](http://www.heartmountain.org/newsletter)



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## KOKORO KARA

Volume 9, Issue 2

Editor/Designer: Kate Wilson

### Have an idea for an article?

Would you like to be a contributing writer? We're interested! Write to Kate Wilson with your story ideas—these could include a profile of a former incarcerated, a specific aspect of the Japanese American experience before/during/after the war, or an act of kindness from a non-incarcerated, just to name a few.

[katew@heartmountain.org](mailto:katew@heartmountain.org)

### Change of address?

Contact Danielle Constein to update your contact information and for questions regarding membership & donations.

[daniellec@heartmountain.org](mailto:daniellec@heartmountain.org)  
307-754-8000, ext. 102

### Heart Mountain Interpretive Center Staff

Dakota Russell  
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Danielle Constein  
*Operations Manager*

Cally Steussy  
*Museum Manager*

Brandon Daake  
*Registrar*

Genesis Ranel  
*VISTA Museum Educator*

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# NOW IS THE TIME TO UNDERSTAND MORE

CHAIR SHIRLEY ANN HIGUCHI

In my last column, I said 2020 would be our best year yet, and I still believe it, despite the disruption that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought into our lives. I have a positive outlook because of our board's 2018 decision to create the Heart Mountain Institute, directed by Vice Chair Doug Nelson, which takes our site's power of place and sends it out to the world through a series of multimedia and educational programs. The temporary closure of the interpretive center this spring was a setback, but also an opportunity. We have used this time to accelerate our Institute activities, cultivating an active online presence that is engaging thousands of followers.

This summer looked very different than the one we had envisioned months ago. In early April, we decided to cancel our annual Pilgrimage for the first time. The two weeklong teacher workshops we were planning to hold around the Pilgrimage, through a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, were postponed until next year. But instead of dwelling on what we have lost, I'd like to highlight the ways we have been able to take action and make the best of this situation.

We owe much of our success to the last five years we've spent carefully recruiting key board members and staff with the skills and initiative to make a difference. We've made it a priority to build our relationships with each other and to think like one mind, which makes all the difference during a crisis. In the face of the pandemic, our board and staff pivoted quickly to take steps to advance our mission and protect the Foundation:

- **Bringing online programming to a national audience.** While the interpretive center was closed, we ramped up our online offerings, providing new programs every day. Staff members delved into selected topics from Heart Mountain history and took our followers on virtual tours of the center and our historic structures. I also hosted weekly online readings of passages from my upcoming book, *Setsuko's Secret: Heart Mountain and the Legacy of the Japanese American Incarceration*.
- **Protecting our human resources.** We have built a knowledgeable and passionate staff at the center, and our top priority is to retain them through these challenging times. To that end, we applied for and received a forgivable loan from the Payroll Protection Program authorized by the CARES Act. These funds helped us to keep our full-time staff working, and even to support our hourly front desk workers, during the closure.
- **Furthering the reach of our mission.** The CARES Act also created grant programs through the National Endowment for the



Humanities to help organizations like ours. We recently learned that the Foundation was awarded a \$92,852 NEH grant to help pay staff salaries, improve our equipment for making and distributing online programs, and accelerate our efforts to digitize our collections and make them available online.

These are just a few examples of the quick reflexes and integrated teamwork that keeps our Foundation going.

I have received a flood of supportive emails from our membership over the last few months. When the Pilgrimage was canceled, I announced I would donate the amount my registration cost to support the Heart Mountain staff. Many of you wrote me to indicate you planned to do the same. I want you to know how much I appreciate your support. Your generosity will help maintain our work at the site and elsewhere, and by next year we'll be even stronger than ever, with our stellar team intact.

My book on the Heart Mountain experience, *Setsuko's Secret*, will be released in September (page 26). I plan to combine my publicity efforts for the book with fundraising work for Heart Mountain. However, I am saddened that Irene Hirano Inouye, a great friend of Heart Mountain and author of the book's afterword, will not be with us to see it. Irene's leadership in the Japanese American community and her support of Heart Mountain was critical to our success. I know she would urge us to continue her work, undaunted.



Top: (L-R) John Barrasso, Shirley Ann Higuchi, Brian Liesinger, Norman Mineta, Irene Hirano Inouye, Doug Nelson, Kris Horiuchi, Alan Simpson, & Floyd Mori at the 2014 Heart Mountain Pilgrimage.

Middle: Bacon Sakatani, Keiichi Ikeda, & Kats Horiuchi

Bottom: Shirley Ann Higuchi & Minister Mukai with the cover of her upcoming book, *Setsuko's Secret*.

So, too, would Kats Horiuchi, father of our dedicated board member Kris Horiuchi. Kats passed away in April at the age of 91. He was a bright light in our community. Kats's enthusiasm and belief in our Foundation's work has inspired three generations of the Horiuchi family to become actively involved at Heart Mountain.

We will be feeling the effects of this pandemic for some time. Though the interpretive center has successfully reopened, the number of visitors will be significantly lower than usual for the rest of the season. It is unlikely we will be able to convene in Jackson Hole, Wyoming this fall, as we had planned, to shore up support for our capital campaign to expand the center and thank our benefactors Margot and Cynthia Walk, who jumpstarted our fundraising efforts with a major donation.

Behind the scenes, though, our efforts will continue. As we focus on bringing more people to the historic site and interpretive center, we are also dedicated to carrying our message further out into the larger world. No matter what obstacles we face, I believe we will overcome them and thrive. Stay inspired! 🙌

Shirley Ann Higuchi

"Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less."

—Marie Curie

## IMPORTANT NEWS ABOUT 2020 DONATIONS

As part of April's coronavirus stimulus package, all 2020 donors will receive additional incentives for giving to charitable organizations like the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation. Taxpayers who take the standard deduction will receive a \$300 "above the line" deduction, and taxpayers who itemize will receive even greater deductions. Contact your tax professional for more information.



# “WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE PROTESTORS COME TO TEAR HEART MOUNTAIN DOWN?”

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DAKOTA RUSSELL

History is always changing. The facts may stay the same, but our understanding of them shifts over time. George Santayana put it bluntly: “History is always written wrong, and so always needs to be rewritten.” Over the past few months, Americans have been facing some tough questions about how we’ve written our history—especially when we’ve written it onto the landscape, with monuments of brass or marble.

As statues started coming down across the country this year, some argued that this was equivalent to erasing history. Personally, I’ve always felt statues were lousy tools for teaching history. They don’t ask us to think, to feel, or to put ourselves in the place of people of the past. Instead, they simply tell us who to revere, and hope that through sheer size and heft, that reverence will go unchallenged.

The aim here at Heart Mountain—from the very beginning—was not to build a monolith, but to start a conversation. This foundation was created in the belief that engaging history means opening yourself to dialogue and debate, and even to change. We have had many hard discussions over the years: Was Heart Mountain a concentration camp? Are the draft resisters criminals, heroes, or both? If you asked us those questions in 1996, our answers would likely

be much different than they are today. That’s a good thing.

This issue of *Kokoro Kara* is largely about how history is shaped and reshaped, as we pass it down from one generation to the next. The reflections on the Heart Mountain Pilgrimage from Toby Loftus (page 17) and Ken Sakatani (page 21) demonstrate why our annual event is so important in that process. Our profile of historian Roger Daniels (page 15), the latest recipient of the LaDonna Zall Compassionate Witness Award, celebrates his long career of challenging the accepted narrative and advocating for a more inclusive one. And on page 11, we look at how even our methods of engaging others are changing, in this case in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

I hope that this issue inspires you to look for the new possibilities that can often come with change. As exhausting as this year has been, it has also brought opportunities to listen, to learn, and to improve ourselves. Let’s embrace that. 🙌



## 2019 MEMBERS & DONORS

Additions & Corrections to the 2019 Members & Donors list featured in the previous issue of *Kokoro Kara*. We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to:

Murray Cline  
J.R. Fujise  
Mikiko Sasai—In memory of Eugene Sasai  
In honor of Donna Ujiye  
In honor of Kenneth Ujiye

In honor of Patricia Ujiye-Sherman  
In honor of Thomas Ujiye  
In memory of William Ujiye  
In memory of Barbara Fujise-Ujiye

## BRANDON DAAKE ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ REGISTRAR



Brandon Daaque is the new registrar for the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation, responsible for the care and preservation of the documents and artifacts in the foundation’s collection. Brandon has experience caring for a wide array of object-based and archival collections, having held positions at the Kenneth Spencer Research Library, the Missouri Civil War Museum, and most recently the Watkins Museum of History and the Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics in Lawrence, Kansas. Brandon has had a lifelong love of museums, sparked by visiting the Missouri History Museum as a boy in his native St. Louis. Seeking a career in the museum world, Brandon earned a B.A. in History and a B.S. in Historic Preservation from Southeast Missouri State University, and an M.A. in Museum Studies from the University of Kansas.

## CALLY STEUSSY ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ MUSEUM MANAGER



Cally Steussy has been in the Heart Mountain orbit for several years now as an intern, volunteer, and researcher. She majored in Japanese language at Carleton College, earned a graduate degree in archaeology from Indiana University, and is currently completing her dissertation on how the people of the Heart Mountain camp related to the natural environment through language, art, and material culture. Cally has joined our team as the museum manager. She is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center, including the maintenance of physical facilities and the development of interpretative programming. She also provides translations of Japanese-language materials when necessary. She has an M.A. in humanities from the University of Chicago and is completing a Ph.D. dissertation in archaeology with Indiana University.

