

# Synopsis

The discovery of a small metal box leads to the uncovering of a family story, shrouded in silence for more than 60 years. Woven through their censored letters, diary entries, and haiku poetry, is the story of a young Japanese American couple whose dreams are shattered when, months after their wedding, they find themselves held captive, first in race track horse stables and later, in tar paper barracks.

Abandoned by America, the country of their birth, Shizuko and Itaru endure four years of life behind barbed wires in American concentration camps during WWII. Itaru, incensed by the indignities of prison camp life, is charged with sedition for speaking out in protest of the government's efforts to separate the "loyal" from the "disloyal" by imposing a Loyalty Questionnaire on all adult prisoners. In his speech, Itaru demands that Japanese Americans be "treated equal to the free people" before they are required to fight in the war. Those identified as loyal would become eligible for the military draft, while the "disloyals" would be segregated to the Tule Lake Segregation Center in northern California. In answering "no" to the questions regarding his willingness to bear arms against the enemy and disavow loyalty to the Emperor of Japan, Itaru is identified as a trouble-maker, and he, his wife and two small children are segregated to Tule Lake.

Faced with deteriorating conditions regarding food, coal supplies, medical care, and milk for her children, Shizuko falls into despair. Militant pro-Japan groups begin to proliferate in the turmoil-ridden segregation camp and rumors sweep through the barracks. What initially appears to be a crisis-of-loyalty, becomes more clearly, a crisis-of-faith... in their own country. In her diary, Shizuko writes, "because our children have Japanese faces, I don't want them to be Americans." Ultimately, they decide that their only hope for freedom is to declare their loyalty to Japan. They renounce their American citizenship and request repatriation to Japan on a prisoner exchange ship. With this decision, Itaru becomes increasingly involved in the Hoshi Dan, a political pro-Japan organization focused on returning to a victorious Japan.

Prison authorities wanting to be rid of the dissidents encourage the renunciation movement and consequently apprehend Hoshi Dan leaders, separate them from their families and send them to Department of Justice Internment camps for enemy aliens. Itaru is sent to Ft. Lincoln in Bismarck, North Dakota. Writing letters almost daily during their two-year separation, Shizuko and Itaru struggle with the reality of Japan's defeat and now fear starvation and homelessness if they are deported to Japan. At a mitigation hearing, without access to counsel, witnesses, and without knowing the charges against them, they attempt to avert the forced deportation order, but are deemed enemy aliens "dangerous to the public peace and safety of the United States," and are ordered to depart in 30 days. The apparently capricious act of a low-ranking camp administrator changes the course of their lives forever.

Documentary, TRT: 57:00, USA

## Producer's Statement/About the Production

### “From a Silk Cocoon”

I was born in a prison camp in 1944. It has taken almost 60 years to uncover the story that would explain how such a thing could happen. The unjust and traumatic imprisonment of Japanese Americans during WWII has been buried in euphemisms and silenced in shame. We were referred to as “evacuees” and “internees” instead of prisoners; we were described as living in “pioneer communities” and “relocation centers” instead of prisons. My parents had two children during their 4½ years of incarceration. They never spoke to us about the shattered dreams, despair, or fears that led them to become dissidents and eventually, renounce their American citizenship. Without the benefit of a trial, without access to evidence used against them, and only by reason of race, were they “deemed by the Attorney General to be an alien enemy dangerous to the public peace and safety of the United States” and ordered deported to war-torn Japan in 1946. In standing up for their civil rights, they were labeled as “disloyal” by the American government and by fellow Japanese Americans. My parents held their silence in shame for the rest of their lives.

It comes as no surprise that I became a psychotherapist specializing in trauma and teaching courses on social justice issues, but it was only after years of conducting therapy groups for other Japanese Americans who, like myself, were children in the camps, did I become involved in filmmaking. My first documentary, *Children of the Camps* was broadcast on PBS in 2000. It examined the lives of six Japanese American women and men who have lived with the long-term impact of their wartime childhood experience in the camps. Shortly after the release of *Children of the Camps*, my mother passed away and I discovered 180 letters that were exchanged between my parents while they were incarcerated in separate prison camps. Many of the letters were in Japanese and had to be translated; most had huge gaps cut into them by military censors. What would be a familiar and cultural restraint of emotions, could only have been reinforced by the ominous presence of armed guards and vigilant censors. Yet, these were clearly love letters exchanged between a young husband and wife struggling to find ways to survive and reunite the family.

