Chapter 2: INTERROGATIONS

Friday, November 19, 1943

Breakfast: mush, pancake, coffee, milk
Lunch: fried rice with weenie, *miso shiru*, tea, cabbage *tsukemono* (pickled cabbage)
Dinner: rice, spaghetti, Jell-O, cabbage *tsukemono*

Today is my turn as a waiter. Four waiters equal one crew. The other crew consists of Tsuda’s boys. I work every other day from 4 o’clock in the morning.

A noise woke me up this morning. Five youths from Hawaii were brought in. Everyone stared blankly at them. The interrogations continue every day, every day. First, it’s by the WRA officers, then the FBI. In the afternoon, one newcomer was brought in from camp.

We asked him about the situation in camp. He said he didn’t know what was going on. He said every day the food got worse. I felt a dark cloud overtaking me. We didn’t know why we had been arrested, but if our arrests made worse the food situation in camp for the children, the elders, and the sick, was it worth it?

Right now thirty-eight people here - a lively crowd.

(A tanka poem)
Snow and rain fall everywhere.  
When the snow becomes rain, the soldiers get wet.  
They hold their rifles, standing quietly outside the fence.

After dinner, we talked and joked around, sharing coffee and sliced apples, a special treat saved from dinner.

I was interrogated by an FBI officer between 9 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. The interrogation was conducted in both English and Japanese.

FBI agent: “This is my identification. (The agent showed me his photo card.) You know why I came here?”

Inouye: “I know very well.”

FBI agent: “I am neither related to the WRA nor the army. I don’t take anyone’s side. I was sent here by the order of the president to search out the truth of the matter.”

Inouye: “Then I ask you. Will my replies reach the president for sure?”

FBI agent: “Yes, it will, for sure.”

Inouye: “Then, I will be happy to answer any questions as much as I am able. But let me ask another question. Did you learn your Japanese in Japan or did you learn it in the
U.S.? I will have to consider how to explain things to you, depending upon your answer."

FBI agent: “I was born in Japan and lived there until I was 26-years-old. I was an insurance agent, and I have done business in China, Manchuria, Singapore, and Bangkok. That’s why I know about Japan very well.”

Inouye: “That’s great. I think you will understand what I have to say much better. As you know, even if one speaks Japanese well, unless he has breathed Japanese air, he does not understand Japanese character.”

FBI agent: “Yes, yes.”

Inouye: “Yesterday, a WRA officer questioned me but he only asked dumb questions so I began to wonder if his intelligence was less than average. If this weren’t so, then I’d conclude that he was making a fool of me. Wouldn’t you agree?”

FBI agent: “Yes. And what did you say to him?”

Inouye: “I asked him, ‘Why did you arrest me? What is your reason?’ The WRA agent replied, ‘That’s what I plan to find out from you.’ I asked the same questions twice to make sure I heard correctly. The answer was the same.”

FBI agent: “He said such a thing?”

Inouye: “Yes, I am sure. I am a gentleman. When I was arrested, I was not consulted even once as to why I was being put in jail. And when I ask questions, I get responses like I mentioned earlier. I feel the questioning is absurd. What do you think?”

FBI agent: “Mr. Inouye, I will make a record of this.”

That is what he told me. Then, the FBI agent thought a moment and started his questioning. “When did you come to this camp?”

Inouye: “I came here from Poston on October 9.”

FBI agent: “How do you feel about this camp?”

Inouye: “Let me answer your question in this way: I asked my four-year-old child when we reached Tule Lake — I asked her this before we even got to our room or ate here — I asked her (Masako), ‘Do you like Poston or Tule Lake?’ She responded, ‘Tule Lake.’ ‘Why?’ I asked. ‘Poston is too hot,’ she said. I thought this was a very interesting answer. I’ve lived at this camp for one month, and it seems that the only thing I like about it is, in fact, the weather, nothing else. This disgusts me.”

FBI agent: “Is Poston that hot?”
Inouye: “Hot? The place is not fit for humans. My children cried every night until 10 or 11 o’clock, until they fell asleep. As parents, we could hardly bear it. Since I came here, the children go to sleep around 7 o’clock. I am very happy about that.”

FBI agent: “Have you noticed any differences in the housing and living conditions between Poston and Tule Lake?”

Inouye: “Tule Lake is better because there are ceilings and walls, but as for other parts, one cannot compare the two.”

FBI agent: “Is Poston that bad?”

