Chapter 5: LEUPP GROUP, MORE QUESTIONING

Monday, December 6, 1943 - Judo

Morning: 2 toasts, coffee
Lunch: a little rice, 2 bread slices, tea, nimono (meat, carrots)
Dinner: Mazemeshi (rice mixed with carrots and meat), tea, beets

Thus far, we have been dividing one regular meal into three separate ones. It is obvious the authorities are hoping to get a violent reaction from us. Initially, we were surrounded by pistols and rifles. Now, they disarm before entering the stockade. This isn’t bread and water; more like rice and water. Today, they supplied us with a little meat to appease us, but no matter how hard the cook tries to feed us well, if the food portions aren’t enough, then there just isn’t enough.

The FBI questioned me for an hour and a half this morning. It has been a long time since I’d been flanked on two sides with bayoneted guards. I entered the interrogation room, which was full of people.

The rice, taken from the recent raid, was personal property of the camp residents, so they were returning them to the original owners. The huge mountain shakes but not even a mouse skittles out.

They moved Sugimoto to the old stockade this afternoon. The officer ordered him to bring three blankets. “Only three?” Sugimoto had asked. “Won’t I freeze?”

The officer replied, “This is an army order.”

Total: 184.

I wonder what they are thinking. We don’t know what’s going on, but most likely they don’t either.

I heard that the five Negotiating Committee members detained in the old tent started a hunger strike this morning. We delivered food to them three times during the day, but they didn’t touch it. They demanded to meet with the commander but were refused for reasons unknown to us (but I pretty much know why). If this situation continues, there will be no relief for the 15,000 in camp. They will continue the hunger strike until they see the commander. Their minds are set, even if it results in tragedy. How callous our enemy is.

The sergeant asked, “Do you know that the five people started a hunger strike?”

Us: “Yes, we know.”

Sergeant: “Why are they doing such a thing?”
Us: “It is because the commander refuses to meet with them. Tell the commander to meet with them.”

Sergeant: “I don’t understand. I don’t want to get involved. It is your business that you are on Japan’s side. It is my business that I love America. If people love Japan, then, put them on a boat and send them back to Japan. It’s not worth spending time thinking over such complicated matters.”

One soldier said, “Whether or not they are on a hunger strike, it matters little to me. All I have to do is guard them.”

In order to gain the attention of the commander, who cares so little about us, they are forced to go on a hunger strike. It’s very sad when one thinks about it.

Fifty two youths arrived in the afternoon from the Leupp Citizen Isolation Center in Arizona.

Total: 236.

These youths were arrested and released from Leupp to the Tule Lake stockade. Those, who changed their “no-no” answers to “yes-yes” (on the loyalty questionnaire), were quickly sent to other camps.

Tanabe, Masataka and Peter Yamamoto were in this category. They were quickly sent back to the Gila River camp. These youths should have been released earlier, but it had been postponed due to the incidence. They ought to have been sent to camp but were sent to the stockade due to the chaos.

A youth from Leupp shared one piece of orange (really, just three segments). It was extremely tasty. This is life in the stockade.

A bearded face, smiling over the joys of eating a single slice of orange — How miserable.

There were two letters from Yuriko:

_A letter of condolence from Mr. Miyamoto. My mother-in-law was worried because she didn’t hear from you for a long time. (I hope nobody tells her that you are detained in the stockade.) *July sent me a lot of magazines so I will send them to the stockade, share it with the others *(July is the sister of Yuriko)

