

Chapter Ten

Community Lost? The Significance of a Contemporary Japanese American Community in Southern California

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Introduction(1)

The purpose of this essay about the Japanese American community in the city of Gardena, California, is twofold. First, it provides an illustration of a specific kind of Asian American community: that is, a community found in an urban or suburban setting where large numbers of Asian Americans are present, "often to the degree to which there is some association of the area with them, but there are also many other ethnic groups present" (Collier 1989:3-4, also Chapter Nine, this volume).

Second, this case study also indicates how, within a territorially- bounded space, (a) the concentration of significant number of persons belonging to a given ethnic group, and (b) the presence of a wide range of ethnic organizations, can *qualitatively* impact the manifestation and nature of "ethnic community."(2)

I will argue in the conclusion of this essay that this correlation has particular significance for Japanese Americans because it suggests the inherent constraints of a relatively *dispersed* population base for ethnic community formation and maintenance, as well as in regard to the issue of local ethnic political empowerment. The correlation also has implications for Asian American populations as a whole, in the sense that Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese, and other American groups of Asian descent can more consciously weigh what is lost when families and individuals relinquish territorial-based forms of ethnic community.

Beginnings(3)

The area that is, today, the city of Gardena has been a home for people of Japanese descent) ever since the first Japanese immigrants (or, *Issei*) began to settle there in the early 1900s. Arriving in the Valley initially as wage laborers, the Issei began to rent, and sometimes even buy, land, in order to farm. Because the early settlers prospered, many others were inspired to do the same. The Issei population grew quite rapidly. One estimate, based on Japanese language sources,

puts the 1907 population of Japanese immigrants at about 250 persons (Hirabayashi and Tanaka 1986).

The economic activities of the Issei immigrants in the area centered around agriculture: up to the 1920s, the Issei concentrated largely on the production of strawberries. From the 1920s, up to World War Two, Japanese American attention focused increasingly on growing table vegetables (Hirabayashi and Tanaka 1988).

Numerous small businesses developed in conjunction with the expanding settlement of farmers and their families. A typical set of associations emerged during the first three decades of the 1900s, including Farmers/Grower's Associations, a Japanese Association (or, *Nihonjinkai*), Buddhist and Christian churches, and "cultural institutes" which offered language classes for the American-born children of the immigrants.

Subsequently, because Gardena was a relatively small area, with limited available land, Japanese American farming families began to seek open lands throughout the larger South Bay area of Los Angeles. By 1941, according to one estimate, there were between 700 and 800 family-run truck farms in operation in the South Bay, on a total of approximately 10,000 acres (Hirabayashi and Tanaka 1988).

Like other persons of Japanese descent on the West Coast, all of the Japanese Americans (or JAs), whether citizens or not, were forced to leave Gardena during World War Two. Many spent the duration of the war in concentration camps, American style, which were run by the U.S. government (Daniels 1972).

After the War

After the war was over, a small number of Issei and Nisei (or second generation Japanese Americans) moved back to the city of Gardena, (although it is impossible to determine how many of the more than 700 JAs recorded in the 1950 census were actually residents there before 1941).

Those who returned after 1946, report they faced an initial period of hostility, but that prejudice and discrimination were gradually overcome. JAs in the post-war Gardena area were not able to return to farming, as many lacked the working capital to start anew; what is more, open land in the South Bay was already being snapped up for housing developments.

Approximately one-third of the JAs who returned, however, were able to apply their farming skills to the gardening profession, either by working as gardeners, or by working in small business related to this occupation -- nurseries, hardware and gardening equipment stores, etc. Other JAs, primarily second generation Nisei, used their American citizenship and education to get access to the new occupational opportunities which opened up in the post-World War Two economic boom. Among the many professions they entered, Nisei in the South Bay were able to find employment in the dynamic aero-space industry of Southern California.

If the JA presence in Gardena remained small but relatively constant up to 1950, with a total of 741 recorded during the latter year, the years between 1950 and 1960 represented a period of fantastic growth. The JA population of the city increased by some 480% during this decade, up to a total of 4,372 by the 1960 census. By the 1970 census, the 1960 figure had almost doubled, as the count recorded 8,412 JAs within the city limits (Nishi 1958; Nishi and Kim 1964).