## GENESIS RANEL ○ ○ ○ VISTA MUSEUM EDUCATOR



Genesis Ranel is the new Americorps VISTA Museum Educator at Heart Mountain Interpretive Center. Americorps VISTA members commit to a year of service in sponsor communities, working to address issues of poverty. Genesis will be working to expand Heart Mountain’s educational offerings and eliminate financial barriers so that all schools and students can have access to the Foundation’s programs. Among other projects, she will be creating a new “digital field trip” package to assist schools that will not be able to travel due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I’m excited to be working here at Heart Mountain!” Genesis says. “I’ve always loved sharing history with others. My position as the VISTA museum educator gives me the opportunity to do that. I’m looking forward to creating new educational programs for the center that will engage students and stimulate conversations on civil rights, citizenship, tolerance, and experience.”

Genesis formerly worked as a Teaching Fellow at the Mississippi Museum of Art in Jackson and as a Curatorial Intern at the Mississippi Arts & Entertainment Experience in Meridian. She is a recent graduate of Millsaps College where she obtained a bachelor’s degree in History and completed an Honors Thesis in History. 🙌



# In Memoriam

## Irene Hirano Inouye (1948–2020)



When we opened our interpretive center with the Pledge of Allegiance in August 2011, Irene Hirano Inouye stood front and center with us. That's where she spent her whole life as a leader in the Japanese American community.

A daughter of Los Angeles, she grew up with the legacy of the Japanese American incarceration. She stood up for her community and protected its values, an activism that culminated in the founding of the Japanese American National Museum.

Irene's list of community work is almost too long to put in one place. It includes chairing the Smithsonian Institution Asian Pacific American Center and serving on boards for the Washington Center, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Center on Philanthropy & Public Policy, Price School of Public Policy, University of Southern California. Irene also chaired the advisory board of the Terasaki

Center for Japanese Studies, University of California at Los Angeles. She was also a trustee and past chair of the Ford and Kresge foundations.

A graduate of USC, where she also earned her master's degree, Irene led the T.H.E. Center for Women for 13 years before becoming the president and CEO of JANM.

In 2008, she founded the U.S.-Japan Council to strengthen the ties between the two countries. Hundreds of business leaders and elected officials from both countries have benefited from the ties she helped create.



(L-R) Shirley Ann Higuchi, Irene Hirano Inouye, Doug Nelson, Alan Simpson, Norman Mineta, & Floyd Mori at the 2014 Heart Mountain Pilgrimage.

As the wife of legendary Senator Daniel Inouye, she helped carry on his tremendous legacy. She joined us again at Heart Mountain in August 2014 to dedicate a plaque in the senator's honor.

We are saddened to hear of her passing, but we know her work will live on. We will see it each time we pass through the doors of the Japanese American National Museum or work with any of the groups that benefited from her generosity and wisdom.



(L-R) Melba Vasquez, Irene Hirano Inouye, Lance Ito, Doug Nelson, Shirley Ann Higuchi, Stevan Leger, Daniel Inouye, Norman Mineta, & Alan Simpson at the 2011 grand opening of the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center.

## Katsuhiro Horiuchi (1928–2020)



Katsuhiro "Kats" Horiuchi passed away peacefully on April 10th in Pasadena after a lengthy illness at the age of 91.

Born to Katsujiro and Moriyé (Fujimoto) Horiuchi in Los Angeles, he was the middle child of ten siblings. He is survived by sister, Hana Nakamoto, and brother, Bob Horiuchi. In 1942, the family was forced to leave their home, close their nursery business, and was sent to Heart Mountain. A thousand miles away from home, Kats turned to his childhood love of baseball, and played second base and pitched for his camp team, The Buckeyes. Emulating his idol, NY Giants Carl Hubbell, he perfected a screwball that befuddled hitters.

After returning to Los Angeles in 1945, Kats graduated from Long Beach Poly HS and attended UCLA. He transferred to UC Berkeley and received a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering in 1950. Kats served his country during the Korean War, joining an elite group of engineers at the U.S. Army Redstone Arsenal's Ordinance Guided Missile Center in Huntsville, Alabama that designed a re-entry cooling system for a long-distance missile under Wernher von

Braun. Honorably discharged in 1952, he returned to Los Angeles to work for Ayres & Hayakawa, Daniel Mann Johnson & Mendenhall, Coker Bradford & Nishimura, and Takahashi & Tobian. In 1965, he opened his own practice, Horiuchi & Associates Consulting Mechanical Engineers. He retired in 2015 after a half-century of consulting on public and private projects including local police headquarters and community colleges. He was especially proud to give back to the community, contributing his design

services to the Japanese Village Plaza in Little Tokyo. Kats was also an avid DIY auto mechanic, spending weekends under the hood of his cherished Mercedes. The radio was always set to classical music on KFAC, helping him pass the hours on congested LA freeways – unless Vin Scully was broadcasting Dodger games!

Kats recognized the importance of preserving the stories of WWII Japanese American incarceration. He volunteered on the Heart Mountain Reunion Committee and returned to Heart Mountain 15 times, most recently

to share his camp experiences in workshops at the annual pilgrimage. He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Barbara "Bambi" (Hirata) along with three children: daughter Kris (Daniel Solien); sons Keary (Lisa Mann) and Kent (Lauren); and four grandchildren, Katharine, Peter, Otto, and Theodore.



Photo courtesy of Kris Horiuchi

Top: Kats walks with his daughter Kris at Heart Mountain.

Right: Kats & his wife Bambi at a HM pilgrimage

Far right: Kats (pictured far left) with three generations of his family, after hiking to the top of Heart Mountain in 2011 at the Grand Opening of the interpretive center.



Photo courtesy of Kris Horiuchi



Photo courtesy of Bacon Sakatani



# 2020 DAY OF REMEMBRANCE events

On Saturday, February 15, the Day of Remembrance was celebrated at the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo. The program began with musician George Abe performing a haunting number on a conch shell. There was a procession of flags that included former incarcerated from each camp with Foundation board members Sam Mihara and Takashi Hoshizaki representing Heart Mountain on stage. Keynote speaker Dr. Satsuki Ina, compared the wartime treatment of Japanese Americans to the inhumane treatment of today's immigrant families in prison. She spoke about the priority of Tsuru for Solidarity, which she co-chairs, to close such detention centers, especially those that hold children.



Above: Sam Mihara with boy scouts representing all camps.

Top right: Keynote speaker Satsuki Ina.

Right: (L-R) Bacon Sakatani, David Fujioka, Min Tonai, Karen Ishizuka, Prentiss Uchida, Takashi Hoshizaki, Kathleen Lucht, & Darrell Kunitomi.



On the other side of the country in Washington, DC, board chair Shirley Ann Higuchi represented Heart Mountain at another Day of Remembrance event. Higuchi spoke alongside Nancy Ukai, Tsuru for Solidarity organization leader and founder of "Japanese American History: Not for Sale," in a panel reflecting on the outcomes of the attempted Rago Arts auction in 2015, which featured a large collection of confinement site art. Other members of the February 19 panel included Clement Hanami (a curator at JANM), David Inoue (executive director of the Japanese American Citizens League), Floyd Mori (a former JACL national president/executive director and longtime community leader), and Norman Mineta (former Heart Mountain incarcerated and member of the U.S. House and Secretary of Commerce and Transportation). The discussion was coordinated by Smithsonian curator Noriko Sanefuji and moderated by JANM President and CEO Ann Burroughs.



Above: (L-R) Noriko Sanefuji, Shirley Ann Higuchi, Norman Mineta, Anthea Hartig, Ann Burroughs and Nancy Ukai before the start of the program.



Left: Nancy Ukai speaking during the panel discussion.



Panelists: (L-R) Clement Hanami, Nancy Ukai, Shirley Ann Higuchi, Norman Mineta, Floyd Mori, David Inoue, & Ann Burroughs.



# ONLINE PROGRAMMING



On March 18, at the recommendation of local public health officials, Heart Mountain Interpretive Center closed its doors to the public. Just five days later, the center's staff launched an aggressive slate of digital programming to help fill the void. Despite little experience among the staff making online video content before the COVID-19 pandemic, Heart Mountain was one of the earliest museums to adopt and embrace this new approach to reaching audiences.

"We had been talking about trying online programming for a long time," notes executive director Dakota Russell, "but I think we were too obsessed with perfection." Watching how late-night talk shows and other productions adapted to the coronavirus changed his perspective. "We realized people just wanted to make a connection," Russell says. "They weren't concerned about slick production values. So we swallowed our fears and jumped in. With time and practice, I think we got pretty good at it."

Museum manager Cally Steussy had been on the job less than two weeks when the center was forced to close. Instead of preparing for her first tourist season, she found herself researching, writing, and presenting programs. "One of the best parts of doing the online programs was

the chance to look at topics in depth," Steussy says. "Normally, we only get to explore specific aspects of Heart Mountain's history for special events. This project allowed us to offer a high-resolution look at some of the smaller moments and narratives that weave together into the broad story of the camp."

Brandon Daake, Heart Mountain's registrar, usually works behind the scenes with the center's artifact and archival collections. The closure pushed him into the spotlight as the host of a weekly video series, "Dusted Off," that highlighted selected objects from the collections. "It forced me to become familiar with the collection rather quickly," Daake says, "which has been helpful for other facets of my job. It was also fascinating to really dig into some of the stories and



Julie Abo edits footage and audio tracks for an online program.

people behind the objects, like artist Jishiro Miyauchi or the Art Students League of Heart Mountain."