_Letter from Hagio stating he will try to be at Tule Lake by Christmas. Christmas dolls are hidden at Mr. Hayashi’s place. Hayashi’s daughter, Seichan made a hat for the doll and a bed, which we painted. I decorated the room to look like Christmas so the children are very happy. Hayashi-san fed us imo kayu (sweet potato rice soup).
At breakfast they haven’t had anything to eat so I had to get a fire, soup, doughnut, fruit, etc. at the canteen so they will not get hungry. This morning that lady that I said was nice to us came over and the children were eating the leftover from last night so she brought over some fried potato with eggs. Sayuri and Masako certainly gobbled them up quick. This morning Masako got up and said, “I saw daddy at the army camp and he was teaching Judo” and she said, “I thought he was sleeping with me.” I guess she dreamt about you but she really thinks she saw you. She is hoping that you will be back soon. Mr. Hayashi again invited us for dinner, this time he cooked a chicken soup. Sayuri ate three bowls full and Masako ate two. Gee, I guess they liked it very much. Gee! Everyone is so kind to us and I really don’t know how to thank them. Mr. Kokawa’s daughter is very nice to us. Sakuma-san gave us 6 cans of milk. There is no milk in the kitchen.

The man next door is bringing up the coal for me every day. I guess people around here are different. I felt quite lonesome for a while but these people in this block try their best to humor us and always come to see me and tell me all about your time in camp saying that you are just fine, so I feel much better. It seems like Sayuri wants a birthday party but I said we better wait until Daddy comes back. Take good care of yourself.

Love, Yuriko

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Conversation with the FBI:

FBI: “Is it true that the judo people met at block 42?”

Inouye: “No, there was no such meeting at block 42.”

FBI: “There wasn’t?”

Inouye: “They would need my permission to hold such a meeting.”

FBI: “Is there a *Yudanshakai* in this camp?”

Inouye: “Yes, but we just started the group, so there isn’t much to tell you.”

FBI: “Are you the president of the *Yudanshakai*?”

Inouye: “Yes. In judo, age and rank are important, and it is customary to respect the elders. In this camp, I am the oldest, with the highest rank, so the general consensus was that I would be president. I don’t want to be president, but due to the circumstances, I was glad to take the position.”

FBI: “How many members are there?”

Inouye: “I wanted to know that myself, so I had been planning a registration program, but I was arrested before that got under way, so I have no idea. I wanted to open a dojo as
soon as possible to get the youths involved, but the incident occurred. Although there was no real incident, people look at us with prejudice. I postponed the registration to ensure that there could be judo in the future at this camp.”

FBI: “Can you estimate how many members there are?”

Inouye: “As I said before, it is difficult to guess. For me, I was arrested early on, and I’ve been in here until now.”

FBI: “Is there practice at block 42?”

Inouye: “Oh, yes. I recall there was practice there. I attended once or twice, but they were using the laundry room for practice. It was very small and cumbersome, so we tried to get a bigger facility, but as you know, I ended up here.”

FBI: “Who is the teacher?”

Inouye: “I’d have to say that I don’t know. If I tell you his name, he might get arrested, so under these circumstances, I refuse to answer.”

FBI: “No, we won’t arrest him.”

Inouye: “Maybe you won’t arrest him, but from my past treatment, I don’t trust anyone in authority. It is enough that I am a victim. Besides, no one else knows more than I do.”

FBI: “Is that so? Do you know Uchida?”

Inouye: “Yes.”

FBI: “What rank is he?”

Inouye: “He’s fourth degree black belt.”

FBI: “How about Kimura?”

Inouye: “I think he is third or fourth degree.”

FBI: “Who will be the chairman, when everyone meets?”

Inouye: “There has been no meeting, but if there is one, I will be the chair, of course.”

FBI: “So is it a fact that the judo organization is not set up yet?”

Inouye: “Right. I thought I’d work for the Japanese from now on, but I got put into the stockade.”
FBI: “Is there any kendo in this camp?”

Inouye: “No! There is no equipment.”

FBI: “How about sumo?”

Inouye: “That’s a completely different field.”

FBI: “How about kenbu (sword dance)_CF

Inouye: “No idea.” (I laughed.)

FBI: “Thank you very much.”

Inouye: “Wait a minute. I want to say something. The American people are misjudging everything Japanese (cultural things), especially judo. They are misled and misguided. Unless the Americans take off their clouded glasses, they cannot understand what I’m saying.

