

Sadako Nakashima  
9th Core (5-6)  
December 29, 1942

ME

April 11, 1928, (in the Bedroom) of our former home an infant's cry could be heard. Yes, it was an event for my parents. Cuddled in the arms of my mother was a baby, and perhaps a smiling father delicately fingering the blanket to get full view of his new born daughter. Several days later the name of Sadako was given to me.

As I can best recall my happy days of childhood, I treasured most the green lawn. I just loved to climb about on the big rocks in the garden made by my father to look like a mountain side full of pretty flowers, trees and bushes. The enormous rocks which measured above my head at that time, were placed here and there with green vines clinging to it. One of my favorite hobbies is to help in the garden and I stood in the freshly turned dirt and filled my lungs with the moist fresh air. During the early part of spring we planted miscellaneous flower bulbs and seeds. I anxiously looked forward to the time when the beautiful gladiolus and the dainty sweet peas (two of my favorites) would blossom. Then when the time came I cut the sweet peas and made bouquets. Most frequently I used to sit on the step of the veranda and think how jewel-like the dew drops looked on the grass blades, while nibbling at my breakfast toast.

The years went by like this. In spring I planned for the garden and Easter vacation. The biggest event in summer would be the three months vacation plus my report card. We stayed home more than this although we went picnicing, hiking, traveling to Mt. Ranier or Olympia, going to the theatres and days filled with interesting times. Autumn brought the back to school preparations with homework and studies with one exception - - - Thanksgiving holiday. December 1 - - - - - the hustle-bustle of Christmas shopping and cards. My happiest holiday was Christmas when I get out of bed in my nightgown. I went to the playroom where the big Christmas tree was alighted with sparkling balls and colorful lights going - - - - on - - - - off - - - - on - - - - off - - - on. There were ever so many boxes under the tree that the lower branches were fairly covered with gifts. New Year's Day brought another wonderful time. It was fun to stay up late on New Year's Eve while mother was preparing many things to eat for the feast which was to follow the next day. Then several minutes before 1943, I made a resolution (although I never could keep it throughout the New Year) and regretted for the mean things I had done this year. 12:00 o'clock --- the whistle was blowing by the water front and I would wish everyone with a chorus of other husky voices, "Happy New Year"

All these happy, carefree and peaceful years had past. But the fateful 1942 gave a different story. Many fathers were taken



from their families and sent "some places." That year's Christmas and New Year's Eve wasn't a happy one. I dreaded the thought when, if dad - - - - - . Well, the days came and went in which I as well as all the Japanese were looked upon with side glances of suspicion.

On the twentieth of February I was full of plans for a birthday party for my cousin who lived with us. That night I slept with confidence, full of hope for the party.

February 21- - - - - I was sleeping comfortably and then the front door bell sounded. Perhaps it's the paper boy, and dozed off again. A few minutes later mother opened the bedroom door as she does every morning to get us up. This morning she shook my sister who was lying beside my and said, "Wake up. The F.B.I is here." Very alarmed I jumped out of bed.

Three hours of searching passed. Father's innocence was known to us but for an unknown reason to Dad and to the family he was taken. This, I knew was that dreaded moment that other families had faced. I couldn't help but let the tears roll out and trickle down my cheeks. His farewell was a brief one. Just few words, "Take care of yourself." and then with a choking, "Good-bye-" he was leaving behind him all the treasures he worked for.

Nightly I lay awake recollecting that day when Dad left with the pleading eyes that said plainly, "Can't I stay with my family!"

Evacuation orders were issued by the army. I didn't have time to plan. What shall I take? What shall I leave? What shall I do with the treasured things I can't take? These were the only thoughts whirling in my mind and the days went by with it. Pack, pack and pack.

Puyallup was our temporary stay for three months. My future was blank. We unpacked and made ourselves as comfortable as possible. During that time I made new friends, learned to knit and dance. There was even a longing to go back to my birthplace, the only home that I had ever known.

Again came the time when I must pack. Pack to relocate ourselves for the duration of the war. The ever so busy packing days had come and gone rapidly.

The journey from Puyallup to Hunt was hot, tiresome and dusty, but atlast we had come to our distination.