The reasons for this rapid growth deserve further commentary. In brief, upwardly mobile JAs from the city of Los Angeles, whose neighborhoods were greatly changed during the War years, were given access to new, single-family dwellings in (what were then) the suburbs of the South Bay. There also appear to have been a large number of Japanese Americans from Hawaii coming into the area during this same period, seeking new economic opportunities.

In either case, while the factors involved in "the move" to Gardena were numerous and complex, the new JA settlement also had to do, I sense, with the re-creation of ethnic community. On one hand, JAs had been through a horrendous experience during the 1940s, and ethnic community traditionally provides a line of defense against a host society which is exclusionary or which practices racial prejudice and discrimination. On the other hand, from a positive standpoint, ethnic community has also traditionally provided a range of resources and relationships that contribute to a uniquely satisfying lifestyle which is based on a sense of shared culture and of "peoplehood."

Characteristics of the Japanese American Community in Gardena, 1980s

According to the 1980 U.S. census, the city of Gardena had a total population of over 45,000 within its 5.36 square mile boundaries. This census also indicated that the city's largest ethnic group was made up of Asian Americans (approximately 12,500 persons, or 28% of the city's total population).

Within this group, Japanese Americans, at 9,324, made up one-fifth of the total population. Census figures indicate that some 25% of Gardena's population that is

of Japanese descent are foreign born. In addition, a good many Japanese nationals -- known as *shoshain* or *kaishain*, in Japanese -- are in the area on business assignments, and thus reside in and around the city. This group, however, is largely made up of non-permanent residents, and at any rate constitutes a distinct category that is not included in city census tallies.

In terms of family composition, about 60% of the JAs live in what the U.S. census bureau called a "married couple family," with another 10% of the city's JA residents heading up single parent families -- 2.5% headed by men, and 7.5% headed by women.

The socio-economic composition of Gardena's JA residents is too complex to treat in any depth in this paper, although data from the U.S. census gives a broad picture of income and types of occupation.

As a group, Japanese Americans enjoyed the second highest median family income level of any ethnic group in Gardena in 1980 (\$28,509), well over comparable figures for Caucasians (\$20,374), African Americans (\$24,354) and Latinos (\$17,121). It is also significant to note here that African American and Japanese American women appear to participate in the labor force at much higher rate than the women in either the Caucasian or Latino population.

In terms of broad categories of occupation, while Japanese Americans are well represented in white collar occupations, there are also a good number of JA wage earners who are employed in "blue collar" occupations. More specifically, about 63% of the JA males work in white collar occupations. So do about 75% of the JA women, although over 70% of the latter figure are engaged in the technical and sales category. Some 37% of the men, and almost 23% of the women, however, are employed in blue collar jobs, including labor categories such as service, farm and forestry, craft and repair and operators/laborers.

Nonetheless, it may be said with some confidence that while the middle class sector of Gardena's JA population *appears* to be slightly higher than average (compare Wright 1989:10, section 3.1), this may be illusory, in that lower levels of white collar work are often "proletarianized" (that is, have little autonomy or decision-making capacity). Further, although JAs do run small businesses such as stores and restaurants, few Japanese Americans in Gardena own large businesses or companies. Thus, I sense that many of the white collar occupations held by JAs in Gardena have what Wright calls a "contradictory character;" that is, "they are simultaneously exploited and exploiting" (Ibid.:10).

Examination of the distribution of JA residents within the city clearly indicates their concentration in census tracts south of Redondo Beach Boulevard. Furthermore, residential clustering results in remarkable percentages of JAs in certain of Gardena's neighborhoods. Most of the tracts south of Redondo Beach Boulevard had concentrations of approximately 25% JAs in 1980, and census tract #6033 may have been as high as 40% JAs. Casual observations in this area indicated that entire blocks in tract #6033 were primarily made up of Japanese Americans.