Off-camera, other staff members like executive assistant Julie Abo, operations manager Danielle Constein, and editorial consultant Ray Locker took on new roles as writers, producers, and editors. Communications and design consultant Kate Wilson worked to distribute and promote the videos in all of Heart Mountain's online spaces. Even board chair Shirley Ann Higuchi volunteered to participate, contributing a weekly reading from her upcoming memoir, *Setsuko's Secret*.

Russell says this team approach is ultimately what made the project a success. "Maintaining the schedule could be exhausting at times," Russell says. "It was important we were there to support one another." When the relentless pace caught up to them, the staff leaned on friends and colleagues. Julian Saporiti of No-No Boy Music stepped in one week to play a quarantine concert and give the regular presenters a much-needed break. During a military history themed week, the education staff at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans assisted with collaborative programming. "The can-do spirit of our friends, and the praise and encouragement of the folks in the comments, kept us going," Russell says.

Although the center is open again—with stricter cleaning measures and new procedures designed to help halt the spread of COVID-19—the staff plans to continue with digital programs. Even now, Heart Mountain is an active participant and contributor to the *Tadaima!* virtual pilgrimage. This nine-week event, coordinated by Japanese American Memorial Pilgrimages and featuring over fifty partner organizations, aims to build the same sense of community online that normally comes from



Brandon Daake films Genesis Ranel leading a tour of the interpretive center.

attending the annual summer confinement site pilgrimages.

Heart Mountain also recently received a \$92,852 CARES Act relief grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. This grant will help the center to retain its professional staff, as well as purchase new equipment and software to improve the quality of future programs. Realizing that travel will likely be limited in the new school year, the staff is working to design an online field trip experience. In this way, the center can continue to engage students in the region, and potentially even reach out to schools across the nation.

Russell says challenges still lie ahead. "Right now, we are only earning a third of what we would in admissions during a regular summer," he says, "and our visitation is very seasonal. We have to make enough this summer to survive next winter." However, he believes that connecting with audiences online can help to ease that financial strain. "Our members and followers have been extremely generous," Russell says. "They have enjoyed these programs, and they have been eager to donate to support them. That makes me optimistic about the future." 🍌

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT

[heartmountain.org/online-programming](https://heartmountain.org/online-programming)



# HEART MOUNTAIN PILGRIMAGE

The first pilgrimages to Heart Mountain were solitary journeys, mostly undertaken by Nisei curious to see what had become of the former camp. These trips, often a detour on a family vacation to Yellowstone, were the first time many Sansei learned what happened to their parents during World War II. As the Pilgrimage grew into a more formal annual event, much of the DNA of these early trips remained intact. To this day, the Pilgrimage is about reflection, about family, and about community.

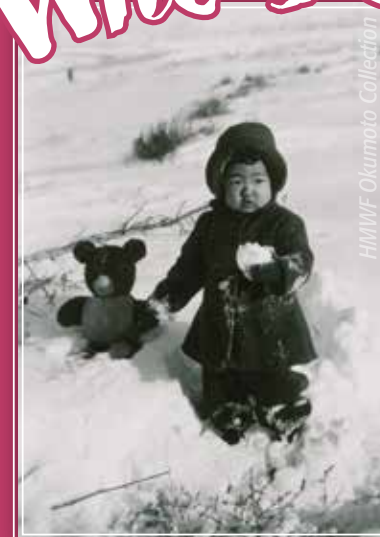
Although we cannot gather this summer, those values endure. In the pages to come, several writers reflect on what making the pilgrimage to Heart Mountain has meant to them. We hope their words will stir memories of your past visits and excite you about returning for our next Pilgrimage in 2021.

**2021 HEART MOUNTAIN PILGRIMAGE: POWELL & CODY, WY • JULY 22-24**



All photos are from the 2019 Heart Mountain Pilgrimage, taken by Janet Reed-Bradley

## Who's that girl?



After the publication of our previous issue, *Kokoro Kara* was delighted to hear from former Heart Mountain incarcerated Lani Sanjek (née Morioka), who wrote of her surprise at seeing herself and her "dear Hiroko-chan" teddy bear featured on the cover of our magazine! Lani was one of the 548 babies born at Heart Mountain.

The HMWF had this charming photograph in our Okumoto Collection (taken by photographer Yoshio Okumoto), but had not identified the subject. On the other side, Lani had always assumed her mother had taken the photo as a copy had been in her family for decades and since her mother had managed to keep her camera during the war, documenting the family's time at Heart Mountain. We're excited to have this mystery solved and to know more about the Morioka family at camp!

Do you recognize yourself in any photos we've featured in the magazine or on our website? Please write and tell us your story, we would love to know more about these special and rare snapshots of this incredibly important history.



First established in 2017, the LaDonna Zall **Compassionate Witness Award** honors individuals who have made significant contributions to raising awareness about the World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans. Past recipients include journalist Tom Brokaw and filmmakers David Ono and Jeff MacIntyre. The award is named for the Foundation's curator emeritus, LaDonna

Zall, who grew up in Wyoming and watched the last train leave Heart Mountain in 1945. Zall devoted much of her adult life to collecting and cataloguing artifacts from the camp, helping to build the Foundation, and educating others about the injustices of the incarceration.

The Compassionate Witness Award is typically presented during the annual Heart Mountain Pilgrimage. Although the 2020 Pilgrimage has been canceled due to concerns about the COVID-19 coronavirus, the Foundation's Board of Directors wanted to continue recognizing an outstanding "witness" on an annual basis. Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation is pleased to announce that eminent historian Dr. Roger Daniels is the 2020 recipient of the LaDonna Zall Compassionate Witness Award.

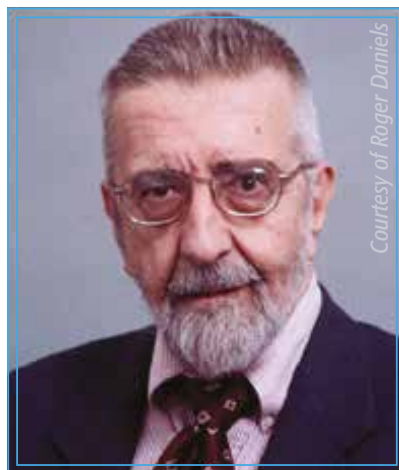
## A LIFELONG MISSION

Daniels has spent a lifetime researching and writing about the history of the incarceration, and helping to heal the wounds inflicted by this



COMPASSIONATE  
WITNESS • AWARD

ROGER DANIELS



Courtesy of Roger Daniels

grievous wrong. "It goes back to the winter of 1944-1945," Daniels says, "when I was a young man in New York. I was invited to a party, and warned that a Japanese man from the camps would be there... I asked him what part of Japan he was from. He told me he wasn't from Japan at all, that he was an American citizen. I asked why, then, he had been in a camp. He told me he was trying to work out the answer to that, too."

Unsure what to make of this encounter, Daniels

ventured to the massive New York Public Library to seek more information about the camps. After speaking with a string of unhelpful research assistants, Daniels finally met with a Japanese American librarian who handed him a slim government pamphlet about the incarceration—the whole of the library's holdings on the subject. Embarrassed about his government's actions and his own ignorance of them, Daniels vowed to learn more.

Later, in graduate school, Daniels sought to continue his study of the camps, only to run into another obstacle. His advisor explained to him that since this history was still recent, it would be some years before the government unsealed the pertinent records. Undaunted, Daniels instead chose to write about pre-war discrimination against Japanese Americans until he could gain access to the sources he needed. His dissertation, *The Politics of Prejudice*, was first published in 1962, and remains in print today. Daniels went on to author or co-author more than a dozen books on immigration and the Asian American experience, including *Prisoners Without Trial*, *Guarding the Golden Door*, and *Asian America*.

## A MENTOR TO OTHERS

In the late 1960s, Daniels accepted a teaching position at the University of Wyoming. Among the things that drew him to Wyoming was the proximity to the Heart Mountain site, and the opportunity to discover more about it. Daniels was joined in his quest by Douglas Nelson, a freshly arrived graduate student. "I had just gotten there myself," says Daniels, "and there was a great deal of information on Heart Mountain in the library, so Doug and I explored Heart Mountain together. He read some of it before I did, and vice versa, and we both shared what we learned."

Nelson, who is now the vice chair of the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation, remembers Daniels's enthusiasm well. "He immediately encouraged me to make Heart Mountain my thesis," Nelson says. "I jumped at it and soon discovered that there wasn't a question I could ask about the broad history surrounding the incarceration that Roger didn't have an informed answer for. My thesis turned out to be exciting for both of us, especially the unwrapping of the breadth and depth of the Fair Play Committee and the draft resistance. Few students have had a more thoughtful and generous mentor." Nelson's thesis, published in expanded form as *Heart Mountain: An American Concentration Camp*, became the seminal work on the camp's history, and earned a Pulitzer Prize nomination in 1976.

## RIGHTING A WRONG

Daniels takes pride in both his own writings and the work of those he's mentored, but his

greatest sense of accomplishment comes from another chapter of his life. "More important than any history I've written," he reflects, "is the history I was able to help make." In 1980, Congress approved the formation of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, a body that would investigate the origins of Japanese American incarceration and look into the possibility of redress. "The government knew nothing about it, or how to navigate it," says Daniels. "I was called in by a New York lawyer at the Department of Justice. We spent two days talking about the situation, and I suggested some things that never occurred to him." Daniels was appointed as the Commission's primary historical consultant.