Inouye: “While I lived there, I thought all the camps were the same. Now, I realize that camp is not fit for humans. Insulation made conditions better, and when my neighbor installed electricity in Poston, the room got brighter too.”

FBI agent: “Then do you think this place is better than Poston?”

Inouye: “I think others have already answered that question. I am not knowledgeable enough to explain the differences statistically. Ask others about details such as whether there were buckets, brooms, closets, or porches.”

FBI agent: “Are you satisfied with the Tule Lake camp?”

Inouye: “Definitely not.”

FBI agent: “Why?”

Inouye: “I expected an uncomfortable life from the beginning, since we are in the midst of a war, so I’ll endure it to a certain degree. But the WRA, which is supposed to supply the needs of the Japanese, is not doing so. For example, buckets and brooms are necessary. In Poston, they did their job, so I thought something was strange here.”

FBI agent: “What are they not supplying?”

Inouye: “Women are having a hard time. Improvements are needed in the latrine, kitchen, and so many other areas. As I’ve said earlier, I do not have enough detailed information to talk to you about the living conditions but there are two things I cannot ignore. So here’s an outline. These must be done.”

FBI: “Please explain in detail.”

Inouye: “I am glad to explain this matter. I am not knowledgeable about such things as to why, who, and when we should receive supplies or not. The authorities are supposed to take care of this but don’t. Why? Who is supposed to do this? These things are not
directly connected to the necessities of life so I can take it to a certain degree. We can skip that part for now. But, in my short time here, I have come to believe we cannot let the hospital and food situation go on the way it is for even one more day because it directly affects human lives. If America claims to be a humanitarian nation, she must correct this right away. You must know the Japanese will not tolerate being treated as animals.”

FBI agent: “I know that very well. Will you tell me how bad the food supply situation is?”

Inouye: “This is speaking in generalities but being arrested without any charges has been very insulting, but even a person such as myself, who has been disgraced, is eating better in the stockade than the 15,000 residents in camp. Ironic, isn’t it? When I first came to the stockade, a salad with raisins and lettuce was served the next day. You may consider such a salad commonplace, but for me, I was not able to eat anything like that for a while in camp. Do you see my point?

FBI agent: “What do you mean?”

Inouye: “I would have been happier if I could have given the salad to my children and to our neighbor’s children. I wished that I could have given the fresh lettuce to the elderly and sick. I know they haven’t eaten fresh vegetables for a while. When I thought about such things, I could not eat the fresh salad. Do you understand?”

FBI agent: “I understand. Is there such a severe vegetable shortage?”

Inouye: “I can’t say that there wasn’t any but let me describe how much we did have. I am sure you will be able to understand better with this example. One day, our family had fresh cabbage. I gave all my cabbage to the children. I can manage without vegetables because I am healthy but the children are growing and need them as it is so rare. I put salt on some rice and ate it with tea. Wareware wo ittai nanto kokoroete iru ka? (Just who do they think we are?) It is not a big deal if it is just for a day or two, but the situation is getting more serious every day.

I feel outraged by the inhumane treatment we are receiving. Those like me, who have children, or others, who are caring for the elderly or ailing family members, are hoping, with heavy hearts, that things will improvement.

Regardless of whether we are Americans or Japanese, I pray that the U.S. government will stop this inhumane policy and improve the situation. This feeling is shared by everybody in camp. You can ask anyone in camp, even a four- or five-year-old. I wrote to my wife a few days ago. I wrote, ‘Here I am eating enough bacon, vegetables, and eggs, but I know what kind of food you are eating, so I can’t help but wish that I could send this food to my children.’ I don’t remember when I ate what and how much, because I am not keeping a detailed account, but I think you now understand how the camp residents feel.”
FBI agent: “Was the situation bad since the day you arrived here?”

Inouye: “No. I didn’t notice this the first couple of days, but things got bad suddenly. This is an extreme example, but I heard that when you are in a shipwreck and there is no food, you are capable of killing your close friend and eating their flesh to survive. That’s how desperate a situation the camp residents found themselves in. Now, I will answer any further questions you may have.”

FBI agent: “Mr. Inouye, I understand your feelings very well. This has been very helpful.”

Inouye: “Since I am not an expert, I regret that I can provide no more than a general impression.”

FBI agent: “Please tell me about the hospital.”