The level of ethnic residential concentration in Gardena can be appreciated even more fully by noting that, by comparison, JAs made up only 1.8% of the city of San Francisco's population in 1980, and that the highest point of concentration -- 17% -- was in the census tract that encompasses San Francisco's J-Town. Similarly, Japanese American concentrations in other cities on the West coast, such as Seattle, Washington, and Portland, Oregon, are negligible by comparison (when analyzed, that is, in terms of the relative percentage of Japanese Americans vis-a-vis the overall city population).

Returning to the consideration of other ethnic groups in Gardena in 1980, African Americans and Caucasians comprised 23% and 22% of the rest of the population, respectively, 17% of the population was Latino, and the remaining 10% were listed as "other." By 1980, then, Gardena was a multi-ethnic city, with a total racial/ethnic (that is, non-Caucasian) population of approximately 68%.

In terms of its physical layout and characteristics, Gardena exhibits contrasting appearances. The calm, tree-lined streets shelter single-family dwellings, apartments, and "condos," that remind one of a typical suburban setting. Cross-cutting the city and suburbs, however, are major boulevards-- busy, filled with new business development, fast food chains, and unobtrusive (and not so unobtrusive) corporations. Up in the north-western part of the city, Nissan runs its "Cup-O-Noodles" factory, and a number of Gardena's businesses and corporations are listed in the *Million Dollar* and *Billion Dollar* Directory.

Gardena is well known, locally, for a number of characteristics. First of all, since 1936, the city has been the home of what is called "the card club industry." These legalized "poker parlors" grew, bit by bit, until soon after the Second World War there were six parlors in operation.

The city is also well-known for another distinguishing feature. Due to rapid period of post-war growth, the Japanese American population in Gardena reached one-fifth of the city's total population by 1970, *making* this the largest concentration of JAs in any city on the U.S. mainland.

Not surprisingly, then, given this level of concentration, JAs have had a remarkable impact upon the city of Gardena. JA influence permeates day-to-day life in Gardena and even the appearance of the city.

JA Community's Imprint on the City's Landscape

In terms of the JAs' imprint upon the city's features, numerous small businesses which make up the local "ethnic economy" are well represented throughout the city. These range from traditional businesses -- such as thirty- six enterprises that were connected with the nursery industry by the early 1980s, as well as the more than twenty different Japanese restaurants to "mom and pop" grocery stores, confectionaries which make traditional Japanese sweets, and a wide range of wholesale and retail operations.

By 1953, a small group of Nisei entrepreneurs, put together investment companies which built shopping centers such as the "Town and Country Mall." Renamed the "Kyoto Mall" in the 1980s, this center featured businesses run by JAs throughout the decade: the "Spot Market," "Kappa" coffee shop, and "Koby's" furniture and appliance store, to name a few.

By the 1970s, however, the real growth sector in Gardena involved investment companies which allied influential Nisei -- who had formal and informal business and political connections -- with Japanese bankers and investors. This kind of consortium resulted in the construction of large malls such as Gardena's showpiece, "Pacific Square Shopping Center," featuring the "New Meiji Market," an emporium of Japanese foodstuffs and culinary hardware, that sits in the heart of Gardena. As one study, published in 1982, pointed out:

. . . . The City's banks are a depository for the flow of entrepreneurial and venture capital from investors in Japan. Three international banks, Mitsubishi, California First, and Sumitomo, all headquartered in Japan, also have offices and branches in Gardena. . . A dynamic melding of Japanese foreign capital with Japanese American know-how flourishes. Such a consortium built the gleaming nine acre Pacific Square Shopping Center . . . (Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations 1982, 6)(4)

Another notable aspect of the JAs' impact on the city's landscape has to do with gardens. Following the analysis of Donald Fellows (1972), these gardens, which often appear in the southern neighborhoods of Gardena, south of Redondo Beach Boulevard, cannot be classified as Japanese gardens, per se. Rather, they are a Japanese *American* art form -- a creative combination of traditional Japanese

esthetics, transformed by the constraints of space and available materials, in the front yards of Gardena's single family dwellings (Dean Toji, personal communication, 1982).

