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IN MEMORIAM

Warren M. Tsuneishi

July 4, 1921- January 29, 2011



Photograph: LC Archives, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Warren Michio Tsuneishi, the fifth of ten children, was born on July 4, 1921, in Monrovia, California, and died on January 29, 2011, at age 89. His parents, Satoru and Sho Murakami Tsuneishi, were immigrants to the United States from Kochi Prefecture, Japan. Of his parents, Warren later wrote, "My father arrived in 1907, and my mother in 1915 after completing mandatory service as a schoolteacher. My father graduated from Monrovia High School, and entered USC [University of Southern California] with the objective of obtaining a divinity school degree. But his dreams of higher education were foiled, first by illness, and then after recovery [b]y marital obligations. He was throughout most of his adult life a truck farmer in Duarte, California, specializing in berry crops. In his spare time, he wrote haiku and with like-minded friends, edited and published "Tachibana," a haiku magazine for immigrant Japanese with a taste for poetry."¹

Born on Independence Day and named for U.S. President Warren G. Harding, Warren viewed himself from childhood on as a Yankee Doodle Dandy.² With his brothers and sisters he attended a Saturday language school organized by Japanese families, mostly farmers, in the Monrovia-Arcadia-Duarte area east of Los Angeles. Even though the Japanese American community in the area was small and isolated and the Tsuneishi family in particular lived farther away in Duarte, Warren remembered attending many community events and activities that linked them to Japanese traditions and culture, such as judo and kendo tournaments and Japanese language classes.³ He attended Duarte Grammar School with non-Nisei [second generation Japanese American] students, some of whose families befriended him. One of these became his best friend through the Boy Scouts. In Warren's words, "His parents virtually adopted me, and they became my second set of parents."⁴ Although the Tsuneishi family lived alongside Caucasian families, they still faced discrimination at schools and at other public facilities, such as the swimming pool which was closed to "coloreds, Blacks and Hispanics" except on a designated day of the week.⁵ Warren graduated at the top of his high school class and was assistant editor of the yearbook. Nonetheless, "the school counselor did not encourage me to apply for college, because professional job opportunities for Japanese American graduates were not readily available."⁶ His parents, strongly believing in the value of education, overrode this advice, and Warren enrolled at UCLA in the fall of 1939 after paying twenty-seven dollars in fees; there was no tuition. In September 1941 he transferred to the University of California, Berkeley to study political science.

When Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, Warren was in his third year at Berkeley. After December 7, fear and resentment against the Japanese spread across the United States, especially

¹ The Library of Congress. American Folklife Center. Veterans History Project. Letter from Warren Tsuneishi to Sarah Rouse. June 30, 2002.

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.02153/pageturner?ID=pm0002001>

² Ibid.

³ Military Intelligence Service Research Center. Veteran Profiles.

<http://www.nikkeiheritage.org/misnorcal/profiles/profile.php?id=1067>

⁴ Warren Tsuneishi, Letter to Thomas Kuwahara, April 28, 2004.

http://www.oocities.com/thomas_kuwahara/warren.pdf

⁵ Military Intelligence Service Research Center. Veteran Profiles.

⁶ "The Story of Two Japanese Americans Who Fought in World War II." <http://www.historynet.com/the-story-of-two-japanese-americans-who-fought-in-World-War-II.htm>