Inouye: “I don’t know the details, but I can tell you the general situation. On the second or third day after our arrival, my child suffered a toothache. She was screaming in pain, so we called an ambulance. The hospital was pretty far, and it was a very cold day, but the ambulance never came, so we wrapped our child in a blanket and took her to the hospital ourselves. After we returned to our block, I asked my neighbor if the ambulance was always that slow, and he said to me, ‘Even when there is a patient in critical condition, the ambulance never comes, so they would not dispatch an ambulance for such a trivial condition like a toothache.’

In fact, I heard that being admitted to the hospital is like going to die because you’d end up dead, after being treated by the poorly-skilled doctor. This may sound extreme, but I learned how bad the residents feel about the hospital from my own personal experience.

FBI agent: “Is everybody saying that you will get killed if you go to hospital?”

Inouye: “I wouldn’t say everybody, but I often hear similar stories. We are living, breathing beings, so we never know when we will fall sick, particularly when we are being fed such a poor diet. There is a big possibility that we will get sick. You can guess how the camp residents feel in this situation. Regardless of my situation, I urge you to think about how worried and how much stress those who must care for young children or the ailing or the elderly are dealing with.”

FBI agent: “You took your daughter to the hospital because of her toothache and saw the situation in the hospital first hand?”

Inouye: “Yes, exactly.”

FBI agent: “Mr. Inouye, did you attend Mr. Kashima’s funeral?”
Inouye: “I was going to attend but I had a slight cold that day. It was a very cold day, and I was debating whether to go or not. Then, someone came to visit me. We started talking about educational issues, and it became too late to go. Mr. Kashima was from Kumamoto, and so am I, so if others hadn’t attended, I should have gone to his funeral. But for the reasons I just told you, I didn’t end up going, and I regret it even now.”

FBI agent: “So you didn’t attend his funeral.”

Inouye: “Regrettably, no.”

FBI agent: “What did you do on the day of Meiji-setsu (Emperor Meiji’s birthday)?”

Inouye: “I attended the celebration. On the same day, there was a meeting of the Recreation Committee. The committee met because we had to discuss the WRA’s order to reduce the number of staff from 175 to fifty. The staff manages activities such as judo, sumo, go, ikebana (flower arranging), and other recreational activities for the 15,000 residents. Do you think it is possible to manage this with just a staff of 175?”

FBI agent: “I don’t think that is possible.”

Inouye: “Then you can understand that it is not possible with only fifty staff members.”

FBI agent: “That is totally impossible. Were you in charge of any activities in the committee?”

Inouye: “I don’t know how many staff members they had before I was transferred here, but after I arrived, the staff was expanded to 175. I was supposed to take care of the judo division, so that is why I was invited to the Recreation Committee meeting.”

FBI agent: “Oh, Mr. Inouye, do you practice judo?”

Inouye: “I have practiced judo for twenty three years.”

FBI agent: “What dan (rank) do you have?”

Inouye: “I have a fourth dan.”

FBI agent: “Is that so? I lived in Kobe, and my wife’s younger brother was a judo practitioner with a black belt ranking, but he doesn’t practice judo anymore. He hurt his ankle. He’s living in Los Angeles now.”

Inouye: “That’s great. No wonder you understand my story and my feelings so well, much better than other Americans.”

FBI agent: “Yes. That’s right.”
Inouye: “Then, you understand that what the Dies Committee and the newspapers are saying about judo is totally absurd.”

FBI agent: “Sure. No one believes such nonsense.” (The agent shook his head when he said “such nonsense.”)

Inouye: “Then, I wonder why Americans are believing such nonsense?”

FBI agent (laughed.): “So you attended the meeting?”

Inouye: “Yes. I arrived late because I was suffering from a cold, which I caught when I came to this camp. I didn’t say anything.”

FBI agent: “Why not?”

Inouye: “Because I knew it was unreasonable to reduce the number of staff to fifty, when even 175 had not been adequate. I felt we needed to find out why the camp administration ordered this staff reduction before we even discussed this within the Recreation Committee. Otherwise, I thought it was useless to gather and discuss the situation if we didn’t know the circumstances.”

FBI agent: “I see. Then, what did you do?”

Inouye: “I thought it was useless to remain, so I left early. The ceremony hall was right in between the recreation hall and my barrack, so I headed towards the ceremony hall. Then, I noticed that I was not wearing a tie, so I dropped by my friend’s house to borrow a tie, and I attended the ceremony. I assume you understand why I borrowed a tie.”