Over the years that followed, Daniels worked with the Commission and the Japanese American Citizens League to develop a roadmap for redress. Such an act was unprecedented on this scale, but Daniels's knowledge of immigration informed him how the government had dealt with smaller claims in the past. "We took great care," Daniels notes, "to write regulations that were not easily messed around with—even by competent lawyers." In 1988, Congress passed the Civil Liberties Act, issuing a formal apology and \$20,000 check for any victim of the incarceration still living. "I believe we helped make the thing a little less bitter," says Daniels, "but in no way could we make it right." Thinking further, he adds, "Americans can hold up their head a little higher for dealing with it eventually, in some way."

Daniels, who now lives in Seattle, says he is honored to receive the award. He hopes his contributions have effected some small change in the world. When asked what modern people can learn from these events of the past, Daniels takes the long view. "A country as

powerful as the United States must use its power—not military power, but soft power, moral power—to try to improve the lot of the vast majority of mankind who don't live what you or I would call an acceptable existence," he observes. "We won't achieve that in my lifetime or yours, but it's a goal we must keep in mind. It's not important how small the group is. Remember what a tiny scrap of the population Japanese Americans were."

Daniels hopes to attend the Heart Mountain Pilgrimage in 2021. 🙏🇺🇸



Courtesy of Densho, Kinoshita Family Collection





## Awakening Memories & Finding Hope: —The Pilgrimage Experience—

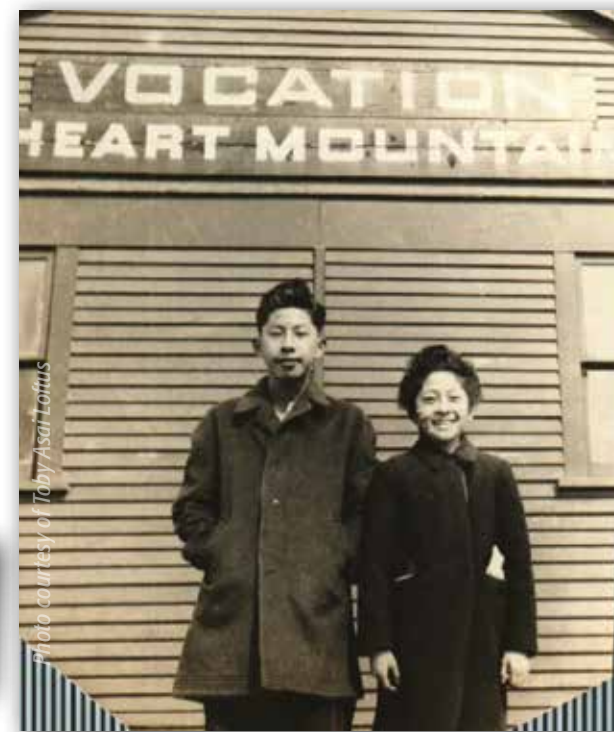
by Toby Asai Loftus

Initially my mom, Mitzi Asai Loftus, didn't want to go when I tried to convince her to attend the Heart Mountain Pilgrimage last year. Mom has been writing and speaking about her family's experience for as long as I can remember. Her reluctance therefore wasn't due to her wanting to avoid this history...

### The War Changes Everything

My mom, now 88 years old, is the youngest of eight children. Her parents immigrated from Japan in 1904 and 1911, settled in Hood River, Oregon, and were married for over 50 years. During this time, they were incarcerated for three years (while four sons served in the U.S. Armed Forces), returned to Hood River, and persevered and thrived. Cousins still live in Hood River tending some of the original family farms. Of mom's generation, only she and her older sister survive.

Mom was just a gradeschool girl when her family was forced from their home onto a train to the Pinedale "Assembly Center" in Fresno, California. After a few months there, they were sent to Tule Lake for about a year. After answering "yes-yes" to the notorious loyalty questionnaire, they were transferred from Tule Lake to Heart Mountain. During that long train ride, the train traveled through the Columbia River



Mitzi and brother Dick pictured on March 17, 1945, the day they left Heart Mountain.



Mitzi pictured with her mother & two of her brothers.

Left: Mitzi (seated far right) with two friends at Heart Mountain

Gorge on the Washington side, across from their beloved hometown of Hood River. Apples from Hood River were brought on the train, but mom recalls everyone being so heartbroken traveling past their home, not knowing when they might return, that no one could enjoy the fruit.

After two years at Heart Mountain, my mom's family was the first to return to Hood River. There they suffered persecution, indignities, and injustices, including the notorious "Hood River incident" involving the removal of Nisei servicemen's names from the county "roll of honor," two of whom were my mom's brothers.

Mom collected stories about her family and wrote a book, *Made in Japan, Settled in Oregon*. Her original goal was threefold: to make sure all our family members knew these stories and this history; to give them context to understand and appreciate the perseverance of her

parents and siblings; and to encourage them to be proud of their heritage. Sharing wartime experiences of the

family has since transitioned to interactions with the wider public. She has been giving talks to schools, universities, book clubs, libraries, and more for decades, even giving a talk in Japanese to a book club in Japan during a 2016 trip. I have assisted her in many of these talks around Oregon and have begun giving talks of my own.



## Processing Memories in the Pilgrimage Setting

My mom has been to several Tule Lake pilgrimages. Five years ago, she ordered her three sons to join her for the pilgrimage. Although I felt knowledgeable about this history, my mind was blown by the new information I learned and the people I met at that event.

A few years back, I traveled to Cody, Wyoming to go fly-fishing. Realizing how close I was to the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center, I had to visit. That visit profoundly moved me and convinced me I needed to persuade Mom to make the trip. Despite her multiple visits to Tule Lake, I believe her only visit to the Heart Mountain site was in the 1960s. At that time there was no trace of what had been the third largest city in Wyoming. All that remained was just farmland. She commented that experience left her feeling empty and depressed.

I raved to her about needing to visit Heart Mountain again, but she resisted. Then I learned about the 2019 Pilgrimage, and the several notable dignitaries who would be present and honored including former Secretary Norman Mineta, retired Senator Alan Simpson, retired Judge Lance Ito, and veteran journalist and news anchor Tom Brokaw. I continued to gently but firmly suggest she should attend, and finally she said, “if you make all the arrangements, I’ll go.”

We flew into Cody and I first took mom to the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center to observe all the artifacts, read the stories, and view the displays. We also found her family listed in the census, and determined the location of her family’s barrack, which was at the extreme northwest corner of the “camp.”

A few days later we ended up driving dirt roads past farm fields to the approximate location of her former barrack. The iconic brick smokestack of the hospital

was barely visible in the distance. She recalled when her mother was hospitalized, her father walked every day to visit her. He claimed he wore out the soles of his shoes that year. Since it was approximately two miles away through dirt and mud, we decided maybe that wasn’t an exaggeration.

Mom wondered how many survivors would attend and was happy to see about fifty registered to attend. I overheard many conversations between her and other former incarcerated (“Do you remember the one time they served us rattlesnake?” “Yes!”). We attended several talks and discussion groups, and one evening she gamely got up and sang karaoke.

Another highlight was meeting all the dignitaries mentioned previously. She was introduced to Tom Brokaw, and after a brief chat, Brokaw said, “we are going to want to talk to you later!” That afternoon, Brokaw and his team interviewed Mom on camera with Heart Mountain in the background, and clips were included in a short piece broadcast a few weeks later.

## Return to Wyoming

There are experiences that awakened memories too numerous to relate here in detail. We found “Vocation Lane,” site of the train station where mom’s family boarded the train that took them home. We found my Uncle Gene’s name listed on the board honoring men from Heart Mountain who served in the US armed forces in WWII.

In the end, Mom was really glad I talked her into attending the Heart Mountain Pilgrimage, and I was so lucky to attend it with her. We met so many wonderful people, learned (and for her, remembered) so much, and left with fond memories. I believe many other attendees were really glad to meet mom and hear her recollections.

I cannot recommend highly enough that people visit the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center. Better yet, if you can attend a pilgrimage, by all means go! You will come away with a much deeper understanding of this troubling and vitally important history, a greater respect for those who endured it and persevered, and a renewed faith in the human capacity to overcome hardship, injustice, and fear. 🙏

Mitzi returned to different areas from her time at Heart Mountain, including Vocation Lane (location of the train station she and her family took to travel back to Oregon at the end of the war) and the approximate site of her family’s barrack.



Mitzi and Toby show their talents at the Frank Emi Karaoke Night during the 2019 Heart Mountain Pilgrimage.



Journalist Tom Brokaw interviewing Mitzi at the 2019 Heart Mountain Pilgrimage.



Toby Asai Loftus works in high tech and has played the viola for over 15 years in the Newport Symphony Orchestra. He loves to travel, fly fish, write, and sing karaoke.





