



# Discover Nikkei\*

\*JAPANESE MIGRANTS AND THEIR DESCENDANTS

<http://www.discovernikkei.org/en/journal/2010/3/2/terminology-incarceration-japanese-americans/>

## WORDS CAN LIE OR CLARIFY: Terminology of the World War II Incarceration of Japanese Americans\* - Part 5

- By [Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga](#)
- 2 Mar 2010

>>> [Read Part 4](#)

While a major controversy between the Nikkei and Jewish communities had been resolved, no such consensus emerged in responses to the JANM's call for debate among its board members, staff, scholarly advisory group, and volunteers. Some suggested capitulating to the early warnings from the National Park Service, such as JANM board member Grant Ujifusa, who favored dropping "concentration camps" from the title for fear of having the exhibit rejected. But others, including this writer, sent indignant emails and letters saying

*At what point are we, as Americans of Japanese ancestry, going to cease to resist having our history written for us by others? Is our empowerment so weak that we must capitulate and surrender our right to state our own history in our own words?.... If the [concentration camp] words are unacceptable in the title, why would they be acceptable in the text labels and what assurance is there that you would not be asked to remove them later also?*<sup>1</sup>

Support for retaining "concentration camps" in the exhibit's title came from a younger generation of scholars who followed Roger Daniels' pioneer research and publications on the Nikkei mass removal and incarceration. Ishizuka quotes history professor Arthur Hansen at California State University, Fullerton, who replied by telephone within forty-eight hours:

*There should be no compromise on the terminology. The slippage would be a form of accommodation that the Japanese American community participated in under duress in the past. The redress effort was an attempt to get over that. To flip back into it would be to capitulate to a historical falsification. 'Concentration camp' is a decidedly accurate term.*<sup>2</sup>

UCLA professor ....

[grantujifusa](#) • a year ago

Ms. Herzig is misinformed. At no meeting of the Board of Governors that I attended was the issue of camp terminology brought up. In fact, what to call the camps has never occurred to me while inside the JAMN building nor anywhere near the LA Basin. Nor was I ever canvassed by anyone from the Museum about the issue by phone or email.

But I am happy to call the camps whatever Ms. Herzig wants. The problem is that the hakuin media hasn't and won't, because the term "concentration camp" is too firmly associated in the minds of most Americans with Nazi death camps, which ours were not.

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From: Macbeth, Angus <[amacbeth@sidley.com](mailto:amacbeth@sidley.com)>  
 To: Grant Ujifusa <[captain129@aol.com](mailto:captain129@aol.com)>  
 Sent: Thu, Aug 28, 2014 5:12 pm  
 Subject: RE: Thanks for taking my call just now

Grant-

Aiko knew a great deal about the various federal archives and what was in them and was a major help in finding all sorts of relevant papers. In that sense we relied heavily on her work.

On the other hand she was quite modest about expressing her own views. She made a few suggestions about the text but nothing extensive and did not do any of the drafting or general editing of the text so far as I recall.

I hope that is responsive to your question. Let me know if you need anything further.

All the best and I trust you are doing well,

Angus