Japanese American's Formal Associations

The JAs in Gardena have formed a great number of formal and informal associations that have also left their stamp upon the city. Only the briefest summary can be made here, focusing on the largest and most important organizations in the city.

There are a good number of churches in Gardena whose membership is primarily JA. Some of these are based on Japanese religions such as the Gardena Buddhist Church, and the Konko Church of Gardena. Others are Western with largely Japanese and/or Asian American congregations. Such churches would include the Gardena Valley Baptist Church and the Lutheran Oriental Church in Gardena. Other churches, like Seicho-No-Ie, are Japan-based, yet involve Christian fundamentalist beliefs and practices.

To my knowledge, no major occupational organizations have lasted into the 1980s, with the exception of the Gardena Valley Gardener's Association. A number of public gardens dot the city, which were landscaped for free by this association. In the early 1980s, the gardeners also volunteered to landscape parts of the California State University, Dominguez Hills, campus, in honor of the Olympic athletes who were coming from around the world for trial competitions. Every year, the Gardena Valley Gardener's Association organizes a large cultural festival. Featured are Japanese *koi* -- colorful carp, whose individual price can sometimes be thousands of dollars.

One of the central social and cultural organizations for JAs in the area is the Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute (often referred to locally as the JCI). The JCI has a large building which houses dozens of JA organizations. These range from very traditional groups, including those which study Japanese arts such as flower arranging, to Boy Scout troops. The JCI also offers Japanese language classes for children, and has even put up low-income housing for seniors.

A wide range of social service organizations have been formed by the JAs of Gardena. Many such organizations sprang up during the activist decades of the 1960s and the 1970s, but did not necessarily last through the 1980s. Two groups stand out, locally, for their dedication to the elderly. One is the South Bay Keiro Nursing Home, which offers culturally-sensitive gerontological services to the elderly

and infirm. Services include having a bilingual staff member on duty, as well as paying special attention to dietary needs.

Another is the Gardena Pioneer Project which has been in existence since 1970, offering many different kinds of services for the elderly. GPP was so successful at identifying needs that programs administered out of Gardena's City Hall eventually took over many of the direct social services that the Pioneer Project initiated. During the 1980s the group's intergenerational board planned monthly outings and social gatherings. It had a membership of more than 500 families and was totally self-sufficient, economically.

Sports leagues are important for the city's JA youth. The "*Sansei*" (or, third generation Japanese American) and "Friends of Richard" (or, F.O.R.) leagues are the largest and administer competition between dozens of teams (Kendis 1989).

Gardena's JAs have also joined or created their own branches of formal organizations patterned after those found in the dominant society. Thus, the Nisei Veterans of the Second, the Korean, and the Vietnam wars have built their own large hall in Gardena. JAs have also been active in organizations such as Gardena's YMCA and YWCA.

Negative Dimensions of Ethnic Concentration

It is appropriate to point out, at this juncture, that while a demographic concentration of a given ethnic group can bring great advantages to ethnic populations, it can also have some distinct disadvantages.

First, it should be noted that, as the ethnic composition of Gardena began to change during the 1970s, some JAs openly expressed ambivalent attitudes toward other ethnic minorities residing in the city.⁽⁵⁾ One potentially negative dimension of ethnic concentration, then, is that it can apparently intensify the willingness to express ethnocentric attitudes toward other ethnic minorities.

Second, it is noteworthy that some JA residents reported that intense intra-ethnic competition is an undesirable aspect of the tightly-knit JA community in Gardena. That resultant social pressures can become overwhelming is evident in a number of unusual cases, one of which can be cited here. In 1974, concerned Japanese American parents and students helped organize a special panel discussion at Gardena's Denker Avenue school. Each of the panel presenters criticized the stereotyping of students of Japanese ancestry and, citing the "right to fail," urged school personnel to recognize that not all students of Japanese descent are necessarily high achievers (Bloom 1974).