He spoke with abnormal variations – sometimes, politely and at other times with familiarity with such uses as *okami san (which isn’t polite.) (*refers to a female, usually to someone’s wife or a landlady or the madam of a business).

FBI: “My wife’s brother, James, practiced judo in Japan, so I think I understand what you say.”

Another agent smiled and said, “I practiced judo once before. I still want somebody to teach me.” Then, pointing to his shoulder, he said, “But I hurt myself here about two months ago.”

Inouye: “Is that so? First of all, I’d like to explain to you the meaning of judo. Ju means ‘gentle,’ and another definition is related to enjuku or mature. Judo is not an offensive martial art. It is entirely defensive. The purpose of judo is to develop character and maturity. It seems to me that the average American considers judo as simply physical training. I consider focusing on the spiritual training, rather than the physical training, as more important. At Poston, the youths, who were practicing judo, were polite, did well in school, and were respectful to their teachers. In contrast, the youths, who did not practice judo were entirely different. Some may think these judo youths are weak, but they are spiritually and physically stronger. Americans can’t seem to understand this.

“At Poston III, Dr. Powell said judo was too ceremonious. He felt that if you met an enemy in a jungle, conducting a ceremony will not help you. I asked him what he considered ceremonial, and he pointed to the bowing at the beginning and at the end of a match. I told him that during a match, we do not belittle our opponents. We want a strong opponent, but even if our opponent is weak, we do not treat him badly. We
proudly bow with solemn dignity. When the match begins, we fight with full force against our opponent. Then, after the match, whether one wins or loses, we bow politely.

“The judo-ka or judo man applies this to his daily life. This is what we believe to be true. I explained this to Dr. Powell, but I don’t think he understood me. Although Dr. Powell has a doctorate and is an intellectual in American society, he cannot understand this, so of course, it would be difficult for the average American to understand this concept. The average American wears clouded glasses. As long as Americans refuse to believe the concepts I have stated, they will not be able to understand. I am surprised that Americans can’t understand the Japanese.” (This was recorded in shorthand by the agent.)

This is how I felt when I came to Tule Lake: Of all the ten camps, this was the most peaceful. I believed that this was an exemplary camp because all of us who came here, came with similar convictions. But as you know, there has been unrest at this camp. Why? Because the Americans are viewing things through clouded lenses.

Everyone wants a peaceful camp, and during this time of war, we should try to live as peacefully as we can —women and children, young and old. But there was turmoil due to several incidents. The FBI agent said they are investigating these matters but this may be difficult. I want to see a peaceful camp. One way to accomplish this is to start a dojo.

There are Japanese in this camp who have decided that they are Japanese and not American and want to go to Japan. But many of these young people, who have been educated in America about Japan, will find their studies to be useless.

As for me, I have no other means to help the people than to teach judo. Teaching judo prepares the youths, who plan to go to Japan, while at the same time, keeping the peace in camp. I tell them I have different intentions than those held by the Tule Lake administration. This surprises me, and I catch myself laughing at what I’ve said.

I wanted to go into more detail, but there were so many others waiting to be questioned, so before I finished, I told them that I considered myself an enemy alien imprisoned in a camp, and so we expected a certain amount of hardships but that we are also living, breathing human beings.

Those, who incarcerated us, do not seem to understand the concept of truth, humanity, and international law. I came to that conclusion after I thought through what has happened to us. However, I do not feel like repeating what has already been said. I just want the youths to have enough to eat to fill their stomachs and to have the innocent, who have been unlawfully arrested and treated like dogs without a hearing, to be released. To continue on this way is a disgrace to America. I thought America was a lawful country like Japan, but for every day they treat the Japanese like this, it is one more day of bringing dishonor to America. (I can’t tell you how much longer my stockade life will be so I am writing very small and succinct.)

I said this to the agent. (The agent said he understood very well.)
The agent said, “I guess the food situation in camp is bad.”

Inouye: “Makoto ni komatta koto desu” (It is truly troubling.)