# Return to Heart Mountain: Grandfather Ojichan's Stones

by Kenneth Sakatani



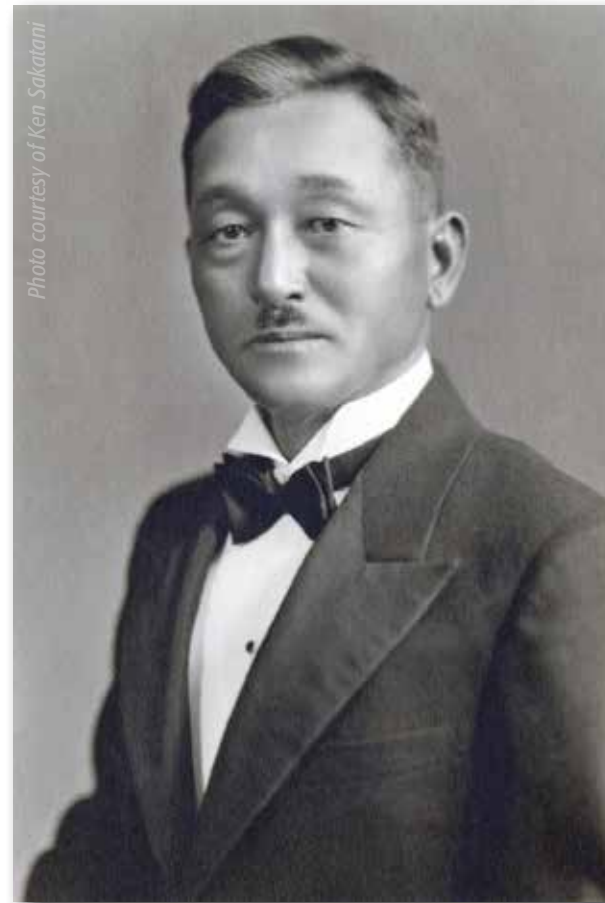
One summer day a number of years ago, my wife Candy and I were having a conversation about family legacy keepsakes with my late mother, Ruth (Arita) Sakatani, at her home in Chino, California.

My mother suddenly shared, "The only thing my father left me was a bag of rocks. Dad brought it back from camp, but I never opened it."

By "camp" my mother was referring to the "Heart Mountain Relocation Center," as it was officially known, where her parents and family, including herself, her husband, my father, James Kiyoto Sakatani, my brother, Terry, and sister, Linda, were forcibly removed from California and incarcerated during World War II along with over 10,000 other Japanese Americans.

Sumijiro Arita, my mother's father and my grandfather, *ojichan*, was an active member and leader in the Southern California Japanese Issei community before World War II. Sumijiro was picked up by the FBI on December 8, 1941, just one day after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. He was placed in federal detention without charge, first at Tuna Canyon Detention Station, Tujunga, California, then at Fort Missoula Internment Camp, Montana, and later at Lordsburg Internment Camp, New Mexico. Eventually, he was paroled and sent to join his wife and family at the Heart Mountain camp sometime in 1943.

The "bag of rocks" my mother described were small rocks and stones my grandfather collected while he was imprisoned at Fort Missoula. Sumijiro had carried this bag from one prison camp to another until finally ending up at the Heart Mountain confinement site.



Sumijiro Arita, age 47 (1934)

We were surprised that my mother had never opened her father's keepsake bag after leaving Heart Mountain. With her permission, we found the cloth bag, tightly tied-up, inside a worn cardboard box underneath her bed. We could feel the stones inside the bag as we carried it outside to the backyard. Untying the bag, we upended the contents onto the concrete patio floor.

An unexpected cloud of dust was suddenly released along with the small rocks and stones that came spilling out from the bag. After being confined for so many years, this cloud of dry dust hung suspended and then slowly rose up to escape into the warm afternoon air. For

an ethereal moment, we were all transfixed and transported back in time to memories of a painful past. As the dust settled, there lay at our feet a pile of these beautiful rocks and stones, in a variety of colors, textures, and sizes. My mother allowed us to take the bag of my grandfather's rocks and stones for safekeeping.

*For an ethereal moment,  
we were all transfixed  
and transported back in  
time to memories of  
a painful past.*





In 2019, I had an opportunity as a Sansei Japanese American born outside the Heart Mountain camp to attend my first Heart Mountain Pilgrimage. I decided to bring some of the stones back as a symbol of remembrance and healing to honor the memory of my grandfather, Sumijiro Arita. It was during the Pilgrimage weekend that my second cousin, Bacon Sakatani, encouraged me to write this article when I told him about my intention to place the stones in that setting. Bacon, known as “Mr. Heart Mountain,” was incarcerated there as a young boy, and has been intimately involved in many of the reunions and Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation activities.

Thus, it was early Saturday morning of the Pilgrimage that my cousin, Cathy (Arita) Takeda, her husband, Daniel, and their daughter, Caitlin drove me to the interpretive center. Cathy’s father (and my uncle) Harry Arita was also incarcerated at Heart Mountain. With Heart Mountain itself as a background, amidst the sagebrush and scrub on the semi-arid land, we created a small altar shrine using my grandfather’s stones and origami paper cranes. Caitlin, a Yonsei Japanese American, documented our ceremony through photography, honoring her great grandfather.

Before the war, Sumijiro Arita had been a prosperous farmer and popular Issei community leader, but the long imprisonment in the federal detention centers had taken a toll on his body, mind, and spirit. While at Heart Mountain, my grandfather hardly left the barracks where he and his family were housed, eating his meals there, alone, and isolating himself from all camp activities. Even after the war, while returning to farm in Southern California,

Above: Cathy, Daniel, & Caitlyn Takeda in front of Heart Mountain with Sumijiro’s stones

Left: Cousins Ken and Bacon Sakatani at the 2019 Heart Mountain Pilgrimage

Opposite page: Sumijiro Arito at Heart Mountain






Ken Sakatani prepares to place his grandfather's stones below Heart Mountain.

Photo by Caitlin Takeda

my grandfather never again involved himself in the civic affairs of the Japanese American community, let alone American society at large.

I believe the bag of rocks and stones, which he carried with him throughout his ordeal, was his "burden of shame and anger" of unjust imprisonment and broken dreams. At the precise moment when my cousins and I completed the altar shrine, the sun broke through the overcast sky and rays of light played on the face and sides of Heart Mountain. I would like to imagine the spirit of my grandfather *ojichan*, Sumijiro Arita, was shining down in gratitude and blessing, released from his imprisonment after these many years. 



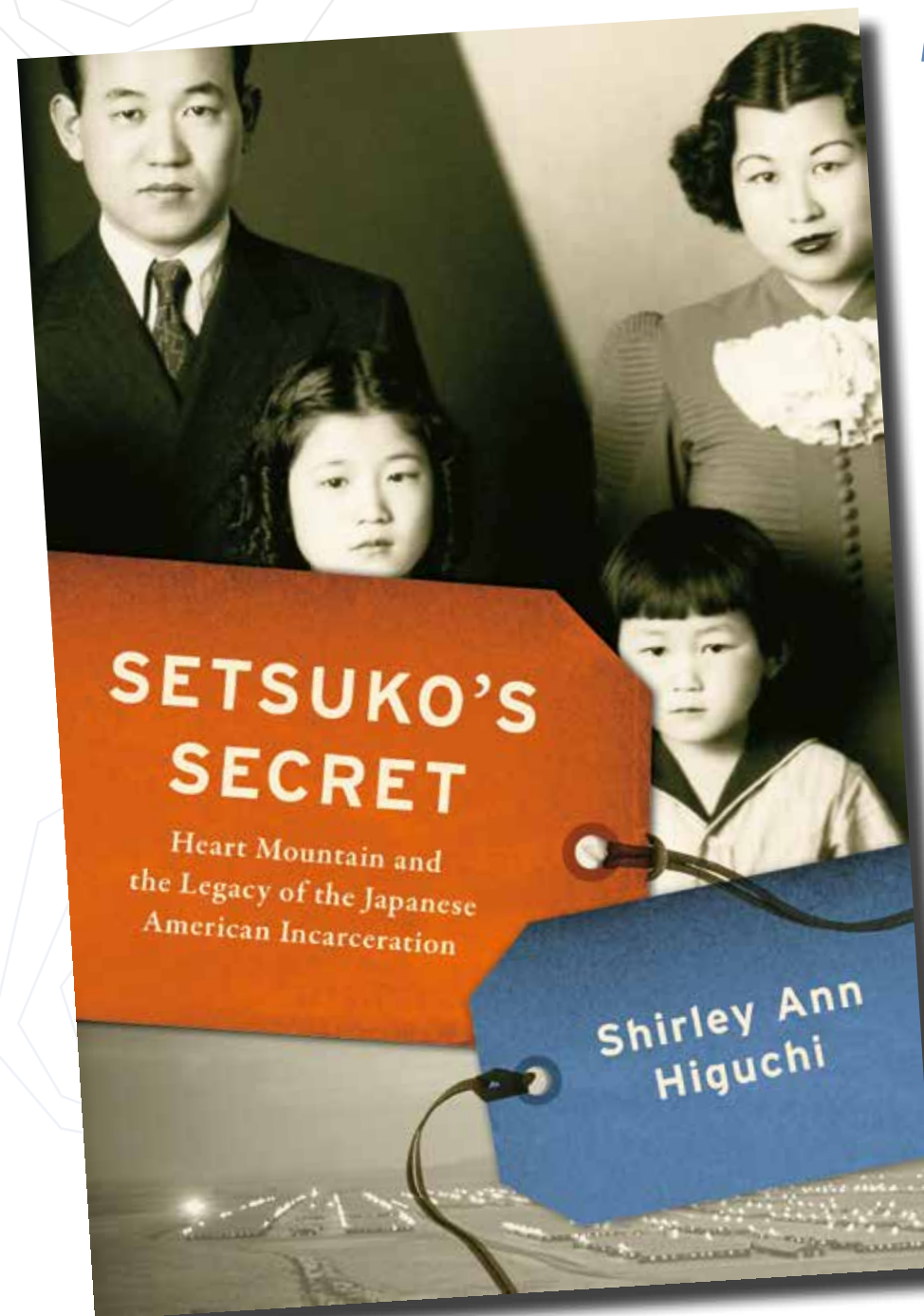
Ken Sakatani is an artist and former professor of art and art education,

who resides in San Francisco. His parents, siblings and relatives were incarcerated at the Heart Mountain.