To consider a third example, illustrating potentially negative consequences of ethnic concentration, some of the most overt bigotry I have ever seen against people of Japanese descent occurred in and around the Gardena area. One manifestation of bigotry can be seen in local letters to the "Dear Abby" column, which appeared in a local newspaper published in the neighboring city of Torrance, but clearly referring to the situation in Gardena:

It's about time someone defended this country. It appears that people of Japanese descent worship a country many have not ever visited. Why do second and third generations removed use chop sticks? Americans use silverware. Why do they bow in greeting? Americans shake hands. Why do they build Japanese community centers? Americans donate money and time to organizations that encompass all races and religions... Do the Japanese realize how stupid they appear when they live the way people in Japan live. Wise up! If you're an American by birth or choice, start focusing on what made this country so great... ("Dear Abby," *Daily Breeze*, August 29, 1979).

To cite another example, during the early 1980s, the Gardena Buddhist church was subject to arson attacks on three separate occasions between late 1980 and early 1982. The first time the church was torched in July, 1980, the building was totally destroyed. The congregation rallied to raise the money for a new building and received, it might be added, contributions from a number of sympathetic non-ethnic organizations in Gardena. The entire community was shocked when, in November, 1981, the Buddhist Church was again subject to an arson attack and again burnt to the ground. The Church, and friends of the church, rallied again to raise funds. The last attack in February, 1982, which did \$5,000 worth of damage, prompted the police department to fence the entire building with barbed wire and to install a 24-hour T.V. monitor to more effectively guard the site until it was re-built.

During this period, the situation became so worrisome that the Los Angeles Country Committee on Human Relations sent a research team into the area in order to assess the situation. Their report, issued in late 1982, stated that most JAs, irrespective of their background, felt that the arson attacks were directed at the church because it was the most explicit and visible symbol of Japanese American ethnicity in Gardena. In short, while having a numerous and concentrated population base can bring many positive qualities to an ethnic community, it can also serve as a lightning rod for hatred. The very *visibility* of an ethnic community, that is, can draw the ire of bigots who are seeking a convenient target for their frustrations.

JA Political Involvement in Gardena

In connection with the phenomena of ethnic concentration discussed above, it remains to consider aspects of JA political activity and participation within the Gardena City context, (although it should be remembered that some members of Gardena's JA population have myriad ties to the regional, state, and national levels).

Indeed, ever since the mid-1950s, there is much evidence Japanese Americans have been able to exert influence over local level politics. Mr. Bruce Kaji was elected city treasurer in 1959. Mr. Kiyoto Ken Nakaoka became the city's first Japanese American councilman in 1966 and was re-elected to the same position in 1970. Two years later, Mr. Nakaoka became the first JA mayor of the city, holding office from 1972 to 1974. Mr. Paul Bannai, who was also a member of the city council in the early 1970s, was elected State Assemblyman for the 53rd district, a position he held from 1973 to 1980. By early 1981, four, out of a total of seven elected city officials, were of Japanese descent.

Analysis

Having summarized a range of descriptive data, it is appropriate to offer some analysis at this point in terms of the following question: what is the specific and the general significance of the Japanese American community in Gardena? A partial, and provisional, answer may be formulated as follows, beginning with the specific significance of this case study.

It will be remembered that all persons of Japanese descent on the West Coast were held in concentration camps, American style, during the Second World War (Daniels 1972). During the years of war and imprisonment, the U.S. government and the governmental agency that ran the camps -- the War Relocation Authority (or, WRA) -- approved and implemented a wide range of policies that were damaging to Japanese Americans at both an individual as well as a collective level.(6)

By 1943, some JAs were allowed to leave the camps in order to resettle in the mid-West and on the East coast.(7) During this period, the WRA strongly encouraged resettling families and individuals to consciously *avoid* other Japanese Americans. The WRA thought that prejudice and discrimination against the JAs would diminish if they would voluntarily try to downplay their ethnic heritage. Part of the process of resettlement from camp involved a leave clearance interview. In this interview, which was administered under oath, each prospective candidate was asked questions such as:

Will you assist the general resettlement program by staying away from large groups of Japanese? Will you try to develop such American habits which will cause you to be accepted readily into American social groups?... (Drinnon 1987:53).

