



From the diaries of Toku Shimomura, 1888-1968

"CAMPFIRE DIARY"

Written and directed by Roger Shimomura

"Campfire Diary"

"Campfire Diary" is a rewrite of the "Seven Kabuki Plays Project" performed throughout Kansas from 1985-1987. It is also excerpted (second act) from "The Last Sansei Story", a multi-media theater piece that recounts personal episodes related to the history of three generations of Japanese Americans in this country.

This performance revolves around the translated diary entries of my grandmother, Toku Shimomura, a Japanese American pioneer and midwife to over 1,000 babies born in the Pacific Northwest. For 56 years, starting from the year of her immigration to this country, Mrs. Shimomura maintained a diary of her daily life. The time frame of this performance focuses in upon the W.W. II years that resulted in the illegal internment of over 120,000 Japanese Americans, two thirds of which were American citizens by birthright. Each act in this piece corresponds not only to a particular diary entry, but corresponds visually to one of the 25 paintings in the "Diary Series", I executed from 1980-1983.

I feel fortunate to have had the assistance of three exceptional collaborators, Joel Sanderson, Tony Allard and Ione Unruh. Their professional qualifications appear later in this program. To the three of them, I am truly indebted.

Credits

Writer, Director & Producer:	Roger Shimomura
Audio Composer & Assistant Director:	Joel Sanderson
Costume Designer:	Ione Unruh
Solo Performer:	Tony Allard
Video Performers & Recorded Vocals:	Fumiko Yamamoto Akira Yamamoto
Video Production:	
Head Technician:	Jim Jewell
Assistant:	Mark Crabtree

This performance is made possible with grants and financial support from the National Endowment for the Arts (Washington, D.C.), N.E.A./Rockefeller/Warhol Foundation, Diverse Visions (Minneapolis), Art Matters, Inc. (New York City), The University of Kansas General Research Fund, Faculty Scholarship Travel Fund, and School of Fine Arts.

Part One

VISUAL: Auditorium ceiling is filled with slides of paintings by Roy Lichtenstein depicting W.W.II fighter airplanes in combat.

AUDIO: Haunting, menacing music with changing overlays of 1940's nostalgia.

VISUAL: After audience is seated, Kurogo #2 turns off slide projectors, one by one.

AUDIO: Introductory music fades out.

VISUAL: Room is dark.

AUDIO: In Japanese, the first diary entry is recited, followed by the sounds of approaching airplanes.

VIDEO: Airplanes approaching Pearl Harbor. Approximately a half a minute later video of actress Jan Seymour wearing kimono, bowing.



VIDEO: Clips of Pearl Harbor attack begins. Then changes to Japanese dancing in streets of Japan to American rock and roll music.



AUDIO: The partial diary entry is recited: "December 7, 1941. When I came home from church I heard the dream like news that Japanese airplanes had bombed Pearl Harbor. I was surprised beyond belief. I sat in front of the radio and listened to the news all day. It was said that at 6 a.m. Japan declared war on the United States..."

VIDEO: Video continues to alternate, at 20-35 second intervals, between images of how the United States and Japan would eventually influence each other's culture:

Pearl Harbor scene alternates to Madam Butterfly with all white cast portraying Japanese people.

Pearl Harbor scene alternates to segment from "My Three Sons" where white boy dances with Japanese girl in Japan.

Pearl Harbor scene.

VISUAL: Kurogo #2 turn spotlight on man with binoculars who watches screen. Spotlight goes out after 30 seconds.

VIDEO (continues):

White Americans learning to do Japanese Kabuki dance alternates to Pearl Harbor scene then to women's professional wrestling in Japan.

AUDIO: The song "Tiny Bubbles" by Don Ho begins.

VISUAL: Kurogo #2 turns spotlight on man who lip syncs "Tiny Bubbles" to the audience.



VIDEO (continues):

Pearl Harbor scene alternates to cowboy, Indian and samurai fighting.
Pearl Harbor scene alternates to Sesame Street's Big Bird in Japan.

AUDIO: "Tiny Bubbles" fades out.

VISUAL: Kurogo #2 turns off spotlight and both exit.

VIDEO (continues):

Pearl Harbor scene for 40 seconds. Then video goes to black. Then image of man with binoculars comes on screen.



AUDIO: Diary entry continues: "Our future has become gloomy. I pray that God will stay with us."

VIDEO: Goes to black.

AUDIO: Voice of President Franklin Roosevelt: "Yesterday, December 7th, a day that will live in infamy..." Fades out. Music fades out.

Part Two

AUDIO: In Japanese, the second diary entry is recited. Then a heartbeat is heard with ominous music in background.

VIDEO: Image of grandma appears. She takes her own blood pressure.

AUDIO: Grandma says: "My blood pressure was 190 over 110."

