

Students step into WWII incarceration through role-playing game



IN THE ROLE OF A NISEI TEEN — Mission US' latest game, "Prisoner in My Homeland," asks players to take on the role of Henry Tanaka, a typical Japanese American teenager during the war. courtesy of THIRTEEN Productions LLC

By TOMO HIRAI
Nichi Bei Weekly

What would a 16-year-old do today if they were labeled "the enemy" and incarcerated in the California desert? "Prisoner in My Homeland," a free educational role-playing game released online Sept. 14 asks students just that, by having them take on the role of Henry Tanaka, a fictional teenager from Bainbridge Island, an island located west of Seattle.

Produced by THIRTEEN, a New York-based PBS studio owned by WNET, "Prisoner in My Homeland" joins five other games aimed at middle school students focusing on major moments in American history from the eyes of a teen.

According to Michelle Chen, the game's senior producer, the Mission US games were developed following a nationwide survey of middle school social studies teachers to determine which pivotal moments of history to focus on.

Tanaka's story, however, differs from the other five games the studio produced, as it features a teenager who is slightly older than the other protagonists.

"The other missions really cover core curriculum topics like ... the Boston Massacre," Chen said. "This one is perhaps a topic that not necessarily all teachers would teach in a lot of depth in the middle school history classroom."

Chen, a Taiwanese American from Brooklyn, New York, said she briefly learned about the wartime incarceration in school, but later gained a more in-depth education from her Japanese American husband, Konrad Aderer. Chen co-produced "Resistance at Tule Lake" with Aderer, and in doing so, learned about the National Park Service's Japanese American Confinement Sites grant program.

"So I knew about this funding opportunity and the light bulb went off in my head. Maybe they could fund a Mission about this topic," she said.

Chen pulled together a team of advisers mainly comprised of *Nikkei* history scholars. She also traveled to Washington to meet with the Bainbridge Island Japanese American community and down to California to meet with the Manzanar Committee to do research. Along the way, Densho: The Japanese American Legacy Project and Martha Nakagawa reviewed the game to ensure accuracy.

Nakagawa, author and researcher at the University of California, Los Angeles' Jack and Aiko Herzig Papers, Collection and the university's Asian American Studies Center's Suyama Project, said she spent a few years working with Chen and her team, and had fun doing so. She thinks the game offers a good introduction to the wartime incarceration experience for students.

Nakagawa said she offered her advice on how *Nikkei* from Terminal Island in Los Angeles would speak, as well as how the *Nisei* would have spoken with their *Issei* parents.

She also said she advised Chen on how the so-called loyalty questionnaire should be framed in the game. The questionnaire asked wartime inmates about their willingness to serve in the U.S. armed forces of the United States, and whether they would swear their unqualified allegiance to the U.S. and forswear their allegiance to the Japanese Emperor.

"The staff did a good job changing how the loyalty questionnaire was presented to the player," she said. "It wasn't our community that really should be a proving our loyalty. It was

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CSU faculty administrators at odds over ethnic studies requirement

By MICHAEL BURKE
EdSource

California State University took another step Nov. 17 toward requiring students to take an ethnic studies class as part of their lower-division coursework, a move that would also have significant implications for the state's 115 degree-granting community colleges.

During the 23-campus system's Board of Trustees meeting Nov. 17, the educational policy committee voted 9-2 to make a minor amendment to a policy approved in July that would have required students to take a course in ethnic studies or a class with a social justice component.

To comply with AB 1460, a new law requiring students to take a class in ethnic studies, the amended policy stipulates that students must complete the requirement by taking a class in one of four ethnic studies disciplines: Native American studies, African American studies, Asian American studies or Latina and Latino studies. A class deemed to have a social justice component that falls outside those disciplines would not fulfill the requirement.

The board did not make revisions to the policy requested by faculty, who want greater control over implementing the new requirement.

Faculty groups called on the board to establish that the class could be fulfilled as either an upper- or lower-division course, but the trustees did not take that step on Nov. 17.

Now, students are likely to be required to complete the class in the first half of their coursework. Because many students take those lower-division classes at community college before receiving an associate degree and transferring to CSU as part of a specialized pathway, it would shift the responsibility to community

colleges to offer ethnic studies to those students. That would be a significant financial burden to those colleges, many of which don't currently offer any ethnic studies classes.

The CSU chancellor's office says it is still finalizing the implementation plan for the new class and has not officially determined that it will be a lower-division class. However, Michael Uhlenkamp, a spokesman for the chancellor's office, said in a statement to *EdSource* that "it is our preference to have the requirement be a lower-level" requirement.

"We are hoping to have that guidance to share with the campuses in the next few weeks," he added.

CSU faculty groups want individual campuses to have greater flexibility over how to implement the requirement and do not want to restrict students to taking the class in their lower-division coursework.

CSU's Academic Senate, the official body representing faculty on system-wide issues, last week passed a resolution urging the Board of Trustees and the chancellor's office to revise the proposal and establish that the requirement could be met as an upper- or lower-division class.