The overall impact of the WRA's policy is clearly complex and multifaceted. One key dimension can be assessed, however, by examining the residential impact on the *Nisei* (again, meaning second generation Japanese Americans) some twenty-five years after the camps were closed. By the 1970 census, although some 43% of the second generation *Nisei* had re-clustered to the point that they were living in areas where both their proportions and total numbers were high, the remaining 57% were in areas where the possibilities of achieving an ethnic concentration, and thus the formation of an "institutionally complete" ethnic community, were greatly reduced.

More specifically, according to research carried out by Professor Ronald T. Tsukashima (cited in Levine and Rhodes 1981), approximately 28% of the *Nisei* were in areas where they were in thinly concentrated, widely spread, clusters. Another 18% were in settings like San Francisco, where their total numbers were high, but their overall proportion was minuscule, (and moreover, they were residentially dispersed). 11% lived in settings such as rural California where their relative proportion was high, but their absolute numbers were low.(8)

In point of fact, only one major area of JA residential concentration was re-established by the 1970s.(9) This was, of course, the greater metropolitan Los Angeles area where, by 1980, 70% of the state's population of Japanese descent, and 16.6% of the total JAs in the U.S., lived. It must be emphasized, however, that even in Los Angeles, many JAs live dispersed throughout the city, and not necessarily in neighborhoods where other Japanese Americans reside. Exemplifying this trend, Los Angeles' Little Tokyo, after the war, was less than one third of its previous size (Murase 1983).

In sum, the treatment of the Japanese American population on the West coast during World War Two -- which involved the dismantling of pre-war communities, incarceration, forced assimilation, and geographical dispersal must be kept in mind, because it helps clarify why the post-war Japanese American community in Gardena is rather unique. Although initially formed in the physical setting of a new middle class suburban housing area, *the Japanese American community of Gardena is probably one of the few remaining Nikkei urban communities that resembles an "ethnic" community in a classical sense*: that is, it manifests, at once, a combination of (a) large numbers of a given ethnic population, (b) concentrated in an delimited territorial area, (c) whom have a full range of social and cultural institutions which serve to maintain and "reproduce" ethnic group. Furthermore, *the JA presence in Gardena, combination with high levels of ethnic concentration and institutional*

completeness, has resulted in a rich dynamic that finds its expression in the development and sustenance of a wide range of expressions of ethnic culture and even ethnic political power.

For all of these reasons, it should be reiterated that the Japanese American community of Gardena is very much an *exception* among the larger Japanese American population in the continental United States, rather than the rule. Precisely because it *is* unusual, even unique, on the U.S. mainland, it suggests what Japanese Americans may have lost as they dispersed into the larger society.(11)

Community Lost?

In all probability, many Japanese Americans would have eventually left their ethnic enclaves, and blended into the larger society -- albeit, at their own speed and in their own time, as had most Euro-American immigrants (Dinnerstein and Reimers 1981). Because of the war, however, what would have otherwise been a natural process was imposed upon Japanese Americans by the U.S. government.

Clearly, further research is needed in order to fully document the short and long-term impact of this policy on the JAs. In this same light, it would also be important and instructive to examine comparatively the experiences of recent South East Asian immigrants, especially Vietnamese Americans, who have also been subject to programs of forced dispersal and assimilation at the hands of U.S. government policy makers (Mortland and Ledgerwood 1987).

In a more positive light, such research could also help to shed light upon two important aspects of contemporary life in North America. One is that the decision to stay in an ethnic community, or to leave it, *should be a choice* -- a choice left up to the individual or to the family that makes it. The second principle is that one of the strengths of our society lies in its multicultural diversity. In this same sense, it can be argued that, despite the recent reparations victory (which awards \$20,000 to surviving Japanese Americans who were incarcerated during World War Two) and despite, for example, the partial formation of South East Asian communities in the 1980s, we have a great distance still to go before we can claim to have learned how to honor and incorporate a heritage of cultural diversity into mainstream American life.(12)

Notes

1. The descriptive data in this paper are taken from a larger ms. for an article which presents a critical appraisal of the concept of "critical mass." I would like to thank Professors Malcolm Collier and Ben Kobashigawa, both of the Asian American Studies Program, San Francisco State University, for their suggestions regarding earlier drafts of this paper. I, however, am solely

responsible for the data and analysis advanced here.