VIDEO: Grandma sighs and bows her head in futility. Fades to black.



AUDIO: Partial diary entry is recited: "December 12, 1941. I spent all day at home. Starting from today we were permitted to withdraw \$100 from the bank. This was for our sustenance of life, we who are enemy to them. I deeply felt America's large heartedness in dealing with us." Patriotic music and drums begin.

VIDEO: Image of screen and silhouette of Superman flexing his muscles appears.



VISUAL: Kurogo #2 turns on spotlight on Kurogo #1 who carries Superman. He runs through audience throwing money, then quickly exits to rear of auditorium. Video fades to black.



AUDIO: Heartbeat is heard again.

VIDEO: Image of Roger Shimomura appears. He takes his own blood pressure.



AUDIO: Roger says: "My blood pressure was 210 over 160."

VIDEO: Roger sighs and bows his head in futility.

AUDIO: Patriotic music and drums swells then fades to silence.

Part Three

AUDIO: In Japanese, the diary entry is recited. Then drumming sounds are heard.

VIDEO: Shoji screen suddenly appears to drum sounds, then disappears.

AUDIO: Diary entry begins: "February 3, 1942. I finally decided to do my fingerprint registration since it had been hanging heavily on my mind. I went to the Post Office with Mrs. Sasaki."

VIDEO: Shoji screen reappears.

AUDIO: Diary entry continues: "We finished the strict registration at 11 a.m. I feel that heavy load has been taken off my mind."

VISUAL: Woman dressed in 1940's clothing walks in front of video of woman dressed in traditional kimono.



VIDEO: When silhouette of woman dressed in kimono walks off of the screen, video goes to black. Then fingerprint on yellow background appears, followed by a second set of fingerprints, the latter moving in a circular pattern.

SLIDES: Simultaneously, a slide image of same fingerprint appears over screen.

VISUAL: Woman in 1940's dress walks with hands extended into slide projector light revealing ink on all 10 fingers. She exits to rear of auditorium.



Part Four

AUDIO: In Japanese, the diary entry is recited.

SLIDE: Slide of barbed wire appears on screen.

AUDIO: Slow, sad music begins. The sounds of thunder are heard in the background.

VIDEO: Periodic flashes of internees in Camp Minidoka are seen standing around the flag pole during lowering of the flag ceremony. With each subsequent flash the camera moves in closer.

AUDIO: "Retreat" is played on the bugle. More thunder is heard.

VIDEO: The camera continues to move in closer. Fades to black.

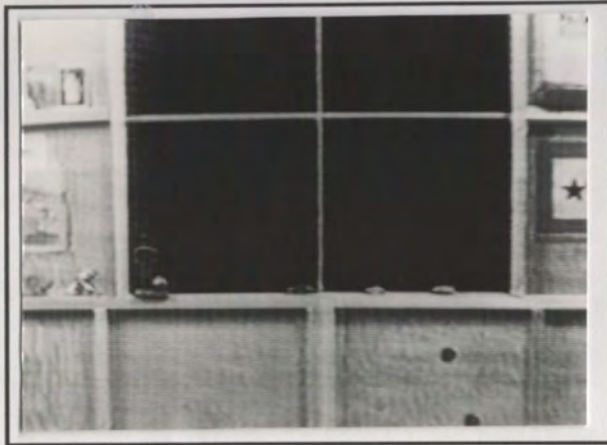
AUDIO: "Retreat" continues.

VIDEO: Changes to interior barrack wall with window. Objects and photographs displayed all over.



AUDIO: Grinding musical refrain with slow lyrical flute.

VIDEO: Camera zooms in and pans objects and photographs on barrack wall.



AUDIO: Partial diary entry is recited: "August 27, 1942. Storm, what a view. I have never seen such a dust storm."

VIDEO: Fades to black.

VISUAL: Old woman steps in front of screen.

SLIDE: Slide of same room interior appears. Image of same old woman is aligned with old woman standing in front of screen.

AUDIO: Diary entry continues: "I stayed in my room and looked out of the window."

VISUAL: Old woman walks across screen and exits.



AUDIO: Diary entry continues: "It was so dark we were all afraid to move."
SLIDE: Goes out. Dark.

AUDIO: Diary entry continues: "Pessimistic words came out of everyone's mouth."
Dramatic musical chord is heard.

VIDEO: Close up of woman's mouth.



AUDIO: Diary entry concludes (in Japanese): "We were sent to such a harsh place!"
Musical chord is repeated.

VIDEO: Goes to black. Mouth reappears for the second time.

AUDIO: In Japanese again, "We were sent to such a harsh place!"

VIDEO: Goes to black. Mouth reappears for the third time.

AUDIO: In English this time, "We were sent to such a harsh place!" Sound of thunder,
more dramatic chords, then silence.

