

From the Director: Tom Ikeda

As I readjust to U.S. time after the whirlwind trip to Japan with the 2008 Japanese American Leadership Delegation, I am left with a blur of images and memories. But the overwhelming sensation is gratitude -- towards all our hosts, towards the leaders who met with us, and towards the many people who saw to our comfort (like the bus driver who stopped at a Starbucks when he overheard us wondering how their coffee tasted in Japan). I felt gratitude to stand at an ancient temple where centuries ago my ancestors walked the same steps, and gratitude for the pleasures of singing until my voice was hoarse, laughing until my belly ached, and talking food and politics into the early morning with our Japanese hosts and fellow Japanese American delegates.

This opportunity to engage in a range of intense cultural activities, in a concentrated time period with extraordinary individuals, will not be forgotten. The Japanese American delegates and our Japanese hosts dazzled me during the day with their intelligence and wisdom, and at night with their humor. Through this experience I felt connected not just as peers but as friends. This feeling of friendship with people in Japan and with other Japanese American leaders I bring back to Seattle as a start for new connections between Densho and a broader national and international community.

See the article below for more information, videos, and photos from the trip.



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Stables for Humans: The Assembly Centers

*"It wasn't even a barrack -- it was a stall. It literally was a stall. And they told us it was temporary."
-- May Sasaki*

Once President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Army had to move more than 110,000 men, women, and children of Japanese descent away from the West Coast and find places to hold them. And the move had to happen immediately because the authorities had officially told the public that Japanese Americans were too dangerous to be at large. Where did the fleets of buses and trains take them at gunpoint? To hastily prepared facilities where they would live for months while more permanent detention camps were built farther inland. Their new homes were flimsy barracks erected at fairgrounds, migrant worker camps, an abandoned mill, race tracks, and a livestock exposition hall. The unluckiest detainees were assigned to stalls that had recently held horses and other animals. Could they be more humiliated? Not only did their government consider them disloyal; it apparently considered them not fully human.

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Densho Director a Japanese American Leadership Delegate to Japan

Tom Ikeda was honored by being invited to join the eighth annual Japanese American Leadership Delegation to Japan. The program promotes mutual understanding between Japanese Americans and their ancestral home country, and strengthens long-term U.S.-Japan relations. The program's sponsors and organizers are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnerships (CGP) in cooperation with the Japanese American National Museum. Tom and a dozen other Japanese American leaders in various professional fields from ten cities throughout the U.S. traveled to Tokyo, Kyoto, and Fukuoka from March 1 to March 9. In Tokyo the group met with Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda and cabinet members, U.S. Ambassador Thomas Schieffer, Princess Takamado, major business executives, and Japan Foundation leaders. In Kyoto they met more dignitaries and visited famous cultural sites. Tom spoke to a capacity audience at a CGP symposium held in Fukuoka City.

- >> [For more information about the Japanese American Leadership Delegation](#)
- >> [View a slideshow of photos from the trip](#)
- >> [View a video of Tokyo by delegate Stann Nakazano](#)
- >> [View a video of Kyoto by delegate Stann Nakazano](#)



Densho Receives Seattle Foundation Grant

Densho is pleased to announce that the Seattle Foundation has awarded \$20,000 toward our general operating expenses through its Community Grantmaking Program. The foundation's grants support effective nonprofit organizations in King County that contribute to a healthy and vibrant community. Densho is grateful for the Seattle Foundation's endorsement of our preservation and education efforts.

- >> [For more information about the Seattle Foundation](#)



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Community Events

Honorary College Degrees for Japanese Americans

The University of Washington Board of Regents has approved awarding honorary baccalaureate degrees to Japanese American students incarcerated during World War II. More than 400 undergraduates were uprooted from their studies in spring 1942 after President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066. A UW libraries online exhibition, *Interrupted Lives: Japanese American Students at the University of Washington, 1941-1942*, describes the efforts university officials made to place the students in colleges away from the declared military zone. Densho interviewees tell their own stories of how their education was affected by the incarceration, as in this "From the Archives" article.

- >> [Read a Seattle Times editorial on the Regents' decision](#)
- >> [See the exhibition *Interrupted Lives*](#)



39th Annual Pilgrimage to Manzanar

Since 1969 the Manzanar Committee, a non-profit educational organization, has sponsored an annual pilgrimage to the site of the former incarceration camp in California. The volunteer group is dedicated to raising public awareness about the violation of civil rights during World War II, and of the struggles of others whose constitutional rights are in danger. The pilgrimage to the Manzanar National Historic Site will take place



on April 26.

- >> See the Manzanar Committee's 2008 pilgrimage flyer
- >> See the pilgrimage program

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