

書評：『The Colonel and the Pacifist』 ISBN 0-87480-789-1
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抄録

第二次大戦中に起きた米国日系人強制収容については様々な報告書や書物が今までに出版されてきた。しかし、『The Colonel and the Pacifist』は非常に独創的である。それは著者の精力的な取材と、時系列に紹介された米国公文書によって米国市民である西海岸の日系人が強制収容された経緯を明らかにしているからである。本書によって読者は人種差別主義に基づくヒステリーと根拠のないうわさが作り出す政策の危険性を知る。そして、その不合理な政策が置き換え理論として正当化され、多くの日系市民を苦しめる過程を学ぶのである。

キーワード

人種差別主義、日系米国人、抑留、戦時強制収容、平和主義者、忠誠、置き換え理論

Book Review: Klancy Clark de Nevers. *The Colonel and the Pacifist*, The
University of Utah Press, 2004

Reviewer Okamo, Takumi

Abstract

Many reports and books dealing with the topic of the incarceration of Japanese-Americans during World War II have been published until now. But “The Colonel and the Pacifist” is so unique because chronological documents and archives in the book overwhelm us with the amount of quantity and their authenticity. This author’s painstaking research helps us understand why on earth the tragic relocation camp scheme was developed and how it was justified as a substitution theory. This is not only a book full of archives, but warns us of the danger of hysteria and groundless fear based on racism.

Key Words

racism, Americans of Japanese-ancestry, internment, war-time relocation, pacifist, loyalty, substitution theory

Much⁽¹⁾ has been told about the internment of Japanese-Americans on the West Coast during World War II. Several researchers have already written about the topic. A popular Japanese novelist, Toyoko Yamasaki, also wrote a voluminous work⁽²⁾ in 1983 dealing with the tragedy of Japanese-American families who were tossed about by the forced evacuation resulting into tormented experiences during and after World War II.

Here is another book titled “The Colonel and the Pacifist” authored by Klancy Clark de Nevers. It also deals with the same topic of the incarceration of Japanese-Americans. The reviewer thinks this book is different from others because the great volume of documentation presented in the book shows how the irrational plan of internment targeted on Japanese-Americans was schemed.

The book comprises four parts except its introduction and epilogue. Klancy Clark de Nevers, the author of the book is a retired software engineer who lives in Salt Lake City. Born and raised in Aberdeen, Washington. Her grandfather used to run his drugstore next to the Saitos’ Oriental Gift Shop on the same street in Aberdeen. The book is not only full of authentic archives and documents that explain why and how the internment scheme was organized, but contrasts the stories of Karl Bendetsen and Perry Saito, both young men of Aberdeen.

Part I consists of stories introducing Perry’s family background as well as Karl’s family background. Perry’s story is that of a young Nisei whose country turned against him. Only desire he had was that he wanted to be recognized as American even though he had a face that looked like an enemy. Karl’s story is that of an

ambitious young man who used his education and skills to build a program that tramped the rights and denied the humanity of Japanese-Americans.

From part II through III the author reveals all the details how the evacuation scheme was started, developed and finally put into practice during the war by using archives and documents. In part IV Ms. de Nevers also makes clear how the movement to seek redress of injustice was gradually organized.

This book is very special also to the reviewer. Because it was gifted to me in 2006 from Morse Saito, the late distinguished Methodist educator and missionary from America served in Kobe, Japan for many years. Morse was a younger brother of Perry Saito, one of the two persons highlighted in the book. Perry and Morse were the second generation (*Nisei*) from Aberdeen, in the Grays Harbor Area of the State of Washington.

The book conveys a social and political atmosphere⁽³⁾ on the West Coast right after the Pearl Harbor that facilitated the plan of the internment to readers by using a great amount of authentic documents. The author’s research is strenuous and overwhelming.

In particular, some interviews⁽⁴⁾ and hearings⁽⁵⁾ introduced in the book with some of those who survived the relocation camps in the deserts or the American inland areas depict vividly then internees’ feelings of being betrayed by their home country (the United States).