Caitlin Takeda is a *Yonsei* artist, activist, and medical student from Ventura County, CA.

She sits on the steering committee of Tsuru For Solidarity and is pursuing an MD-ScM at the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, with an interest in women's health.



**Kokoro Kara** sat down with **Shirley Ann Higuchi**, author and chair of the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation, to discuss her new book: *Setsuko's Secret: Heart Mountain and the Legacy of the Japanese American Incarceration*.



Photo by Brian Smyer

\***KK** = Kokoro Kara  
\***SAH** = Shirley Ann Higuchi

**KK:**\* You grew up in Michigan, where there weren't many Japanese Americans at the time. How did that influence your view of the community and the incarceration?

**SAH:**\* I think I had a very isolated and narrow view of the Japanese American incarceration, because there wasn't a lot of information given to me on that topic. My parents never said much about that experience, except sometimes my mother would say that was where she met my father when they were children. She made it seem like camp wasn't that bad and kind of a fun place to be.

My main source of information about the community was the JACL newspaper, the *Pacific Citizen* (PC). But given the complicated situation at that time, the PC only gave one side of what it was like to be a Japanese American.



**KK:** When did you first think about writing a book about Heart Mountain and your family?

**SAH:** I started thinking about it fairly quickly after my mother had passed in 2005 of pancreatic cancer and my discovery that she dreamed one day of something “being built” at Heart Mountain. I realized that her incarceration experience meant that Heart Mountain was more than just a place where she met my father. After my election to the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation board and Doug Nelson’s suggestion that I become chair in 2008, I began documenting my experiences with the Heart Mountain community. I wanted to develop a historical document that would have meaning to the legacy of those who were incarcerated there.

**KK:** How did the project evolve during your research?

**SAH:** I first started with Hana Maruyama and Helen Yoshida working with me to collect interviews and stories of the Nisei who were incarcerated. We thought we would have individual chapters of each family story. After consulting with literary agents and others in the field, I decided to take more of a memoir approach about my own life and my own family’s experience intertwined with a series of other families connected to Heart Mountain and the incarceration that would start with their arrival from Japan and carry on to the opening of our museum and beyond.

Also, after gaining more confidence with the book over the years, I was able to convince Tom Brokaw to write the foreword to the book and the late Irene Hirano Inouye to write the afterword. I’m proud that my work is bookended by these important people to our story.

**KK:** You’re obviously deeply familiar with Heart Mountain and its history, but you’ve learned some new things during your research. What were your main discoveries?

**SAH:** The research revealed many new and interesting details. I learned more about Senator Al Simpson’s father, Milward, and his support of the Japanese Americans incarcerated at Heart Mountain, particularly how he and a colleague from Cody visited their American Legion counterparts in camp. One was Clarence Uno, the father of Raymond Uno. Milward Simpson also encouraged his sons Pete and Al to visit the Japanese American incarcerated at Heart Mountain, which led to the meeting of Al and Norman Mineta, which is well known and discussed in my book.

I was always aware of Judge Raymond Uno, but I never really pieced together his impact on the community and his relationship to my family, starting with how he first met my parents as children in camp and including his speaking at the various

Right: Iyekichi & Emily Higuchi at Heart Mountain.

Below: Saito family portrait c1930s.



Above (L-R): Shirley Ann Higuchi, Norm Mineta, Takashi Hoshizaki, LaDonna Zall, Bacon Sakatani, Al Simpson, & Daniel Inouye at the 2011 grand opening of the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center.

Right: William Higuchi, Shirley Ann Higuchi, & journalist David Ono in 2019.



Pilgrimages, providing a eulogy at my mother’s memorial service in 2005, participating in the grand opening of the Interpretive Center in 2011 and conducting my son Bill’s wedding ceremony in 2015.

Other aspects include the depth and range of Takashi Hoshizaki’s life and career, starting with his resistance to the draft. His career after the war included service in the Army and conducting research as a botanist in Antarctica. I realized he was more than just someone who promoted civil rights and stood up for his own rights at Heart Mountain.

**KK:** There have been a number of government policies in recent years that have drawn comparisons to the Japanese American incarceration. How does your book fit into these times?

### How to get your copy of *Setsuko’s Secret*:

*Setsuko’s Secret: Heart Mountain and the Legacy of the Japanese American Incarceration* is available to purchase now from the Heart Mountain store, Amazon, the University of Wisconsin Press, and independent bookstores around the country.

If you buy it from Amazon, please consider leaving a review on the book’s page on the Amazon website—it helps the book reach a wider audiences.

Author Shirley Ann Higuchi will donate all profits from the book sales to the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation.

Search for “Setsuko’s Secret” on these websites to purchase the book:

Heart Mountain:

[www.shopheartmountain.org](http://www.shopheartmountain.org)

Amazon: [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

University of Wisconsin Press:

[www.uwpress.wisc.edu](http://www.uwpress.wisc.edu)

**SAH:** I think the book is a reminder of what the government, politicians and the media should not do during a wartime crisis or other dramatic moments that can occur in our nation’s history, like September 11. When President George W. Bush stood up with then-Secretary Norman Mineta and said, “We do not want to do to Muslim Americans what we did to Norm in 1942” it showed that at the greatest levels of our nation’s leadership, we can get support for other groups in times of crisis.

**KK:** How do you plan to work this book into your future work with Heart Mountain and other Japanese American confinement site groups?

**SAH:** Many of our members have heard that we were successful in receiving a National Endowment for the Humanities grant, which will bring in 72 teachers from around the nation to learn about Heart Mountain and the Japanese American incarceration from a series of experts. My book will be part of that curriculum. 🙏



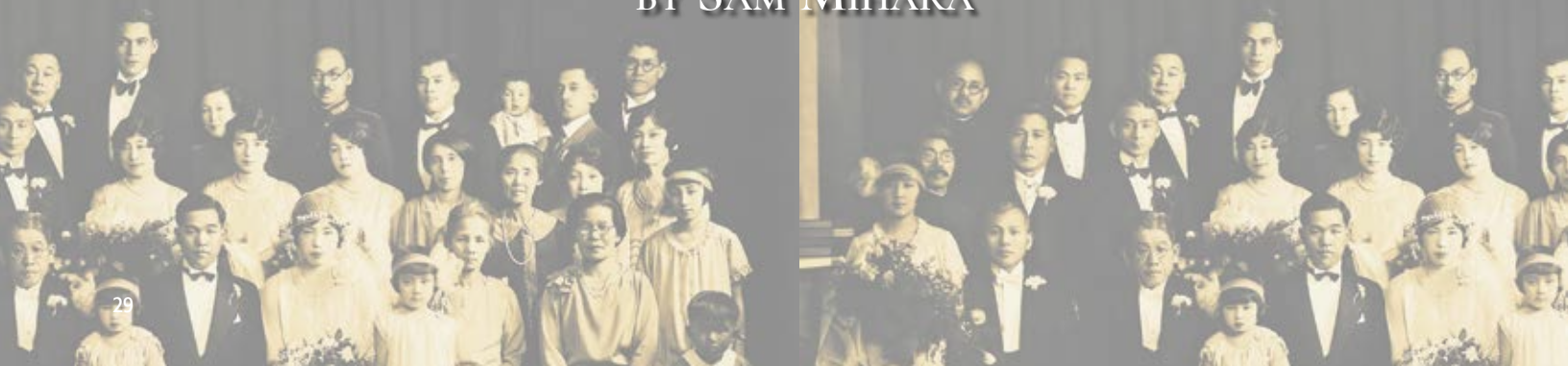


# BEYOND THE BRAILLE BOARD: TOKINOBU MIHARA'S LEGACY



Photo courtesy of Sam Mihara

BY SAM MIHARA



My father, Tokinobu Mihara, became blind while imprisoned at Heart Mountain camp. His blindness and desire to remain productive drove him to create a Braille Board in camp—an alphabet of Japanese characters and raised dots. The board would prove useful to other blind people in both the United States and Japan who wanted to read Japanese and perhaps translate into English.

Although my father lost his sight in camp, when he came to this country from Japan he had perfect eyesight—he didn't even wear glasses. He immigrated here in 1920, after graduating from Tokyo's prestigious Waseda University, where he had majored in English. His parents wanted their son to have the best education possible.

The Mihara clan were members of the vast working class from feudal Japan. My grandfather worked at a Miso (soybean paste) factory. My grandmother was a worker at a textile mill who operated a weaving machine with her feet. My grandparents wanted their offspring to break out of the class (caste) and enter a more rewarding upper level, so they dedicated their efforts to making sure my father was well-educated. My grandfather immigrated to the U.S. in the early 1900s, sending money back to the family which enabled my father to study. Their efforts on his behalf paid off—when he came to the United States he was hired by a bilingual San Francisco newspaper, *The New World Sun*, where he worked as an English writer and later as editor of the English language section. My parents married in 1928 and our family prospered, moving into a comfortable three-story Victorian house in the heart of Japantown, San Francisco. It had a gymnasium in the back and meeting rooms on top.