FBI agent: “Yes, I do.”

Another FBI agent passed a piece of paper and whispered something to the FBI officer, who was interrogating me. He stared at the memo for a while.

FBI agent: “Did you go to see Mr. Myer?”

Inouye: “Yes, I did.”

FBI agent: “Were you the representative?”

Inouye: “No, I wasn’t a representative, but I went to see Mr. Myer. You must understand why I went to see him, since I explained to you the general feelings of the camp residents. I’ve never met nor talked with Mr. Best, but the camp residents do not feel they can trust Mr. Best. That is why we thought that camp life might improve if we explained the situation directly to Mr. Myer.”

FBI agent: “The residents don’t trust Mr. Best?”
Inouye: “It is worse to make a promise and not follow through, than to not make a promise in the first place. It leaves a bad feeling.”

FBI agent: “I understand. Is that why everyone was waiting for Mr. Myer?”

Inouye: “Yes. Mr. Myer is considered a first-class gentleman in America, and it is common knowledge that a Japanese gentleman never lies, so everyone was anticipating Mr. Myer’s visit. When news of his arrival spread, the entire camp went out to see him. I’m sure you’re familiar with this part of the story. Some women came out, carrying their babies, while others showed up pushing buggies. Many of the elderly came out, as well. It became so festive that it was just like a picnic.

FBI agent: “Is that right?”

Inouye: “As I watched the situation, it occurred to me that if just one young man created a commotion, others would follow. I don’t like violence. The Japanese had simple demands. That’s all. I didn’t feel the camp authorities had any reasons to deny their requests. I thought that a calm meeting would resolve the problem. However, if someone started stirring up trouble, then I thought the honor of the *dai kokumin* (great people) would be tainted. I practice judo. I am duty-bound to prevent violence from erupting in order to preserve the honor of the Japanese, so I placed myself at the entrance of the building. I was standing there, facing the crowd, with my back to the door, when, somebody from behind said, “Come” or “Come in.” I turned around, and the door opened up, and I was pulled in.”

FBI agent: “Did a Japanese or an (Caucasian) American ask you to come in?”

Inouye: “I don’t know, and I didn’t know where to go. I thought about heading towards the exit, when a (Caucasian) American said, ‘This way,’ and pointed at a door. I found myself in the conference room. An FBI agent asked me, ‘Are you a representative from the people?’ I responded, ‘Yes.’ I actually felt like an outsider. The Japanese there were also staring at me, probably wondering what I was doing there, but since I was already in the meeting room, I gathered myself together and sat down in a chair. As a judo practitioner, I am conditioned not to show fear. I decided to hear out what the representatives had to say. If they did not bring up the food and hospital situation, which is what I was most concerned about, I planned to speak up and explain things to Mr. Myer.”

FBI agent: “Did you sign the attendance sheet?”

Inouye: “Yes I did.”

FBI agent: “Ah, that’s why they put you into the stockade.”
Inouye: “I only signed the roster. Then, I was arrested without any investigation. I have been detained for many days. This is outrageous. Don't you think so?”

FBI agent: “I cannot answer that.”

Inouye: “The reason why I signed the paper is because Mr. Myer is considered an American gentleman and I am a Japanese gentleman, so I signed it. Do you understand my feelings? Do you understand Japanese politeness?”

FBI agent: “I understand. Then, you went home?”

Inouye: “Yes. I went home and talked about that day with my wife. She said, ‘Why did you sign it? You might get in trouble.’ I said, ‘You shouldn’t say such a thing. The politeness between two gentlemen should be maintained, regardless if one is Japanese or American.’”

FBI agent: “Is that so, Mr. Inouye? I understand your feelings very well. Do you have anything else you would like to say about it?”

Inouye: “Yes. Mr. Myer promised the Japanese representatives that he would investigate what was requested. Mr. Best was also happy to consider the requests and promised to cooperate with the Japanese. All of the camp residents think that Mr. Best is inept but that Mr. Myer is a first-class gentleman. We believe that now Mr. Myer will improve living conditions in the camp. Even now, when we are living under such miserable conditions, we keep our fingers crossed. I expect Mr. Myer to do his work from a humanitarian standpoint. He should also follow the international alien law and make improvements, as much as the international covenants permit.”

FBI agent: “I assure you that your statement is recorded. What did you do on November 4th? Did you go with the others to the warehouse?”