FBI: “This situation will not continue much longer. The results of our investigation may be sent to Washington in the near future.”

The FBI agent, then, took me to the prisoners’ office. They returned me to the stockade, escorted by bayoneted army soldiers, under orders from the FBI.

**Tuesday, December 7, 1943**

Today is the second anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack. Mr. Koji Todoroki cut his finger and drew blood to sketch a *hino maru* (the rising sun) or *nisshoki* (flag of the Rising Sun).

Morning: boiled egg (We haven’t eaten eggs for a long time), coffee, 1 hot cake
Noon: water was unavailable between 9 a.m. and 3:30p.m. Around 4 o’clock, we had one cheese sandwich
Evening: (We barely got dinner prepared by 7 p.m., since there are not enough pans.) rice, tea, *nimono* (squid, cabbage, potatoes)

It tastes like straw. Burnt rice stinks. I think around 10 o’clock at night, I heard guns being discharged and tanks rolling through. The searchlights lit up the dark and were focused on the camp. We went outside to see what was going on. We didn’t hear any voices. We only heard the tanks and saw the searchlights. We wondered if the tanks were brought out because the authorities thought the residents would do something on this second anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack. *Kisei o seisu* (*They are trying to intimidate us)*.

For the last two or three days, there has been some construction going on around the stockade. Today, it appears as though they will be building a new guard tower. By the looks of this situation, there seems to be no chance that we will be getting out soon. We laughed about this and discussed what to do about New Year’s mochi (rice cakes).

Today, we planned a lecture after lunch, and after dinner, we scheduled some entertainment, but everyone was so hungry that it was difficult to pull it off.

**Wednesday, December 8, 1943**

Morning: 2 biscuits, coffee, toast
Lunch: rice, tea, spareribs, pickled carrots
Evening: rice, *nimono* (cabbage, carrot, pork, potatoes), bread pudding, tea

I woke up when I heard someone holler that it was snowing. The sky was full of drifting frost that looked like snow. I am not sure but I heard the five people in the old stockade had only three blankets and slept on cots without mattresses. They also had no coal to burn. At least, we have four blankets and a mattress over the cot. We can also burn coal
for about two to four hours a day but this is still insufficient to keep us warm. This is what real American humanity, democracy, and justice looks like.

Mr. Todoroki, who was given the nickname *tokkan kozo (*the youth or brat who charges ahead), told us he was going to demand a meeting with Commander Colonel Austin to discuss the five being held in the old tent stockade. He planned to ask for their release or that he be put in there with them. We stopped him from doing this since this would only infuriate the commander even more.

Why was the commander acting in such a way? Why does he refuse to meet with the Negotiating Committee? When I think such things through, it seems it would be better not to go through with such action because it would probably makes things worse. (It is very clear that the commander is acting out through his emotions and not through rational thought.) The Negotiating Committee plans to endure any hardship for the sake of the 15,000. We all feel the same way as you, Koji Todoroki. We are all full of anger over how the army treats us, but if you go through with your plan, it will be simply futile.

We should negotiate through the FBI, not the army. Although the intent is fine, we should be selective as to whom we reveal our intentions. We realize negotiating with the FBI won’t be easy but we feel that the attorney general, through the FBI, can override the army’s authority during wartime and carry out the order of the president. Then, the army would have to move by executive order.

Mr. Mori was called in by an officer. He happened to overhear someone saying, “We tried but the commander does not listen to us. We talked to him but…” The high-ranking officer, apparently, did not listen.

I don’t know if that was connected with this matter. The way I feel is that the commander failed to carry out any of his plans successfully. We called him ochariki. Since he was unsuccessful, he was acting out, based on emotion, rather than rational thought.

I received a letter from Mr. Osaki. He visited my place, but no one was home. He told Sleepy Kokawa to convey the message to me of his visit.