2. The analytic framework, emphasizing the importance of numbers and concentration vis-a-vis ethnic populations in urban settings, is drawn from Fischer's discussion of "critical mass" (1984). "Institutional completeness" was introduced into the sociological literature on ethnic communities by Breton (1964). More recently, Tsukashima (1985) has drawn on this concept as an explanatory variable in his study of Issei interpersonal relationships.

3. For a more detailed account of the Issei pioneers in the Gardena area, and their contributions to the economy of the South Bay, see two previous studies by Hirabayashi and Tanaka (1986;1988).

4. Incidentally, in the course of doing research, I found that California's "Unitary Tax Law" makes it difficult to trace how much foreign capital is coming into a local community, let alone where such monies are actually being invested. The state of California, that is, taxes foreign corporations on their world-wide earnings, making it very difficult for local citizens to obtain data concerning the size or the impact of external investments on their community.

5. As an example, see the *Newsweek* article "Out-Whiting the Whites," (June 1, 1971), in which a JA resident of Gardena openly expressed racial prejudice concerning the desirability of African Americans as neighbors. A full-length, unedited, version of this article is also available in the Japanese American newspaper, *The Pacific Citizen* (see Brinkley-Rogers 1972).

6. See the U.S. government's own study in this regard, by the President's Commission on the Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (1982).

7. In order to apply for an indefinite leave before the end of the war, each applicant had to (a) formally apply for leave clearance, (b) submit "Form WRA-26" which contained one's personal record, (c) fill out a special questionnaire, "Form WRA-126," which was examined and evaluated by W.R.A. officials, as well as representatives from intelligence organizations such as the F.B.I., and, (d) submit to a formal leave clearance interview under oath (Drinnon 1987:50-55).

8. It must be acknowledged here that small Japanese American communities were often recreated to some extent in rural settings after the Second World War. For an interesting case study see Beardsley (1989).

9. Another area of JA residential concentration in the post-war era is found in the state of Hawaii. Although this case constitutes a clear exception to the general rule on the mainland, it is not examined here, primarily because a public policy of mass incarceration was never carried out on the islands (Daniels 1972).

10. This point should not be taken to imply that Japanese Americans have lost all sense of, or connection with, ethnic community. A recent study by Kendis (1989), however, indicates that in the dispersed setting of Orange County, California, Japanese Americans must *commute* in order to participate in ethnic community. "Community" in Orange County takes the form of participation in three *formal* organizations: the ethnic church; local chapters of the national civic organization, the Japanese American Citizens League; and, sports leagues for the youth. Needless to say, face-to-face interaction on a daily basis, and "institutional completeness," are almost impossible in this kind of setting.

11. It is worth noting that new Asian immigrants have also clustered in urban and suburban settings in California; e.g., the Chinese Americans in Monterey Park, California. According to recent studies, this community provides an example of a predominantly new immigrant Asian American

population, in a relatively small city on the periphery of Los Angeles, which has been impacted by both an ethnic concentration and "institutional completeness," albeit with an initially less fortuitous reception on the part of local Caucasians (Wong 1989; Horton 1992).

12. For the record, I list three disclaimers so as to preclude (hopefully) misinterpretations of this text: (a) I have no problem acknowledging that some benefits may have accrued to the JAs via the process of post-war dispersal (although I sense that, for various ideological reasons, the supposed benefits have received much more attention than the potential losses); (b) I have acknowledged, elsewhere, that there *are* negative dimensions to tightly-knit ethnic communities and families (Chabran and Hirabayashi 1986), but such dimensions do not in any way alter the fact that forced assimilation is fundamentally unconstitutional; and, finally, (c) the perspective advanced in this conclusion should not be mistaken for or conflated with a "separatist" position -- that is, that people should only live within their "own" ethnic communities.

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