Inouye: “I am not that kind of person. That night, I heard gunshots. At first, I thought it was the crackling of the burning coals but I heard the same noise again. At that time, I didn’t know there was a tank involved, but I did hear trucks in maneuver. I sensed something unusual was going on, so I got out of bed and peered through the window, but I didn’t see anyone outside. I was relieved, but I continued to keep an eye out for what was going on outside. Then, again, I heard gunshots. I think this was around 10 o’clock.”

FBI agent: “Why were you relieved when you saw no one outside?”

Inouye: “There would be a lot of confusion if the block residents gathered outside, and the situation could escalate if soldiers arrived. I was afraid that if there were a commotion, the soldiers would come and fire shots into the crowd. I felt, then, that I would have to stop the people from getting involved in something like this should such an incident happen.”
FBI agent: “I see. I understand your explanation. What do you think of what happened?”

Inouye: When I went to the latrine, I learned that martial law had been declared and that machine guns and tanks had been brought in the night before. This surprised me.

You know, in any town with a population of 15,000, a man and a woman might have a fight or two during the night. Someone might also cause trouble after getting drunk. This incident happened to involve a Japanese and an (Caucasian) American.

Mr. Best overreacted by mobilizing the army because this place happens to be an enemy alien internment camp (*Tule Lake was NOT an enemy alien internment camp but a camp where Americans of Japanese Americans were imprisoned unconstitutionally. Aliens, ineligible for U.S. citizenship, were imprisoned in Department of Justice camps.) I don’t know if I should laugh or be amazed at his foolish action.”

FBI agent: “Does everyone think similarly?”

Inouye: “Do you know the story of the Genji and Heike clans fighting? The Heike platoon heard noises on the Fuji River one night. They assumed it was the Genji clan and retreated to Rokuhara in Kyoto, but the noise was only water birds suddenly flying out of the water.”

FBI agent: “Yes, I know the story.”

Inouye: “This is exactly the same situation. All the residents in camp were living peacefully, but the American military was mobilized. This absurd reaction is an embarrassment to Americans. Even the women and children are deriding America.”

FBI agent: “What you think about Mr. Best?”

Inouye: “Do you know the saying, Joshi to shonin wa yashinai katashi? (It’s difficult to deal with women and weak men).”

FBI agent: “I know it.”

Inouye: “A man, weak in spirit, is known as a shonin. That describes Mr. Best exactly. Don’t you think?”

FBI agent: “Why, yes. When I arrived at this camp and I met him for only five minutes, I could see what kind of man he was, which is just like you said.”

Inouye: “Most residents think Mr. Best is a small-minded man and misjudged the situation. He made a mountain out of an anthill. If he was employed anywhere else, for example, at a factory or an office and he makes a mistake, it would only affect that place. However, since he is the head of the *enemy alien camp (*Tule Lake was NOT an enemy
alien camp but a segregation camp), his mistakes become the mistakes of the entire American government.

If only he had had a little common sense, he would not have made such an error. He doesn’t have to be a good man. The camp residents are prepared to undergo inconveniences since we are in a state of war. We can calmly wait out the war if it can be guaranteed that the women and children will be looked after enough to survive the war. But Mr. Best failed to carry out what the WRA had guaranteed to us, and this mistake by the American government has been exposed to the entire world.

On top of that, he continuously pressured us and even mobilized the American army against us. Best is just a wage earner. He is not a true American. His actions are not like that of someone who loves America. The Japanese army is honored to fight against a strong enemy, but if they learn of the undisciplined administration and army, they will be disappointed. I want you to understand that the Japanese do not want to fight a weak army.

FBI agent: “I understand very well.”

Inouye: “America is a strange country. America claims to be a just and democratic country, but this is what I think — I think America is trying to be a democratic country, but the war has brought confusion and muddled up the principles of democracy.”

FBI agent: “Yes, before the war, it was very different, but since the war started, the situation has become troubling.”

Inouye: “It is regrettable that this great country has put itself into such a difficult predicament.”

FBI agent: “It is indeed regrettable.” (Shakes his head.)

Inouye: “But I want to believe that goodness exists in this country. I want to believe that there are people with good judgment, who believe in justice and the democratic principles. I want to appeal to such people, to let them know the miserable conditions the Japanese are experiencing here. I want to appeal to them as a member of the human race.”

FBI agent: “You are requesting this as a member of the human race?”