## A COMFORTABLE LIFE IS TAKEN AWAY

Our home was comfortable until December 7, 1941. Then local hatred and hysteria drove government leaders to force the removal of all people

of Japanese ancestry from their homes to be shipped to prison camps. Our family was placed on a train with armed guards and taken to the desolate camp at Heart Mountain, Wyoming.

I can remember when our train arrived at camp and we were loaded like cattle into the backs of army trucks. As our truck drove past the main gate, I saw multiple guard towers holding sentries with weapons and barbed-wire fences. We were driven to barrack 22 in block 14. The barrack was divided into six rooms; we were assigned to room C, which measured a mere 20 by 20 square feet. There were four folding cots, one ceiling light and a coal burning stove in the corner. The barren room had no other furniture, no utilities and no insulation. That brutal winter, the temperature reached down to minus 28 degrees F., making it the coldest winter in our lives. In San Francisco, which was rarely freezing, the coldest we had experienced was plus 32 degrees F.

In the center of our block there was a communal toilet with 10 seats and no partitions, serving 300 prisoners. Our food for the first year was primarily bread, pickled veggies and powdered milk. There were no fresh veggies, no fish and no whole milk, which were the foods that Japanese ate in San Francisco.

The camp hospital consisted of 17 barrack-like buildings connected by a common corridor. There were a number of general practitioners and a few dentists and optometrists, who were all incarcerated.

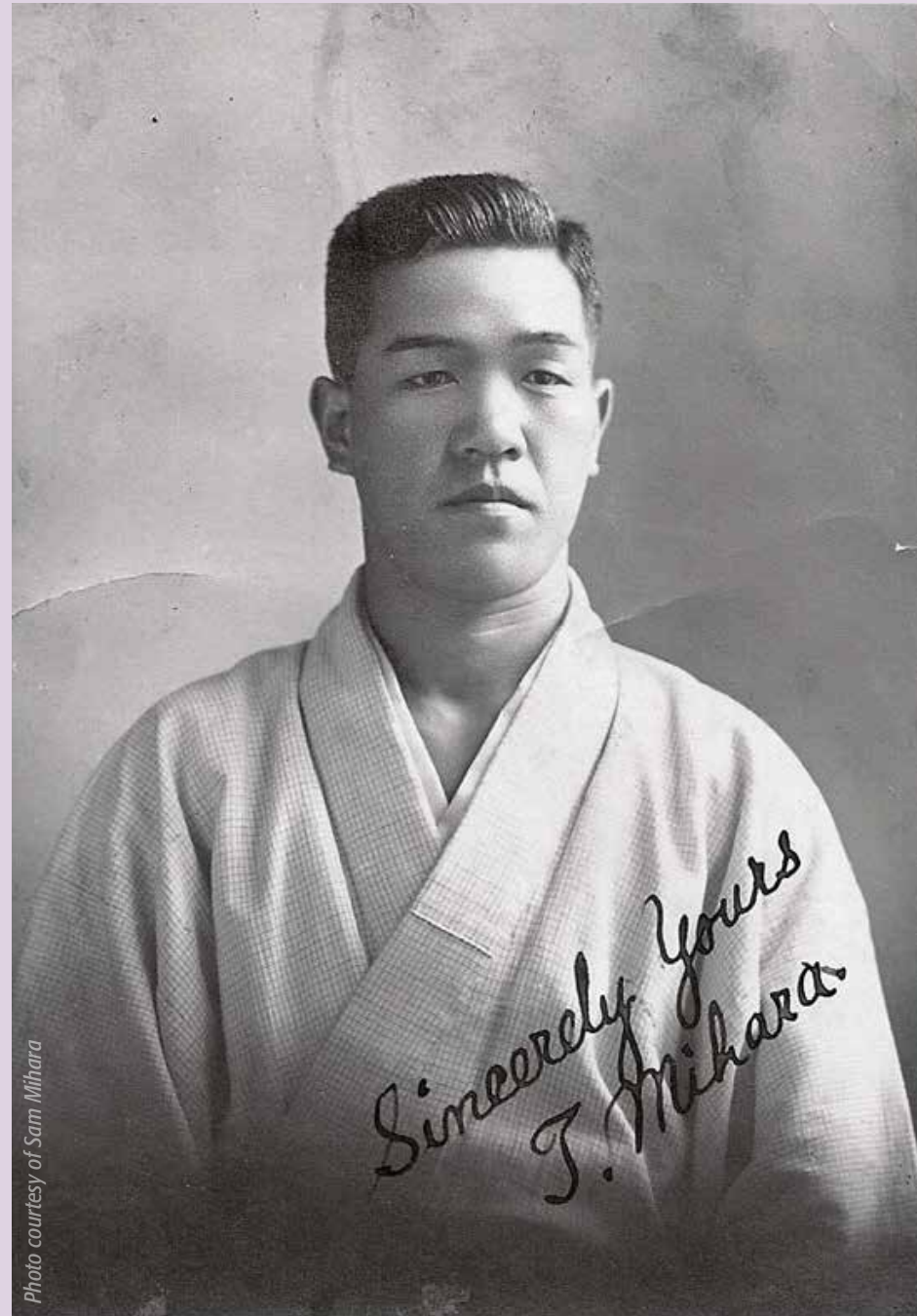
Unfortunately, our family had many medical problems. While in the camp, my father became blind from glaucoma. Lt. Gen. John DeWitt, commanding officer of the western military district, would not allow his return to San Francisco to see his eye specialist. He was finally allowed to go to a hospital in Montana where they pronounced him as incurably blind.

As a person who had always been creative and productive, instead of simply resigning himself to his blindness, my father looked for ways to continue contributing to society and earning an income with his skills. Toward this goal, he became an educator and created his Braille Board.



## STAYING PRODUCTIVE IN SPITE OF BLINDNESS

The story about my father's motivation to teach and create the board is part of a larger picture. He was motivated in his work by his responsibility to his family and his desire to help others in need. So after becoming blind in camp and losing his primary



Tokinobu Mihara, c. 1920

source of employment as an editor, he constantly sought ways to use his skills to support his family and remain productive.

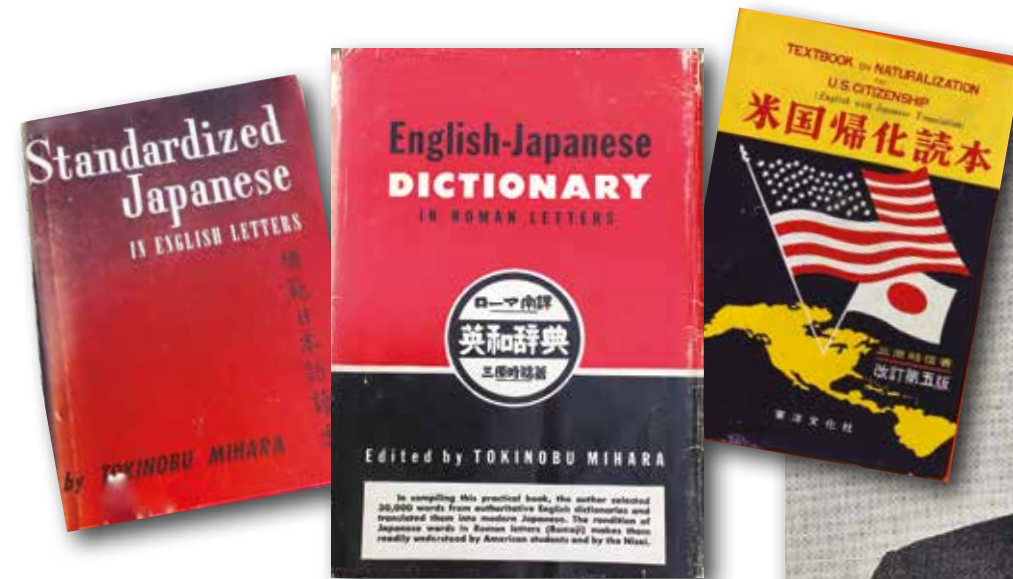
While still imprisoned at Heart Mountain, my father found meaning and purpose by creating the Braille Board, with the help of others. He hired a craftsman to transform his thoughts into the board. He guided the craftsman on the Japanese alphabet and what Kana (simplified Japanese characters) to use. I remember he used our barrack room to teach other blind prisoners how to read Braille using the board.

He also used his time in camp to write several books about teaching English and Japanese, hiring a secretary to write down his thoughts.

First, he wrote a dictionary in English characters. It contained 30,000 words in English and the equivalent Japanese word or words. For example, the sentence "Heart Mountain is a very cold place in the winter" can be translated as follows: Heart (*Shinzo* or *Kokoro*), Mountain (*Yama*), very (*tokubetsuna*), cold (*samui*), place (*tokoro*), winter (*fuyu*).