California. The War Relocation Authority was established by executive order on March 18, 1942, and more than 110,000 Japanese-Americans on the West Coast were interned in ten detention centers in isolated areas in California, Arizona, Idaho, Utah, Wyoming, and Arkansas.⁷ Some 13,000 Japanese Americans from the San Francisco Bay Area were evacuated to the temporary quarters at Tanforan racetrack in San Bruno. While Warren managed to finish his spring term at Berkeley, his friends and family further south were incarcerated at the Santa Anita racetrack and Pomona Fairgrounds. "They converted them to holding pens," he explains. "Whatever we could carry we could take. People were angry and frightened. In the Western states, we were aware of the long history of discrimination, but we were brought up to be Americans, and therefore optimistic." The Tsuneishis were sent to Heart Mountain Relocation Center, located twelve miles northwest of Cody, Wyoming, on a high, treeless plateau, soon after it opened on August 11, 1942. There, each family was assigned a single room in the standard-issue GI barracks; everyone ate in the mess hall. Warren joined the family in October after doing summer labor in Idaho, thinning sugar beets and putting up hay, and harvesting beets and potatoes in the fall. Of Heart Mountain he recalled, "It wasn't home, but it was not Dachau."⁸ There was no curfew. There were dances, ice skating, parties. These were not death camps."

Warren was able to leave Heart Mountain to complete his education at Syracuse University in upstate New York because its chancellor, William P. Tolley, opened the university to evacuee students as did some other colleges. Warren's brother Hughes, who was then a student at Camp Savage in Minnesota and who later served with the Allied Translator and Interpreter Section (ATIS),⁹ suggested that Warren volunteer for the Military Intelligence Service [MIS] Language School. He did so upon graduation from Syracuse in August 1943, because "I wanted to prove myself, even with bad eyesight and flat feet."¹⁰ The Army had opened the first MIS Japanese-language school in November 1941 in the Presidio in San Francisco, near General John L. DeWitt's headquarters. It had sixty students—fifty-eight of them Nisei. Soon after Pearl Harbor, the school moved to Minnesota, first to Camp Savage and then to Fort Snelling because all the teachers were Japanese Americans who could have been forcibly removed from the West Coast—this despite the fact that their understanding of Japanese culture and language and insights into Japanese ways of thought made them the key to the program's ultimate success. By 1945, 5,700 Nisei and 780 Caucasian students graduated from the MIS Language School. Among their duties were translating captured documents, monitoring Japanese radio broadcasts, spying and eavesdropping, preparing propaganda leaflets and broadcasts, and making surrender appeals over loudspeakers to cornered Japanese troops.¹¹

Warren spent six months at Camp Savage in the intensive military Japanese language program and then went through two months of infantry basic training at Camp Blanding in Florida. After basic training all recruits were shipped back to Fort Snelling prior to their overseas assignment.

⁷ Charlynn Spencer Pyne, "Building a Nation of Readers: Children Come to the Library for a History Lesson," *The Library of Congress Information Bulletin* August/September 2000 <http://www.loc.gov/loc/icib/00089/readers.html>

⁸ Dachau was a Nazi concentration camp near Munich, Germany.

⁹ The Library of Congress. American Folklife Center. Veterans History Project. Warren Michio Tsuneishi. Biographical Information. <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc/natlib.afc2001001.02153/>

¹⁰ "The Story of Two Japanese Americans Who Fought in World War II."

¹¹ Ibid.

Warren and the group of ten Nisei that he was part of were granted a brief leave of absence, and he returned to Heart Mountain to say goodbye to his parents, brothers, and sisters. In June 1944 the ten Nisei were sent to Schofield Barracks, Wahiawa, Oahu, Hawaii, where they were named the 306th Headquarters Intelligence Detachment of the XXIV Corps that was then being organized. After jungle training in Oahu, the XXIV Corps boarded ships to form part of the Army that returned to the Philippines with General MacArthur, landing on Leyte Island on October 20, 1944. Most of Warren's work involved translating captured documents. Of this he wrote: "I recall staying up all night following a Japanese airborne attack translating a captured top secret operational order found on the body of a member of the attacking force spelling out in detail the mission, objectives, personnel, and equipment carried by the airborne force. Their mission was to knock out airstrips being built by the Seabees, and then link up with Japanese ground forces on Leyte. . . . Another document I translated comprised secret information on the force defending the Camotes Islands situated between Leyte and Samar. The inhabitants had radioed MacArthur seeking help because the occupying forces were slaughtering civilians. . . . I translated a document identifying the occupying force—naval engineers units of perhaps 400 men. They were wiped out when they attacked our lines in a banzai attack."¹² The XXIV Corps was part of the Battle of Okinawa, and Warren helped translate a top secret operational order laying out the strategy for the defense of the island. The strategy was: Let the enemy land with their full forces and supplies with minimum resistance; take up dug in defense lines on an escarpment bisecting the island; let the Imperial Navy kamikaze attack and destroy US naval and supply ships; and then destroy the invading forces cut off from their supplies at leisure. Warren commented, "It goes without saying that knowing enemy intentions is half the battle."¹³