Inouye: “This is neither a request nor a demand. Let me explain. For example, I understand the government budgets $0.40 per person per day. If we wanted $0.50 per person per day, we would request it, and if we are not given $0.50 and we protest, that would become a demand.

But what we are saying now is that if the budget is $0.40 per person per day, then please make the allowance of $0.40 per person per day. I am surprised that Mr. Best refused
such a simple request. I just can’t understand it. Don’t you think such a refusal is strange?”

FBI agent: “What you say is exactly right.”

Inouye: “I was born in this country but I am of Japanese descent. Currently, I consider myself an enemy alien. Although I was born here, I was sent to Japan for an education but I missed the country of my birth and that is why I returned. I came back with the intention of planting my roots here and raising children in this country. However, once the war between Japan and the U.S. broke out, I changed my mind. I prayed that Japan would win this war. Do you understand this feeling?”

FBI agent: “Yes, I understand. My mother is British, and I often wonder what I would do if America and England should go to war against each other.”

Inouye: “It is not surprising that the U.S. regards me as an alien enemy. But when they make a policy, whatever it is, they must stick with it. I am talking about this as a human. I hope America will reconsider this matter. From the point of humanity, they should think about it. There is no way they can coerce Japanese by force.”

FBI agent: “When did you return to Japan?”

Inouye: “I was three-years-old.”

FBI agent: “Then you were educated in Japan?”

Inouye: “Yes. I returned when I was seventeen.”

FBI agent: “Where did you live?”

Inouye: “Los Angeles.”

FBI agent: “Did you reside other than LA?”

Inouye: “Majority of my time was in LA. No other place.”

FBI agent: “Do you have a job in camp?”

Inouye: “No, but when I was employed, I taught judo.”

FBI agent: “You supervised the judo program?”

Inouye: “Yes.”

FBI agent: “Have you served as a representative or a committee member of any kind?”
Inouye: “I think you might know of Master Kano…”

FBI agent: “Yes, I have heard of him.”

Inouye: “Master Kano was asked to join the Japanese Cabinet as the Minister of Education, but he declined because he had committed himself to judo education. This fact has impressed me deeply. I think it is extremely regrettable that young people in camp are being idle. I considered it my duty that I open a dojo and train young people. I started making plans, but, as you know, I was thrown into the stockade.” (I laughed.)

FBI agent: “So how have you been spending your time here?”

Inouye: “I have only been here for one month, and I cannot walk around without a map. Also I have two children, so I have been busy making desks and chairs.”

FBI agent: “Is that all?”

Inouye: “You know the expression, mochiya wa mochiya (People do what they know, i.e., a mochi man will be a mochi man.).” (I laughed.)

FBI agent: “I see.”

Inouye: “My purpose is to use my energy for the good of the people and help everybody thrive together through the teaching of judo. There are other people who can serve on committees, even if I don’t do it, but those people cannot teach judo, even if I ask them to. If there is no one else, I would serve on the committee whether I can do it or not, but generally, I am not that type of person. Mochiya wa mochiya.” (I laughed.)

FBI agent: “Thank you for your many stories. Thank you very much. If you feel you wish to say something more please come over anytime.”

Inouye: “I am completely satisfied with what I have said. Please report this to the President. The hospital and food situation must absolutely change, if America stands for justice and humane treatment. They should tend to this right away. Whenever you have a chance to see Mr. Grew, tell him that Question 28 was an excellent attack, even coming from the enemy. It was like the persecution of the Christians in the 20th century.”

FBI agent: “When I have a chance, I’ll tell him. Thank you ever so much.”

I was returned to the stockade, guarded by a soldier with a bayonet.

FBI agent: “What do you think if the army took over this camp?”

Inouye: “I heard the following things when I left Poston —‘What was that man thinking? He has two children and he chooses to be segregated to Tule Lake. Mr. So-and-So was smart enough to answer ‘yes’ and chose the safer path.’”
“Tule Lake is surrounded by 8 shaku (2.5 meters) high barbed wire fences. They have roll call every morning and evening. They do such things, just like in a federal penitentiary. As long as I am Japanese, I cannot answer ‘yes,’ no matter how harshly I am treated. I came here prepared for any hardship. I don’t mind if the barbed wire fences covered the entire sky over this camp. We can survive if we have access to food, the latrine, and a hospital. But because the above three are indispensable for survival, they should be adequately provided for from a humanitarian point of view, regardless of the inmates being Japanese or American. If these three are guaranteed, I don't care whether the army or the WRA or any other organization takes over. I don't care. As you know, if one receives a check and there is no money behind it, it is useless, so this guarantee is important.