Part Five

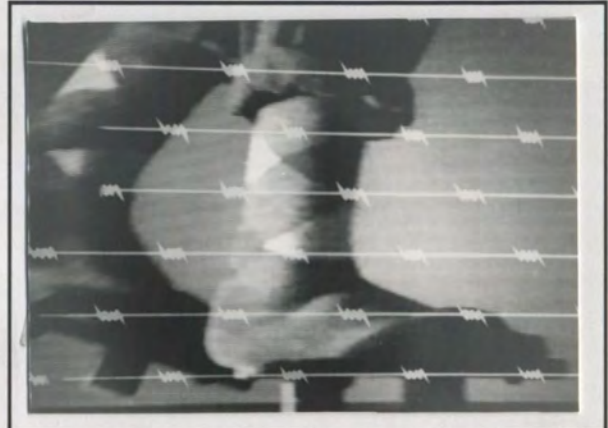
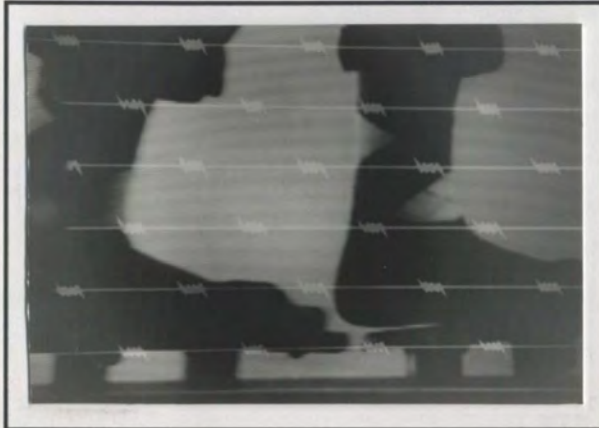
AUDIO: In Japanese, the diary entry is recited.

SLIDE: Barbed wire appears on screen.

VIDEO: Feet in Argyle socks walking in "geta" (Japanese shoes) are seen against blue
background.

AUDIO: The partial diary entry is recited: "May 23, 1942. It was clear today. As always the day was monotonous. During the evening Ogishima and I paid a visit to Kuboto san who was ill..."

VIDEO: Fades to black, then fades up to same feet walking against grey background.



AUDIO: Diary entry continues: "Even if you are not healthy, it is not very pleasant nowadays." Sounds of rain over music begins.

VISUAL: Kurogo #2 turns spotlight on male Kabuki actor with large umbrella. He walks in front of audience, then down the side aisle to rear of auditorium.



AUDIO: "Diary entry concludes: "I went to bed listening to the sounds of raindrops which sounded like machine-guns." Raindrops begin to sound like machine-gun fire. Then fades with music.

Part Six

AUDIO: In Japanese, the diary entry is recited.

VIDEO: Barbed wire appears on screen.

VISUAL: Christmas lights around screen goes on.

AUDIO: Very tense music begins. The diary entry is partially recited: "December 25, 1942. The muddy ground was completely covered by the white snow. It was like a beautiful white cloth and a suitable sight for Christmas..."

VIDEO: A 1940's film of "The Night Before Christmas" is shown, *in reverse*, on front screen.

AUDIO: Diary entry continues: "We sat happily at the family table..." Tense music continues.

SLIDE: Image of family eating dinner behind shoji screen appears to side of video screen.

VIDEO: "The Night Before Christmas" ends. Barbed wire remains.

AUDIO: Diary entry concludes: "At 9 p.m. Santa Claus appeared. For these few moments I forgot where I was."

VISUAL: Kurogo #2 turns spotlight on Santa Claus who appears from between two screens. He carries a box filled with origami cranes (made out of Mickey Mouse wrapping paper) and moves into and through the audience passing them out.

AUDIO: Flute plays "Silent Night".