At the end of the war, the XXIV Corps was sent to Seoul, Korea, to accept the surrender of Japanese forces and to occupy and govern South Korea. There, Warren Tsuneishi served as an interpreter and translator. He and the other Japanese-speaking members of the unit would interpret from English into Japanese, and their Korean associates would interpret into Korean, as many Koreans could speak and read Japanese fluently.¹⁴ While serving in Korea Warren visited his sisters in Japan, who were working as translators at General MacArthur's headquarters. He recalled, "I had observed the devastating effects of naval and aerial bombardment on Okinawa, [and] . . . I was aware of the enormous civilian casualties suffered by the Okinawans. Even so, I was unprepared for the enormity of the devastation of Osaka and Tokyo, so huge was the scale of destruction and I could only imagine the sufferings of the Japanese people. . . . Lives were shattered. Many people lived in the streets virtually in rags and yet they were not beggars. I had profound compassion for their plight. They were no longer the impersonal enemy. They had suffered."¹⁵

¹² The Library of Congress. American Folklife Center. Veterans History Project. Letter from Warren Tsuneishi to Sarah Rouse. June 30, 2002.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ In a letter entitled "From Warren Tsuneishi in Seoul to Don Keene in Guam", September 12, 1945, Tsuneishi writes of his experiences as an interpreter in Inchon and Seoul and the reactions of the Koreans with whom he spoke to their liberation from Japanese colonial rule. (Cary, Otis, ed., *War-Wasted Asia: Letters, 1945-46*. Tokyo and New York: Kodansha International, 1975), pp. 26-34. Reprinted as *From a Ruined Empire: Letters--Japan, China, Korea, 1945-46*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1984. 322p. Revised edition: *Eyewitness to History: The First Americans in Postwar Asia*, edited by Otis Cary. Tokyo and New York: Kodansha International, 1995.)

¹⁵ Military Intelligence Service Research Center. Veteran Profiles.

Warren Tsuneishi was awarded the Bronze Star by Lt. General John Hodge, CG, XXW Corps, in a ceremony in October 1945 at the Chosun Hotel in Seoul. He had reached the rank of Technical Sergeant and in early January 1946 was offered a commission if he would sign up for another tour of duty, but he chose to return to civilian life. With the opportunity of education made available by the GI Bill, he matriculated in late January 1946 in the Department of Chinese and Japanese at Columbia University, and received his M.A. degree in classical Japanese literature in 1948. In the meantime, at an April Fool's Day Dance in 1946 at the Japanese Buddhist Church in New York, he met Betty Teruko Takeuchi, a design student at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn from Honolulu, and they were married on November 16, 1946. Over the years three children were born to them. Their first child David was born in Syracuse, New York in 1948, the same year Warren received his M.A.; their second son Kenneth was born in 1951; and their daughter Julia was born in 1959. After completing his M.A., Warren began studies in the Graduate Library School of Columbia University and received his MSLS in 1950. Warren's first library job following graduation was as a part-time Japanese cataloguer at the Yale University Library beginning in 1950. At the urging of his wife Betty, he enrolled in the Yale graduate school and received his Ph.D. in political science from Yale University in 1960. His dissertation, written under the direction of Chitoshi Yanaga, studied the political and constitutional changes in the Japanese emperor system during the Occupation. One reason that he chose this topic was that ". . . during the war I simply did not understand how the banzai attackers and the kamikaze pilots could throw their lives away with 'banzai' on their lips."¹⁶