“If I went to Japan and became an officer of a concentration camp, I would treat the prisoners fairly whether they are English or American. No matter which country they came from, the treatment would not be below the regulations. My conscience would not allow me to consider the thought of them being treated below the standard. But I have to be blunt. When I think of the treatment that my fellow country people are receiving in wartime U.S., I must say that I have to discard the above idea. I have to remind myself that West is west and East is east.”

FBI agent: “That is really regrettable. I totally understand what you are saying. You do not represent your block or community, but you were arrested because you signed the roster. Can you think of any other reason why you were arrested?”

Inouye: “What kind of reason, for example?”

FBI agent: “For instance, someone uses your name and tells others that the judo master, Mr. Inouye, approves it and tries to invite them to join a plan. Could such a thing happen?”

Inouye: “There have been no such action taken in the Japanese quarter. Since I am a new arrival of only one month, most people do not know my name. It would be an honor if they would use my name but no such influence exists.”

FBI agent: “Do people from around Los Angeles know about you?”

Inouye: “I know most of the people who practiced judo in Los Angeles, but five years ago, my business took up a lot of my time, so I didn’t get a chance to practice or teach judo. That’s why many of the younger men wouldn’t know me.”

FBI agent: “You said there has been no such action within the midst of the Japanese. Is that true?”
Inouye: “That’s right. This is your profession, so you can tell if I am lying or not, right? One reason this thought may have occurred to you is because maybe Mr. Best suspected this since he is such a small thinking man.”

FBI agent: “Yes, I see. Mr. Best might have thought that there is a judo man, Inouye. Young men, violence, gangsters — I suppose Mr. Best suspected something like this.”

Inouye: “Perhaps, Mr. Best imagined such an association, but he has come to a wrong conclusion. He is completely mistaken.”

FBI agent: “But Mr. Best might have thought that way.”

Inouye: “He proved and demonstrated that his mental capacity is below average. He cannot make good judgments about people. (We laughed together.)

“The Japanese who came to this camp are generally honest and serious because they could not lie. But the newspapers and radio keep saying that we are gangs and are engaged in sabotage. Mr. Best must read these headlines and believe them, and that is why he issues tyrannical policies. Mr. Best should think about how he disgraces his own nation by taking such measures. For America, his act is unpatriotic. He acts like one who does not know about his own country.”

FBI agent: “Did you say something to Mr. Best when you were in the conference room?”

Inouye: “No, I went in late, so I first I sat down on a hard chair. Then, a message arrived by telephone that *Dr. Pedicord (*Pedicord was the head doctor at the Tule Lake hospital and unpopular among Tuleans because he was considered uncaring and incompetent.) had been beaten up. People were alarmed, and some went to stop the commotion. Then, when several chairs became empty, I pressed the seat of each chair and looked for the most comfortable one. I moved to the softest chair. I guess Mr. Myer knew why I was pressing the seats and laughed.”

FBI: “Mr. Myers laughed?”

Inouye: “Yes. I found a comfortable chair, lit a cigarette, and listened to the discussion, quietly.”

FBI agent: “Did you run out when Dr. Pedicord was beaten up?”

Inouye: “I thought that would be useless, so I stayed in the room.”

The FBI agent recorded that Mr. Myer had laughed.

**Saturday, November 20, 1943**
Morning: French toast, mush, coffee, weenie
Lunch: rice, mackerel (baked), cabbage soup with onions
Evening: *nimono* (beef and Swiss chard), Jell-O, rice, tea

Mori-san slept in the next bed and said that I talked in my sleep. He told me I clearly said, “We have to try harder! And guys like Kobayashi need to practice judo a lot more.”

I said, “Wow. It’s a good thing I didn’t call out my wife’s name or something.” Everybody laughed.

I sent a letter to Sayuri and Masako:

*Be nice girls and obey your mother. Sayuri, study hard. If you study hard, I will ask Santa Claus to send you something good. Masako, if you go to sleep early you will be a nice big girl. Play with Sayuri nicely then when Christmas comes, I asked to send you something as nice as your big sister. Daddy is well. When I come home, I will be fat. Give my regards to Hayashi san. Tell mom to send me my blue pants. Goodbye.*

Yuriko sent a pencil, Durham, tablet, Japanese writing textbook, getas, slippers, and a dictionary. I received a lot of persimmons from Mr. Nakamoto. I didn’t know who he was so I asked around. I learned that he was from the Rohwer camp. I appreciated his gift very much and am sharing them with others in the same room.