Yesterday, we had no water, so the youths at the dinner table (dinner was a small portion of low grade food) ate aggressively, which was miserable to watch. The lieutenant looked into the garbage can and said, “You people said there is not enough food but look at all this garbage.” The cabbage was frostbitten, and the yellow, rotten leaves were not suitable for eating.

Mr. Tsuda put his hand in the garbage and angrily retorted, “Do you think we can eat this?” Then, he yelled, “Is this American democracy?”

Today, we were provided a little more food than before. Perhaps, the few things that I had said to the FBI had taken effect. However, the portions are only a little bit more. Perhaps, someone, who reads the menu, may think that the food is good and tolerable, but
if they could see the portion sizes, quality, and taste, this would surely shock them. When I think about the Imperial Army on the battlefield, I know we shouldn’t complain about our food. If our endurance of subsisting on such horrible food helps Japan, then we won’t complain. I would be happy to persevere like a soldier on the battlefield who does not eat for one or two days. In comparison to Japan’s treatment of British and American soldiers, America’s treatment towards us is not right. We should protest.

In the afternoon, three men were released without being interrogated even once.

Total: 228

I asked one of the men being released to carry out a letter, written in Japanese. I heard that *Mama (*referring to mother-in-law) was worried because there was no communication. I wrote that things were peaceful and not to worry. A letter, written in Japanese, cannot be sent out, so I asked him to take it out, covertly. (If I sent an English-written letter, she would worry more.)

The first man I asked refused. He was afraid that if the letter got discovered he would be sent back to jail. (The man knows nothing but was arrested anyways.) Newspapers and magazines from Yuriko arrived.

I wrote Yuriko:

1) Did you receive the letter I want to send to Poston?
2) Bring my fingerprint certificate.
3) Thank everyone in the block.
4) Keep all of the newspapers.
5) Don’t wait for my return; go ahead with the birthday party. (Sayuri’s wish)
6) Don’t send anything I didn’t ask for.
7) You have nothing to worry about concerning me. If our sacrifice makes camp life better, I’m satisfied.

**Thursday, December 9, 1943**

Breakfast: fried eggs, dried figs, 2 toasts, coffee
Lunch: rice, 2 ika (squid), tea
Dinner: rice, boiled carrots, salted pork with carrots, tea

Before noon, ten men were released. By afternoon, twenty more people were taken out. (They were all from Leupp.) Hatano-kun from our same room was also released. (He is a very nervous type. We worried that he might go crazy after his arrest. His wife was going to have a baby soon.) There was one sick man, who was sent from the stockade to the hospital. A total of thirty-two left the compound.

Remaining men: 196
The men, who are being released, look so happy, while the men, who must remain, look sad and lonely. In decent society, the authorities should be apologizing to the men being released since they were not given any explanations or charges for their arrest or release.

Anyhow, these men did not know anything. They only thought of food or sex. They do not consider how they can contribute, even in small ways. The young ones laughed and told stories, and when there was an announcement that those from Leupp would be released, Rev. Suwa clapped his hands with joy.

There is a saying that goes, “When people are imprisoned for ten months, they become dull.” Maybe we should try to view things from the other perspective. I’m not sure but I think this situation will affect us psychologically.

We received care packages from camp that contained tobacco, newspapers, and magazines. We were told that there was no need to worry since the camp residents stood with us in solidarity. They said life in camp was getting better. In time, it will come to light that our sacrifices were not in vain.

When people in Japan are standing in solidarity like a shield, sacrificing their lives to protect the homeland, we must not focus on only our own personal matters. When one thinks about this, we must endure everything that comes our way with a smile for the welfare of the 15,000 residents in camp.

Today, Mr. Mori was asked to go to the FBI office to interpret. There, he heard the following story: The WRA reported to the FBI that 150 pigs became sick and had to be slaughtered and buried. The FBI dug up the pigs but only six remains emerged.

The question I have is what happened to the other 144 pigs? Who put the stick in the brush to make the snake come out? This is really funny that the WRA desperately tried to cover this up.

The stockade is surrounded by a twelve-foot fence, and about 300 feet away, there is another fence. The camp is just beyond that. This means, we are surrounded by three fences.