CSU's Council on Ethnic Studies, which laid the groundwork for AB 1460, also took that position, as did the California Faculty Association, the union representing faculty across the system.

"We are looking to the CSU Board of Trustees ... to exercise its oversight of the Chancellor's Office and demand freestanding graduation requirement, allowing upper or lower division Ethnic Studies courses," Kenneth Monteiro, the former dean of San Francisco State's College of Ethnic Studies, said in a statement. Monteiro is also the chair of the CSU Council on Ethnic Studies.

The chancellor's office argues that it would not make sense to give campuses autonomy for implementing AB 1460.

"Unlike a campus requirement, a system requirement must be consistent across the 23 campuses," Alison Wrynn, CSU's associate vice-chancellor of academic programs, said during the Nov. 17 meeting.

If the class is indeed implemented as a lower-division requirement, it would create significant costs for the state's community colleges that offer associate degrees.

Under that plan, the class would become part of CSU's general education requirements. Students who transfer to a CSU campus from community college as part of the Associate Degree for Transfer pathway are required to complete those requirements at community college. About 14,000 students transferred to a CSU campus on that pathway this fall.

Aisha Lowe, the community college system's vice-chancellor of educational services and support, previously told *EdSource* that it would cost up to \$45 million in new spending for the system to offer the required courses to those students.

Most of that spending would be to hire new faculty. Lowe estimated that about 40 colleges currently do not offer any ethnic studies classes, and said that those that do will likely need to offer more of those classes to satisfy all students.

The law goes into effect beginning with students graduating from CSU in 2025. That means that students who enter college next fall will be the first class subjected to the requirement. For those students to be able to complete the requirement by their second year of college, the community college system would need to have the ethnic studies classes available by Fall 2022.

S.F. Board of Supervisors approve speed reduction

By DEREK TAHARA
Nichi Bei Weekly

At the City and County of San Francisco's Land Use and Transportation committee's Nov. 9 virtual meeting, Supervisors Aaron Peskin, Dean Preston and Ahsha Safai recommended a speed reduction bill.

It was approved unanimously by the city's Board of Supervisors Nov. 10.

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency will "implement a proactive approach for reducing posted

speed limits citywide under their existing authority, and to implement coordinated traffic signal timing to reduce vehicle speeds citywide," the Board of Supervisors' meeting minutes said. The bill will reduce the speed limit between Geary and Gough Streets, where pedestrian Mark Berman was killed by an oncoming car in August, KPIX 5 reported.

Preston took advantage of a state law loophole that allows cities to set their own speed limit guidelines near schools and senior centers, the *San*

Francisco Examiner reported. The District 5 supervisor used the loophole to push the SFMTA "to reduce the speed limit to 25 miles per hour on three segments of Geary Boulevard near senior centers — a 10 mile per hour decrease from their original standard," the *San Francisco Examiner* said.

The affected areas of the legislation include "Geary between Laguna and Gough streets, Geary between Steiner and Scott streets and Geary between Baker and St. Joseph's" Avenue, KPIX 5 reported.

FROM PAGE EIGHT: *The Story of Japanese American Food: Evolution by adaptation*

One example is Colorado-made Karami, a salsa originally made by farmers using green chile instead of seaweed for a savory *okazu*, or side dish.

Matsumoto also showed a variety of Japanese American cookbooks, noting that all immigrant communities passed along their recipes in cookbooks, but Japanese Americans were downright industrious in their number and variety, published by churches, temples, and community organizations.

She pointed out that by the 1960s, the need to help *Sansei* who may have lost some of their roots was reflected in diagrams (how to make a *sushi* roll) and explanations of some cultural traditions.

Following Matsumoto's talk, JANM Director of Collections Management and Access and Curator Kristen Hayashi shared some of the museum's collection of pre-war era photographs and artifacts, including a *sushi* mold, *daikon oroshi* grater and *mochitsuki kine* (mallet for pounding *mochi*).

JANM's photographic archives include images of immigrants eating at picnics and family celebrations, as well as early restaurants that served both Japanese and American dishes (and chop suey). She

noted that one book of recipes from the JANM collection made some traditional dishes with new world touches. "The ingredients, you know, aren't necessarily Japanese — they included Worcestershire sauce," she said.

Sometimes, the diversity was forced by improvisation. Hayashi said that when she tried to replicate some of her grandmother's recipes from a Wesley United Methodist Church cookbook in San Jose's Japantown, she was confounded by the fact that the ingredients were listed but without measurements.

"And so it was really interesting to hear family members chime in on their memories of my grandma making these different recipes."

Ultimately, the takeaway from this event was that Japanese American food, whether by design or accident, has always been a work in progress. As Matsumoto put it, "Japanese American food is much more diverse than we often think."

The next event in the "A Taste of Home" series, focusing on celebration food including Oshogatsu, will be Dec. 13 at 2 p.m. PST. Registration is free: <http://ow.ly/j0aw50Cyx11>.

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basically the white elected male officials that were not loyal to the Constitution, and I think that needed to come through."