Morse was one of those survivors from the notorious Tule Lake camp. Through exchanges of letters⁽⁶⁾ and memos⁽⁷⁾ between U.S. legal and army officials, the author helps readers understand the impact of Pearl Harbor and the ensu-

ing groundless fear and distorted suspicion toward Japanese-Americans spread among some Americans (Caucasians) on the West Coast. The author looked into archives thoroughly looking for the real cause as to why injustice befell ordinary American citizens of Japanese-descent totaling around 120,000.

The book also reveals that the incarceration that happened to Japanese-Americans included every American citizen not only of direct Japanese descendants, but also persons of mixed American and Japanese parentage.⁽⁸⁾ Evacuating all the Japanese-American civilians (either aliens or non-aliens, young or old, whether they had thick or thin Japanese blood, were never questioned) was ruthless and merciless from a standpoint of human rights. One of the biggest excuses for the comprehensive internment was that it was extremely difficult for American authorities to tell Japanese-Americans who were loyal from those who were disloyal in that short period of time.

“The Colonel and the Pacifist” reminds us of the danger of our judgment based on ignorant fear and racial prejudice. The author views the equation⁽⁹⁾ of the forced internment with American soldiers captured in the battle fields in the Pacific by the Japanese army as one of the defending reasons appealed by officials who schemed the incarceration plan. Of course, it is easy to imagine that the current of the times misled some officials into an idea that ordinary American civilians of Japanese-ancestry should be viewed as equation with Japanese soldiers.

This substitution theory⁽¹⁰⁾ is apparently illogical, but it was justified under the name of war-time. For some Americans who were obsessed with groundless fear and rumors about the pos-

sible second attack by the Japanese army on the West Coast right after the Pearl Harbor, it may have made sense to have constructed the theory.

Needless to say, this theory was against civil rights vested in the U.S. Constitution and proved to be hysteria and the lack of judgment in hindsight. But this theory really gave a bolt from the blue to many Japanese-Americans who had nothing to do with subversive activities and believed in the American democracy.

“The Colonel and the Pacifist” is not merely a book full of archives and documents about the background of the relocation camps, but provides readers with human stories through the two key men who were in stark contrast to each other.

The Colonel, Karl Bendetsen and the pacifist, Perry Saito happened to be from the same town, Aberdeen, Washington. Karl Bendetsen was said to have been in charge of scheming the ground plan of the internment program backed by Lieut. Gen. John L. DeWitt.⁽¹¹⁾

Perry Saito, the pacifist, a Methodist minister, represented survivors from experiences beyond description in the relocation camps. They were not of the same generation, but from the same hometown, and above all they lived in the same neighborhood. The author is also from Aberdeen, Washington and tries to find some clues as to why Karl Bendetsen became deeply involved in mapping out the internment plan by way of meeting and interviewing people who had known about Karl Bendetsen and his childhood.

The author also learned about Perry Saito and his family background mainly from Morse, Perry’s younger brother. The Saitos was the only Japanese-American family who lived in Ab-

erdeen area among Caucasians. Unlike the Saitos, most Japanese-Americans tended to live in the same areas together establishing Japanese local communities. In that sense, the Saitos were well Americanized and assimilated themselves into American society. Readers find that the Saitos were Christians and Methodist churchgoers.

They never lived in the community densely populated by the Japanese immigrants, never mingled with other fellow Japanese-Americans. They lived independently among Caucasians and their Christian faith testified that they identified themselves as Americans naturally. That is why I presume that they were so shocked when they were ordered to evacuate all of sudden leaving everything behind.

From the Japanese point of view, it is not easy for Japanese families to be converted into Christianity. It has been already more than 150 years since Protestant missionaries started to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ in Japan. Nevertheless, Japan has always been resistant to accepting Christianity to date. The number of believers is less than 1% of the nation's total population even now. This rate has always been the same, never more or never less since the Meiji Restoration in 1868. This shows that the Saitos' conversion to Christianity was quite uncommon as Japanese. Their faith must have strengthened their decisions to live as Americans.

Perry was summoned to appear as a witness both in the United Methodist General Conference⁽²⁾ and in the CWRIC panel⁽³⁾ after the war. He took those occasions to appeal rationally how the internment was illegal and claimed the need to establish a kind of national level committee

where they should judge the illegality of the internment camp.

It took many years, though. Witnesses including Perry together with the support of several members of Congress like Norman Mineta, Robert Matsui, Daniel Inoue and Spark Matsunaga helped open the door to the federal government's apology and compensation in 1988, Civil Liberties Act.