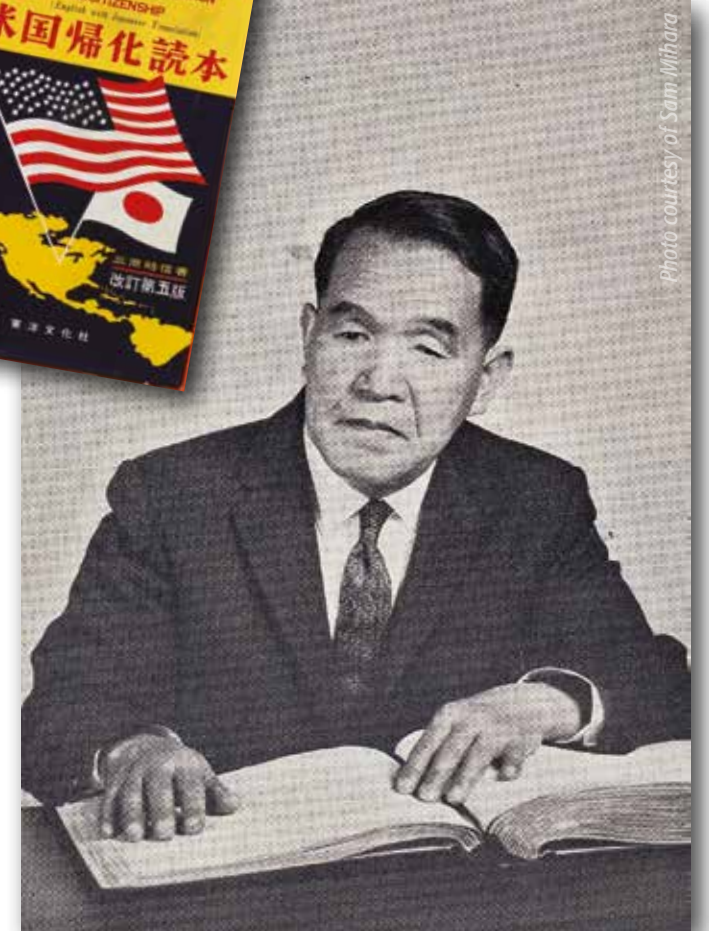
A collection of words is not sufficient for correct grammar in Japanese, however. Simply reciting these words to a taxi driver in Tokyo will get a response, "Where are you from?"

Knowing this, my father wrote a second textbook on proper grammar to translate phrases into correct Japanese sentences. For example, the above sentence in Japanese should read like this: Heart Mountain winter is a very cold place (*Kokoro Yama no fuyu wa tokubetsu samui tokoro desu*).



Above: Three of Tokinobu's books he worked on during and after the war.

Right: Tokinobu Mihara, pre-1962



## CONTINUING TO WRITE AND TEACH AFTER THE WAR

My father did not stop writing after that second book. Once back home in San Francisco after the war, he converted the large meeting room in the back of our house into a classroom. In one of his most popular classes, he taught English to "war brides," (Japanese women who married American occupation forces and immigrated to the U.S. with their husbands). In addition to teaching English to these women, my father also coached them on how to become American citizens. That prompted him to write a book on how to become naturalized as a citizen of the United States.

He also wrote a Japanese-language autobiography, *The Story of the White Cane*. This book featured important events in his life, from his youth in Matsuyama in western Japan to the moment when he learned he had early stages of glaucoma. Before the war, a specialist ophthalmologist in San Francisco performed successful procedures to allow him to continue to see. As his sight continued to decline,

thoughts of suicide entered his mind, but he was a devout Christian and engaging with the bible helped keep his mind and spirits positive to persevere through hardships.

Creating the Braille Board to enable other blind people to read and writing books that would help immigrants in their new country truly demonstrated who my father was: a person dedicated to being productive, to meeting his family's needs, and to helping others despite his handicap.

When Dad died in 1987, he left no will—his possessions were only his books and his Braille Board. Unfortunately, he did not live to receive the government apology and redress payment, which was offered in 1988 only for those prisoners still living at that time.





Tokinobu Mihara with his wife and sons on July 27, 1947 with his white cane, referenced in his Japanese-language autobiography, *The Story of the White Cane* (pictured above).



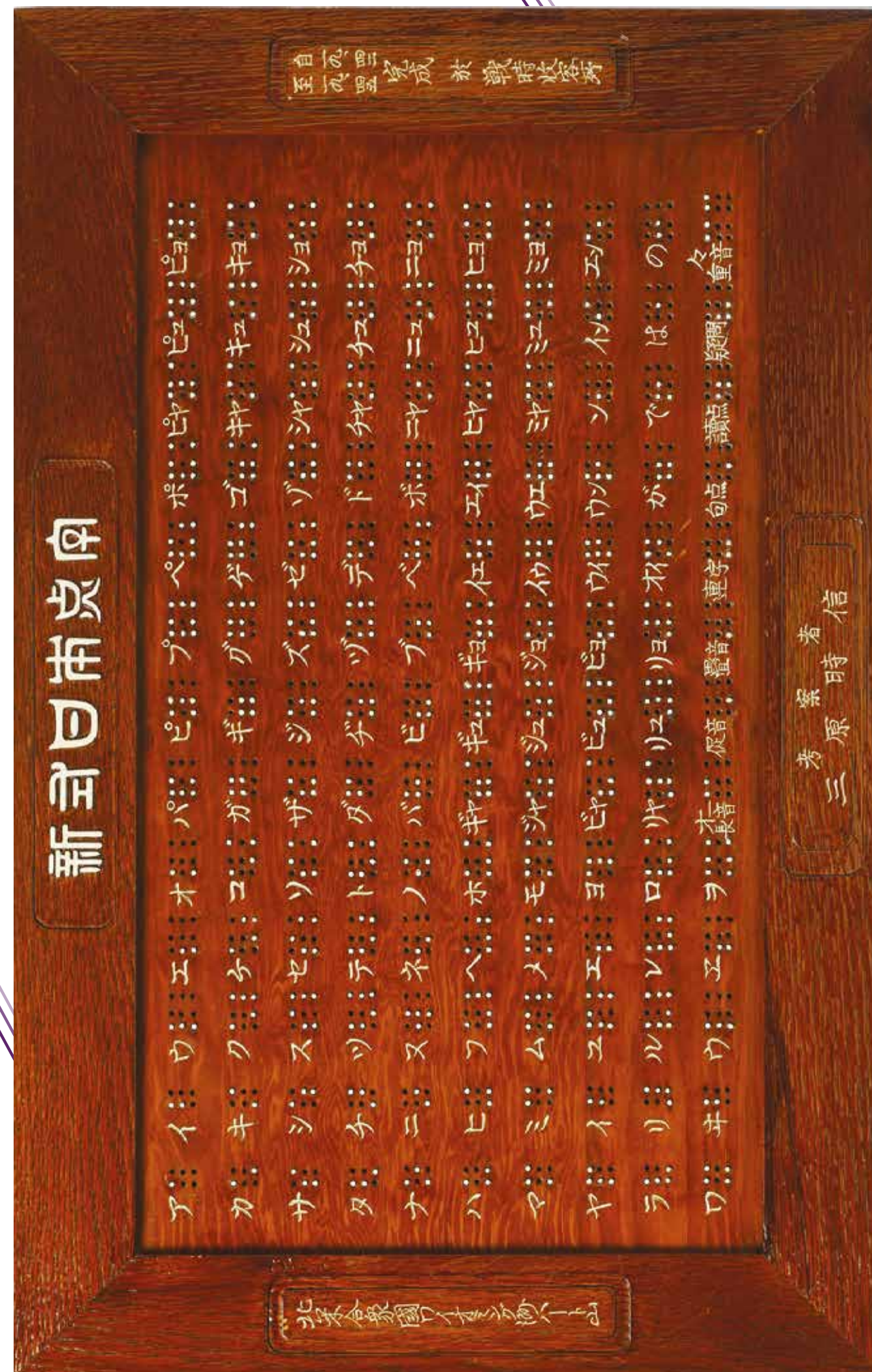
I wish I did one thing before my father and mother passed on: I should have thanked them for enduring their lifetime of hardships to make certain the family survived. I would not be where I and my family are today without their support and actions to help others. So if any of you have relatives who survived the WWII imprisonment, be sure to not only thank them while you can, but to speak with them about their experiences (if they are willing). Let's honor their experiences by ensuring that their memories of their time before, during, and after "camp" are not lost and can hopefully live on to inform future generations.

*The Braille Board is featured in the permanent exhibit the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center, courtesy of a donation by the Mihara family.*



Sam Mihara worked as a rocket scientist and executive with The Boeing Company. Following retirement from Boeing, he created his own high-tech consulting firm and with clients around the world. Sam currently speaks about his experiences in engagements around the country to schools, colleges, attorney groups and other interested organizations. This story is featured in Sam's nationwide talks.

For more information, visit [www.sammihara.com](http://www.sammihara.com).



Braille Board (on display at Heart Mountain Interpretive Center)





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# We're going digital

*Please note: The next issue of Kokoro Kara will be digital only.*

Due to the impact of COVID-19 and the reduced number of visitors to the interpretive center, we have been forced to make some difficult cuts to our 2020 budget. Our first priority has been to retain the Foundation's talented professional staff. To do that, we must make sacrifices in other areas. Rather than printing and mailing the remaining 2020 newsletter, we will instead be hosting it on the Heart Mountain website, to access and enjoy digitally. We look forward to continuing to engage with you throughout this global crisis, through both *Kokoro Kara* and our expanded range of online programming.

We will announce the release of the next issue by email.  
If you have not already subscribed to our email list, please do so by visiting:  
..... [www.heartmountain.org](http://www.heartmountain.org) .....