From 1953-1957 Warren Tsuneishi served as Curator of the Far Eastern Collections at the Yale University Library, and from 1957-1960 he was Head of the newly-created Far Eastern Languages Section of the Library of Congress [LC] Cataloging Department. In 1961 he returned to the Yale Library and until 1966 served as Curator of its East Asian Collection; from 1963-1964 he also lectured in the Yale Department of Political Science. As Curator he presided over a major expansion of East Asian acquisitions and personnel, inaugurating the first "integrated area collection," that brought technical services, collection development, and public services into one library department.¹⁷ Returning to the Library of Congress in 1966, he became Chief of the Orientalia Division, a position he held until the Library's reorganization of 1978, at which time he was promoted to Director of Area Studies in the Library's Research Services Department. With the Library reorganization of 1989 he was appointed Chief of the Asian Division, a position he held until his retirement in 1993.

During his thirty years at the Library of Congress, Warren Tsuneishi participated in several important developments in East Asian librarianship. As head of the Far Eastern Languages Section on the late 1950s he was the first to supervise the Library's cataloging of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean language materials in accordance with newly established cataloging rules that standardized the use of both Romanization and CJK script on the LC

¹⁶ The Library of Congress. American Folklife Center. Veterans History Project. Letter from Warren Tsuneishi to Sarah Rouse. June 30, 2002. Page 3.

¹⁷ Ellen Hammond, email to Gail King dated February 18, 2011, providing details about Warren Tsuneishi's service as the Curator of the Yale University Library East Asian Collection.

printed cards. In the 1960s Tsuneishi helped plan LC's only National Program for Acquisitions and Cataloging (NPAC) center in East Asia, established in Tokyo in 1968. In the 1970s he assisted in plans coordinated by the Library of Congress to send the first American delegation of librarians, represented by LC, the American Library Association, the Association of Research Libraries, and the Association for Asian Studies, to the People's Republic of China, for which he received the Library of Congress Superior Service Award.¹⁸ In the 1980s he served as the representative of the Library of Congress to the Research Libraries Group (RLG) East Asia Program Committee during the period when RLG, with the cooperation of LC, was developing online network cataloging of East Asian language materials. In the early 1990s he played a leading role in the planning and negotiations with the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership that resulted in the establishment within the Asian Division of the Japan Documentation Center.¹⁹

Warren Tsuneishi was active in several library and academic organizations. He served from 1964-1967 on the Executive Group of the Committee on East Asian Libraries of the Association for Asian Studies [AAS] and as Executive Group Liaison to the Association of College and Research Libraries [ACRL] from 1967-1980. From 1971-1982 he was a member of the AAS *Bibliography of Asian Studies* Advisory Committee. He was a member, and in 1967 chairman, of the Special Subcommittee on Romanization of Japanese of the Z-39 Subcommittee of the American Standards Institute and also served as Chairman (1966-1968) of the East Asian Acquisitions Committee of the Association of Research Libraries. He was a member of the International Education Project Task Force on Library and Information Resources of the American Council of Education (1973-1974) and from 1975-1978 served on the East Asian Libraries Steering Committee of the American Council of Learned Societies.²⁰

Warren Tsuneishi was particularly interested in the field of international library relations and served with distinction in several related organizations. From 1974 to 1980 he was chairman of the American Panel of the Subcommittee on Libraries of the U.S.-Japan Conference on Education and Cultural Interchange (CULCON), and in 1983 he was elected president of the International Association of Orientalist Librarians, a position he held until 1991. He was a member of the American Advisory Committee of the Japan Foundation (1982-1984) and of the U.S.-U.S.S.R. Commission on Library Cooperation (1987-1991). His most substantial contributions in this area were his activities on various committees of the American Library Association, where he was a member of the International Relations Committee (1987-1989), the Armenian Earthquake Relief Committee (1989-1991) and chair of the International Relations Round Table (1983-1984). For over twenty-five years he was a member of the ALA International Relations Advisory Committee for Liaison with Japanese Libraries, where he played a major role in organizing five U.S.-Japan Conferences on Library

¹⁸ Richard Howard, "Warren Tsuneishi Retirement Notice," *Committee on East Asian Libraries Bulletin*, No. 99 (June 1993), pp. 143-145.