Of course, until Japanese Americans restored their honor and reconciliation was brought to them, there were a lot of process including the civil rights movement in 1960s. In the process for Japanese-Americans to win credibility and became trusted in American society during and after the war, we must not forget that the U.S. 442^{nd(4)} regimental combat team or battalion deserves special mention given what they did to show loyalty to America and what sacrifices they paid in the European battlefields.

It is high time to wrap up my book review for a conclusion because of limited space. "The Colonel and the Pacifist" is valuable because the author exposes little known stories of the development process of the internment targeted on Japanese-Americans. The book assures me that the following points are important for us to remember to avoid the same mistake for the better future.

1. If forefather's blood strain and appearances still have room to stop at the last minute Asian Americans from being fully accepted into American society, clearing a hurdle for assimilation is too high.
2. Under the name of war-time, defense or national security, whatever plot or policy scheme could be taken into action violating basic human civil rights in the face of

opposition.

3. Any kind of unjust plots or orders like the resettlement of civilians could not only be justified for the cause of the majority, but also be developed not by many people, but by a handful of people whose bureaucratic skills are high with the wind at their back based on racism or hysteria.
4. Events and ideas targeted on Japanese-Americans over 70 years ago have present day equivalents: profiling, cultural misunderstanding, racism and religious prejudice.
5. Humans, particularly those in politics are vulnerable to temptation to construct a substitution theory: Japanese-American civilians versus Japanese soldiers,⁶⁵ and relocation versus protection.⁶⁶
6. Being civilians or citizens of Asian-ancestry in multi-cultural and racial diversified countries like America could have the potential to face another new type of difficulties subject to political changes.

The book's accounts and documents really serve as cautionary even now in a post 9/11, as we keep the above points in our mind.

Before closing my book review, let me add more stories about Perry and his younger brother, Morse. Perry was a conscientious objector, a leading Methodist pastor in justice and reconciliation ministries in Wisconsin regarding peace, poverty and people's rights. In recognition of Perry's long-standing services in those areas, the Perry Saito Award in his honor is now presented every year. In 2013 two Wisconsin United Methodist women were presented with the Award for their outstanding social justice ministries. Perry's name is alive now in the honorable form of the Award.

His younger brother, Morse, whose comments and recollections are recorded in "The Colonel and the Pacifist", came over here to Japan in 1949 as a Methodist missionary and ever since he had been very active also as an educator as well as a columnist for the Japan's nation-wide English newspaper "The Mainichi Daily News" until he passed away in 2008 in Kobe.

He had his own column for the Mainichi Daily News for years termed as "Battling Windmills." Through the column he kept writing his own ideas dealing with a wide range of social issues from an American perspective. As an Christian educator he was deeply involved in those prestigious Methodist-related schools such as Palmore Institute and Keimei High School in Kobe. I personally served Palmore Institute, one of country's oldest English language institutes founded in 1886, for 19 years under Morse Saito. Morse was always an American with a smiling face to me.

Whenever he was free, he would come over to my desk and talk a lot about various social issues with me. I would be often talked into reading his column "Battling Windmills." But he didn't talk much about his bitter experience at Tule Lake Camp where he was interned with his family in 1942.

At its peak, Tule Lake is said to have held 18,789 internees. It was also one of the last camps to be closed, staying open until March 20, 1946. However, in his last one or two years before he retired from Palmore, he began to talk with me about his thoughts and memories about his experiences during those hard years in America. He said Aberdeen is a special place where people and his classmates nurtured him and his growth.

He would tell me how regretful it was that he was unable to graduate from Aberdeen Miller Junior High School together with his classmates because he and his family were rounded up and sent to Tule Lake Camp in April, 1942.

But one day in 2004 he bounced up walking down to my desk and showed an article proudly from “The Daily World”,⁽⁷⁾ a local paper in Aberdeen, Washington. It reported that by virtue of efforts made by his old classmates, Morse was privileged to receive his sixty-two years delayed diploma from the Aberdeen’s Junior High School. He rejoiced over this news very much in front of me.

But the same article said that Morse’s classmates were disappointed that he wouldn’t be there to receive his diploma in person. Because Morse wrote a letter to one of his old classmates saying he was going to donate the money for his and his wife’s airfare to a Toronto-based charity that cares for street kids in India and Nepal.