Part Seven

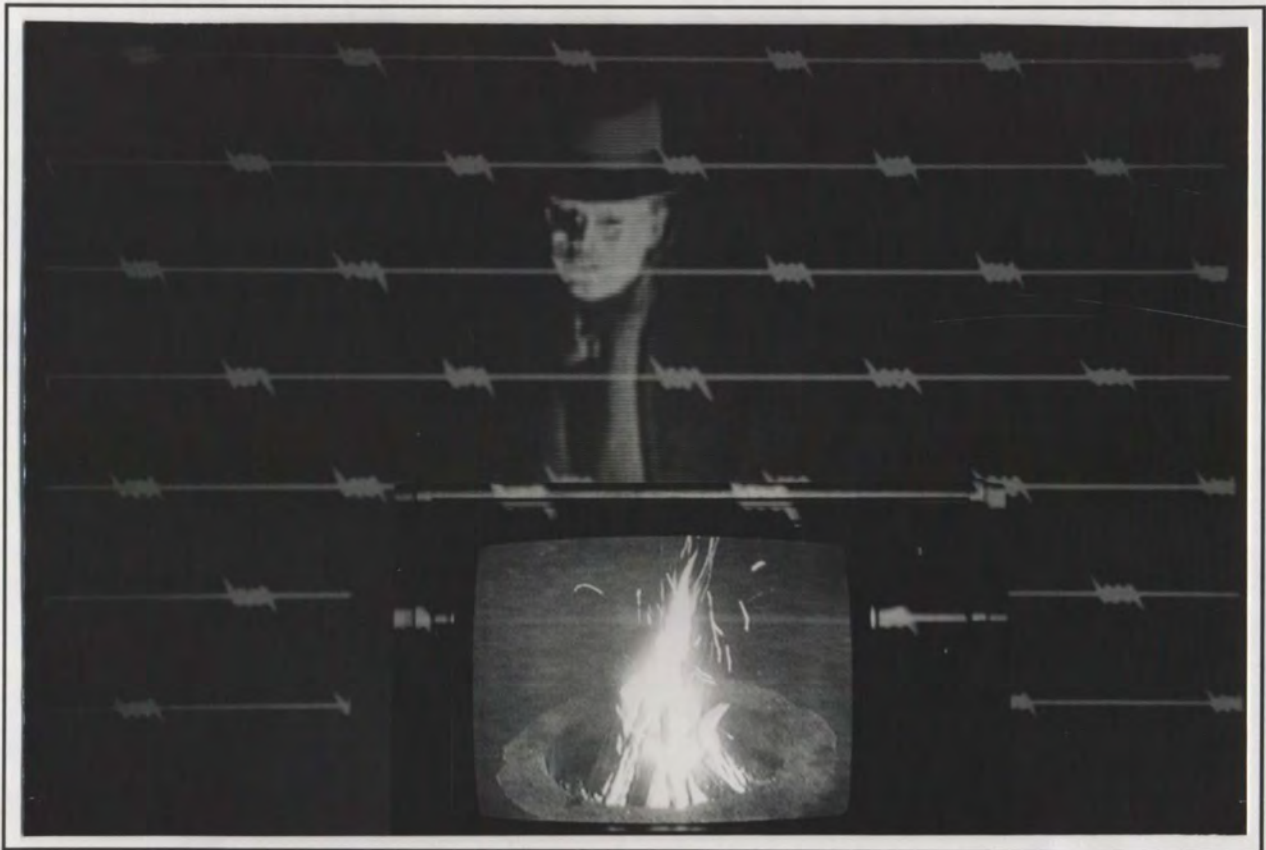
AUDIO: Slow, melancholy music begins.

VISUAL: Kurogo #2 moves TV monitor in front of screen. When turned on, image of campfire appears on monitor.

SLIDE: Slide of barbed wire appears on screen.

VIDEO: Image of man in overcoat appears.

AUDIO: In Japanese, man recites poem, "Moon Seen as Exiles" (written by anonymous internee in Camp Minidoka).



VISUAL: When "Moon Seen as Exiles" is over, Kurogo #2 turns off TV image of campfire. Fake campfire on side stage is turned on.

VIDEO: Image of man reciting poem fades to black.

SLIDE: Barbed wire goes off. Approximately five seconds later slide of spotlight goes on side stage.

AUDIO: Male voice begins to recite "Moon Seen as Exiles" *in English*.

VISUAL: Kurogo #1 stands on side stage behind doll on pedestal moving head and arms as though the doll is listening to the poem being recited.

AUDIO: "Here in Minidoka, in Idaho, on the high plains with sagebrush, packs of Coyotes roam at night.
Even though Spring comes, no flowers bloom. In summer, strong winds whirl, in winter, snowstorms hit our windows.
Bearing on our backs the word 'enemy', we ten thousand, wire-fenced in, endure a wretched life severed from yesteryear.
In fifty years of endeavor and work, we had built a foundation. Abandoning it, we watch the moon. Exiles.
No matter how hard our pains, we sacrifice under national policy, taking each other's hands, vowing to endure.
When the breeze of peace blows, spring with blooming flowers will come around. Then our pains will become a tale of past dreams."



AUDIO: Poem ends.
SLIDE: Slide of spotlight goes out.
VISUAL: Fake campfire is turned off.

AUDIO: Closing music with sounds of drums and bugles begins. In Japanese, the words "samui (cold), atsui (hot), hokori darake (dusty), kazega tsuyoi (windy), sabushi (lonely), hito ga ipai (crowded), and shigataganai (It is beyond our control)" are recited. At the conclusion of music, the performance ends with the sound of a single airplane flying by.

The End