Chen said the topic of the wartime incarceration is "always timely," but recognized that finishing the game this year was apt, with the rise of anti-Asian discrimination in the United States as a result of the pandemic and other issues of racism.

"In all of our missions, we do try to draw connections between these historical moments and what's happening in young peoples' lives today ... to really make history, and the study of history, more engaging and meaningful," Chen said.

The game puts the wartime incarceration experience in context of the larger issues with anti-Japanese racism *Nikkei* faced prior to the war, as well as the various perspectives Japanese Americans held about their incarceration.

While exploring these broader themes, Chen said the game also incorporates smaller moments to breathe life into the experiences.

"I think, the challenge with the game, or with any of these games, is that you have a limited

scope and you can't obviously cover everything. ... There were 120,000 people that were in the camps, and we can't tell all their stories," Chen said.

The game was released two months ago. Chen said some 20,000 unique visitors have looked at the game, but said students typically learn about World War II later in the school year and anticipated more students, teachers and parents will check out the game as the school year goes on.

With so many children attending school from home, Chen thinks more students than ever will have an opportunity to learn through Mission US games.

"The games in general have been used by more than 3 million users and 100,000 teachers, so I also hope that even if a teacher might not have chosen to teach this topic or done it in much detail, if they're already using Mission US, they might be more motivated to include this game in their curriculum," Chen said.

"Prisoner in My Homeland" and its associated teaching guide materials are available free. For more information on the game and other Mission US games, visit, <https://www.mission-us.org>.

FROM PAGE FOURTEEN: *Takakeisho wins Emperor's Cup*

strong resolve in the playoff and stuck to his tried-and-tested techniques. Hitting hard and low from the jump, he denied Terunofuji a belt grip before pushing him back and out.

Takakeisho had carried the mantle of title favorite as the highest-ranked wrestler left at the tournament, which was moved to Tokyo's Ryogoku Kokugikan from its usual home in Fukuoka to limit the spread of the novel coronavirus.

Injuries forced the withdrawal of grand champions Hakuho and

Kakuryu before the meet, while *ozeki* Asanoyama and Shodai pulled out in the early stages.

The championship is Takakeisho's first captured while fighting from *sumo's* second-highest rank. He won his maiden Emperor's Cup at the 2018 Kyushu Grand Tournament as a *komusubi*.

"I couldn't have won by myself. I was able to achieve this thanks to my stablemaster Chiganoura, his wife, and all the people that support me at the stable," said Takakeisho, who has struggled

with injury since his *ozeki* debut in May last year. "This result makes me very happy. Ever since I was promoted to *ozeki*, not many good things have happened to me."

The runner-up finish continues a remarkable comeback story for 28-year-old former *ozeki* Terunofuji, who won the July tournament in his return to the top flight following multiple knee surgeries and a long climb back from sumo's fifth division. The 173-kilogram (381-pound) wrestler picked up Technique Prize.

FROM PAGE FOURTEEN: *SoftBank Hawks win 4th straight Japan Series*

said. "But Yanagita hit a home run right away and that immediately changed the mood on the bench, the players' energy changed and created an atmosphere that enabled us to keep going."

In stark contrast to Nov. 24's near no-hitter, the Giants' bats came alive early on Nov. 25 against Hawks veteran left-hander Tsuyoshi Wada.

Akihiro Wakabayashi hit a leadoff double in the opening

frame and Yomiuri captain Hayato Sakamoto followed with an RBI double to get the visitors on the board first.

But Yanagita promptly turned it around in the bottom of the inning with a two-run go-ahead blast. The Hawks' slugging

outfielder connected on the first pitch he saw from Giants right-hander Seishu Hatake and bombed a low forkball into the right field stands.

Kai extended the Hawks' lead to 4-1 in the second with a two-out, two-run blast.

FROM PAGE TWO: *Peace of the world*

her the mental power to not give up hope. Soon after, her family found her and she was reunited with Rev. Fumio. Her appearance had been damaged by the effects of the bomb and her parents were shocked. However, Rev. Fumio said, "I am not shocked by her change in looks. I am just so grateful and joyful to have found her alive and to be reunited with her."

They got married and went to the Konko seminary school to become Konko ministers. When the opportunity was presented to go to San Francisco, they moved from Japan, and the Rev. Fumio Matsui became the third head minister of the Konko Church of San Francisco.

The Matsuis contributed a lot to the growth of the church, and in turn, positively impacted the wider Japanese and Japanese American community in the Bay Area. I am grateful that they were blessed to witness and survive the challenges of war so that they were able to share these lessons with us. I hope through remembering this suffering, we can work to prevent war and violent confrontations in the future. Let us work first on our own relationships with our family members, friends and communities so that this positive cooperation can spread to a global scale.

Rev. Masato Kawahatsu is a minister at the Konko Church of San Francisco and Konko Center of South San Francisco, who teaches shodo (Japanese calligraphy). He can be reached at konkosf2@sbcglobal.net or (415) 517-5563. The views expressed in the preceding column are not necessarily those of the Nichi Bei Weekly.

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