Klancy Clark de Never introduces an episode⁽⁸⁾ in “The Colonel and the Pacifist” in connection with Morse and how he handled his individual compensation money granted from the American government. In her book Ms. de Nevers says that Congress passed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, and on August 10, 1988, President Ronald Reagan signed it.

The Act provided \$1.25 billion for individual payment of \$20,000 to each surviving internee. President George H. W. Bush signed the appropriations bill and an apology in 1989. For many former evacuees, the \$20,000 payment was humiliating.

Morse hadn’t wanted to accept the money but finally did; he contributed all of it to a Canadian group supporting orphanages in India and

Nepal. Those episodes tell us what kind of person Morse was. He was a man full of compassion and the founder of Japan’s chapter of Amnesty International. Where did his compassion come from? It must have come from his bitter experiences during his days and years at the relocation camp, but also come from a generous scholarship granted by winning a national writing contest for his further higher education studies.

Morse would mention some of his mentors like Reinhold Niebuhr in his Yale days. He seemed to have enjoyed a lot their advice and academic fellowship with them. But he seldom mentioned to me about his brothers and sister except his father Ransaku. It is not until I finished reading “The Colonel and the Pacifist” that I have really come to know better about his brother Perry and a thorny path his family walked through.

In general, Japanese-Americans appear to be foreign to most ordinary Japanese people. Their mentality, language, the way how they express their feelings, and behavioral patterns are different and look really Americans in the eyes of most Japanese. My observation and experience tell that the tie between Japanese-Americans and ordinary Japanese people in Japan appears to be weak and alienated now and even throughout the past many years. I do not know exactly why the tie and relations between us and them are not so strong as that of other Asian Americans.

Above all, I have never heard from anyone around me of plans or wishes that they are going to emigrate to the United States. I presume that many Japanese like to visit the United States as tourists, but very few of them

have had some experiences of fellowship or personal acquaintances with those of Japanese-Americans in person. Nevertheless, I can't resist showing my interest in them. I think Japanese readers should learn some lessons from their past history to understand America through books like "The Colonel and the Pacifist."

Some of the merits achieved by Ms. de Nevers are that her book draws us Japanese readers much closer to Japanese-Americans and discloses unknown historical parts of the internment weaving together two men's human contrasting stories from common hometown.

I really hope the future readers of this book will learn a lesson and do their parts in averting tragedy like the forced internment.

Notes

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- (2) Yamasaki, Toyoko, *Futatsuno Sokoku (Two Motherlands)* Tokyo, Shinchousha Publisher, 1983.
- (3) de Nevers, Klancy Clark, *The Colonel and the Pacifist*, 74, p.95, p.116, p.117, The University of Utah Press, 2004.
- (4) Ibid., p.148, pp.152-153.

- (5) Ibid., p.176.
- (6) Ibid., pp.157-158, p.213.
- (7) Ibid., p.76, p.80, p.83, p.95, p.218.
- (8) Ibid., pp.32-37, p.171
- (9) Ibid., p.139, p.160, p.228
- (10) A substitution theory is this reviewer's coined word. Rulers and administrators are tempted to come up with this theory in order to justify what they did. This could be said to the case when they did a fine administrative job in an unjust program just like Karl Bendetsen did.
- (11) John Lesesne DeWitt (1880-1962) was a general in the United States Army and head of the Western Defense Command and Fourth Army., best known for his vocal support of the Internment of Japanese Americans. He believed that Japanese Americans on the West Coast could be conspiring to sabotage the American war effort.
- (12) Ibid., p.284.
- (13) Ibid., p.262, picture. Committee on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians.
- (14) This team was a regimental size fighting unit composed of almost entirely of American soldiers of Japanese-ancestry who fought primarily in Europe. They are famous for their brave breaking German defenses and rescuing 211 American soldiers from Texas stranded in the mountain in France. They lost 216 soldiers and more than 600 team members lost either their arms or legs for this rescue operation.
- (15) Ibid., p.169, p.228.
- (16) Ibid., p.160, p.210
- (17) Wilkins, David, *The Next Day He Wasn't There*, *The Daily World*, Aberdeen, Washington, August 11, 2004.
- (18) Ibid., p.292

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