¹⁹ "Asian Division Chief, Assistant Chief Retire," *The Library of Congress Information Bulletin*, June 28, 1993.

<http://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/93/9313/retire.html>

²⁰ *Ibid.*

and Information Science and in editing and preparing for publication the proceedings of four of these conferences.²¹

Tsuneishi was also a guest lecturer on technical processes in Asian collections and on Japanese library systems at summer library institutes from the 1960s through the 1980s and was one of the attendees at the conference held in Washington D.C. in June 1991 that resulted in the founding of the National Coordinating Committee on Japanese Library Resources (NCC).

Warren Tsuneishi was proud to be an American and worked to help his country realize “. . . Thomas Jefferson’s ideal of equality and justice for all [in the Declaration of Independence] . . . [and] these same core American values in the Gettysburg Address, [and] Martin Luther King’s dream.”²² Having himself experienced discriminatory language and practices since childhood, he firmly believed that “. . . racial, ethnic, religious, or other derogatory and hateful epithets that have been used historically to ridicule, stereotype, debase, and humiliate the groups so described have no place in modern society . . .”²³ and sought to educate the American public on the patriotic contributions of the Nisei to their country.²⁴ He was a member of the Japanese American Citizens League and was proud of how Japanese Americans, inspired by the civil rights struggles of African Americans, organized to demand redress for the losses and injury suffered as a result of their internment during World War II.²⁵ One of The Greatest Generation and a member of the Japanese American Veterans Association, Warren Tsuneishi recalled with pride and dignity his service during World War Two.

Following his retirement in 1993, Warren continued his active interest in Asian libraries and Japanese history. Despite the difficulties entailed by increasingly diminished vision, he researched such topics as the origin of the Tsuneishi name following the Genpei war in 1195, the nine Japanese sailors who were serving on the *USS Maine* when it was sunk in Havana Harbor in 1898, and the liberation of the Camotes Islands off Leyte, The Philippines.²⁶ In addition, he served as an honorary member of the Board of Directors of the Asian Division Friends Society of the Library of Congress from the time that the ADFS was established in 2004/2005 until his recent death. He also enjoyed gardening and birding with his wife.

Warren Tsuneishi is survived by his wife, Betty Teruko Tsuneishi, three children: David Ian (Wendy), Julia Sachi Tsuneishi, both of Maryland, and Kenneth Lee Tsuneishi of West Virginia; four grandchildren: Kevin Warren and Lisa Joy Tsuneishi of West Virginia, Jean Marie Tsuneishi of North Carolina, and Monica Tsuneishi of Maryland; three brothers: Noel, Paul (Aiko), and Yoshihiro (Fumi) Tsuneishi and two sisters: Frances and Rose (Jack); a sister-in-law, Sally Tsuneishi; and many nieces, nephews and other relatives. Funeral services were held on Saturday, February 5, 2011, at the Evergreen Baptist Church of San Gabriel Valley in La Puente, California. A memorial service is planned for a later date in the Washington, D.C., area.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Warren Tsuneishi, Letter to Thomas Kuwahara, April 28, 2004, Epilog, page 1.

²³ Ibid., Epilog page 2.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Charlynn Spencer Pyne, “Building a Nation of Readers: Children Come to the Library for a History Lesson.”

²⁶ Warren Tsuneishi, Letter to Gail King, January 4, 2004.

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