Two days before my arrest, Fukui-kun was arrested. (He doesn’t know why he was arrested.) During roll call, he spotted his sixty something-year-old mother and eight- or nine-year-old son at the fence. Fukui-kun frowned and tried to hide his surprise with an awkward smile. Someone asked him what the son’s name was. Fukui-kun replied, “Masao,” so several cheered, “Masao.” It seemed as though Masao could not pinpoint where his father was due to the glare from the sun but it appeared that he realized his father was somewhere in the group. Fukui-kun’s father is eighty-plus and is the oldest in camp. His mother had made the long walk in the cold with her grandson to get a glimpse of her son.
The camp newspaper reported that Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill met at Cairo. The army confiscated a lot of “contraband,” which was piled up in a heap. However, most of the items were personal property and since items such as a walking stick could not be considered a weapon, they were being returned. The administration must be sweating. Why do they waste such time? It is funny that they tried to prove something but failed.

*Sutta, nuita, ohiba, utta, oi, oi, hiki azuke, akameshi* — I don’t understand these words but they are said during the *handafuda* gambling sessions where the men make bets with cigarettes. The only words I can understand are “goddam, son of a bitch” and “sukebe (pervert),” which are uttered occasionally. I am amazed at how much they enjoy gambling and cursing amongst themselves.

One group enjoys playing the guitar and mandolins. One group shares dirty stories, while another group discusses international politics. Others stay in bed and sleep all day. I do not fit in with any of these groups but I also do not feel that I should intervene and lecture some of them, either. But I don’t isolate myself. I make small talk and laugh at the occasional joke. I spend each day with the thought that this is all good mental training.

*Saikontan* impresses me deeply. It pleases me that I have so much time in the stockade to go through each paragraph and savor each word. Ha ha.

**Friday, December 10, 1943**

Morning: hot cake, coffee  
Noon: rice, *nimono* (weenie, carrot, cabbage), tea  
Dinner: rice, pink beans and weenie, tea, vinegared turnip, 1 orange

Last night, Mr. Mori heard a story from the FBI that made me feel sorry for Mr. Kuratomi and Mr. Kai. Someone is using these people from behind the scenes. Mr. Mori had asked the FBI agent, “Who is the man behind the scene?” But the FBI agent did not answer him and changed the subject. Such rumors are being spread. There are many members of the *Yudanshakai* connected with the incident. Until now, we thought *kendo* had the most influence, but we were wrong. The FBI is hinting around that they think judo people are involved. The Manzanar Yudanshakai is working to keep the peace. The agent showed Mr. Mori documents regarding this, so Mr. Mori said, “If there is someone controlling the Negotiating Committee, it is probably Mr. Akabo.”

The WRA initially thought the underground was being operated by youths from Hawaii, Topaz (Central Utah), and Jerome. Now, they are turning their attention to the judo people. They can’t seem to go beyond the first impressions they got about judo from the newspapers. I’ve strongly encouraged them repeatedly to take off their clouded glasses, but they are refusing to go beyond their first impressions.

Due to the situation in camp, I tried to cooperate with the authorities and postponed the opening of a dojo, which was meant to keep the peace. They just do not understand how hard it is to refrain from participating in a desired sport — but trying to make them understand is futile. East is east. West is west.
Three people were released.

Now, their are a total of 183.

We have nothing to do every day. Everyone idly spends their time away. Then, around noon, we heard two or three gunshots. Everyone gathered to see what was going on. It seems a sentry may have fallen asleep near the fire. (Because it is cold, they burn wood, day and night.) He might have accidentally pulled the trigger. He was replaced after being reprimanded by a senior officer. The bullets had hit and shattered the garage window and the window at the far end of this stockade. Imagine if the bullets had flown in the other direction. We can’t even safely take a walk. These soldiers are all well trained. Some had come back from the Battle of Guadalcanal.

When the dogs mate, everyone roars with laughter.