Two new men were brought in on curfew violation. Now, the inmates total forty.

The WRA sent two pairs of boxing gloves, a football, two pairs of baseball gloves, a mitt, and a ball. Uchida received permission to go back to camp to retrieve papers. I asked him to talk to Yuriko about the money situation.

Guardsmen watched us day and night. It’s cold and rainy. One of the guards was Chinese. Someone called him names, saying, “Chingamagahai.” He retorted “Jap!” We all laughed when we heard the story.

When we moved into the new stockade, we ordered chicken and tuna almost every day, to the point that it was comical.

On the way back to the stockade, a thought of escape occurred, even if it was aiming out from the second eye of our pants. We were just joking. (*a crude joke, referring to peeing out beyond the fence.*)

The quality and taste of the food have simply dropped, compared to the first three days but I am glad there is rice and *shoyu* (soy sauce). After dinner, we practiced singing, *“Yukoka Mairoka.”* *(Most likely from Shanshan Uma Dochu Uta.)* Everyone roared with laughter.
From across the bed, Yoshiyama said to me, “Your wife is probably worried about you but you sure are easy-going.” What use was there in worrying? I’m glad my wife is a brave, spirited, heroic woman.

After breakfast, a WRA officer called for me. His name was Martin. This man already hit six young men. Martin asked me questions such as my address, where I was born, etc. My answer was routine: “I can’t speak English. Can you get an interpreter?”

Martin: “If you could speak that much English, you don’t need an interpreter. What is your father’s job?”

Inouye: “No job.”

He asked for my older brother’s name and job. I replied, “No job.”

Martin: “Without a job, how do they live?”

Inouye: “They must have money. I don’t know.”

Martin: “You know Kuratomi or Kai?”

Inouye: “What? Say Again?” (I waited for him to repeat it.) Then said, “I don’t know them.”

Martin: “You know Tom Kobayashi?”

Inouye: “I don’t.”

Martin: “You don’t know him? You were with that fat boy.”

Inouye: “Oh, that’s Tom Kobayashi? Then, I know him. I met him before entering camp, and then, I saw him again in the stockade.”

The internal security officer finally got around to asking about the loyalty registration. “What was your answer to questions 27 and 28?”

Inouye: “Of course, no.”

Martin: “Did you engage in military training before?”

Inouye: “Yes.”

That got the attention of three soldiers, who were standing, facing us with bayonets. They stared at me.

Martin: “Why are you going back to Japan?”
Inouye: “You should know that.”

Martin: “Not really. What plans do you have?”

Inouye; “Oh well, after the war, I know we can live like human beings. I plan to live with my parents and brothers so I don't have to worry about my livelihood.”

It was an unexpected answer. He looked surprised. “Have you put in papers, requesting your return to Japan?”

Inouye: “Not yet, but I plan to.”

Then, he asked, “What did you do when Myer came to this camp?”

Inouye: “I went to the administration office, of course.”

He asked me why.

Inouye: “I am Japanese. I can’t be the only one staying back in my camp room when all the other Japanese were gathering.”

Martin: “Did someone come to get you?”

Inouye: “No, nobody came. I just happened to be bringing back coal, and people were saying Myer was here and that everyone was going to the administration office. I didn’t know what was going on. I just followed.”

Martin: “And then what?”

Inouye: “Then, I watched from outside of the fence and then, went in.”

Martin: “Did you try to make everyone press closer to the meeting room?”

Inouye: “Exactly the opposite. I tried to calm the people down. I think you know how the Japanese are. They waited quietly and patiently to learn about what was going on in the meeting.”

After this, he tried to ask me another question but was unable to find his words, so he closed his folder and stood up. From beginning to end, he continuously asked foolish questions.

Then, I asked again, “Why did you arrest me? I’m trying to find out why I was arrested.” I asked him twice, and both times, he answered with a question: “Do you have any criminal records?”
Such a foolish question. I’m not that kind of a person.

“What did you pick me up for?” “I am going to find it from you.” “That’s all, go ahead, find it.” *[These phrases were written in English]*

My answers went up like smoke. There were two more people, and since I finished early, I listened to the others being questioned. Upon noticing this, the officer from internal security told the guard to take me back to the barracks.