In the course of my more formal research into the National Archives and California historical museums and libraries, some personal documents that belonged to my parents were found in boxes long stored in musty closets. My mother kept diaries beginning from her wedding day and all through her incarceration. My father wrote in his haiku journal almost every day while interned in Ft. Lincoln, North Dakota, miles away from my mother, brother, and me. Even secret letters that my father had written on stripped bed sheets and sewn into the waistband of the pants that needed mending were found in perfect condition. Miraculously, perfectly preserved, these personal writings filled in the missing parts of the story that was being shaped by government documents and censored letters.

*From A Silk Cocoon* tells the story of the frightening and tragic outcome resulting from the wartime hysteria and racial profiling that occurred in the name of “military necessity.” Chilling similarities in government decision-making, euphemistic language, and suspension of constitutional and human rights are echoed in today’s post 9/11 America. Told in first-person voice through letters, diaries, and haiku poetry, this film puts a human face and heart to a historical incident that should never be forgotten, lest it be repeated again.

## REVIEWS

***“POWERFUL. I was . . . impressed with the film's honesty with respect to renunciation issues. This is art on film . . . the poetry and narrative come together so perfectly . . . Bravo, bravo!”***

- John Christgau, author, *Enemies: World War II Alien Internment*

***“. . . the issues of renunciation and loyalty resonate deeply with the current concerns over war and patriotism . . . a very important film . . .”***

- Taro Goto, San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival

***“. . . offers a cautionary tale of homeland security. . . . compelling . . . From a Silk Cocoon stretches beyond the basic facts of the Japanese-American internment experience into the dark and thorny corners of a perceived “military necessity” that is just as frightening and relevant now as it was when it happened. . . . An intimate portrait of a family under siege.”***

- Mark Halverson, *Sacramento News & Review*

***“. . . particularly compelling because it is personal and well-documented . . . not much is known about the 5,461 Japanese American internees who surrendered their citizenship in the camps.”***

- Dixie Reid, *Sacramento Bee*

***“. . . touching . . . it's important to see this film, because it's a very personal experience. You see how a family was disrupted.”***

- Former Assemblyman George Nakano

***"This gripping story of steadfast love and red tape is suspenseful to the end . . ."***

- Frako Loden, San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival

***“Itaru Ina's powerful, poetic haikus to his wife underscore his loneliness and sense of betrayal by the U.S. government.”***

- Brian Kluepfel, *Asian Week*

# Producer's Biography

## **Satsuki Ina, Ph.D. – Executive Producer/Co-Director/Writer**

Education - Ph.D., Oregon State University, Corvallis, Counselor Education, 1980.  
B.A., University of California, Berkeley, Psychology/Social Work, 1966.

Occupation - Director & Psychotherapist, Family Study Center, Sacramento, California, 1990 - present.  
Professor (Emeritus), Department of Counselor Education, California State University, Sacramento, 1988 - 2000.

\*Project Director and Producer of ***Children of the Camps***, a documentary and educational project, February 1998 - February 2000.

\*Co-writer of grant proposal, awarded \$365,000 from The California Endowment to produce the documentary and write the study guide.

\*Wrote proposal and received additional \$150,000 to disseminate documentary and conduct 115 educational workshops.

\*Academic specialization in Multicultural Education and Psychotherapy, developing curriculum and instructional materials for secondary and college level on unlearning racism, cultural diversity, multicultural families.

\*Researched and published articles in scholarly journals on the psychological and familial impact of the internment on Japanese Americans, culture and psychotherapy, and racism as a mental health issue, and self esteem of Japanese American children.

\*Former child internee, born in Tule Lake Segregation Center and raised in San Francisco Japantown after the war.

**Dr. Ina** is Professor Emeritus in the School of Education at California State University, Sacramento and founder of the Family Study Center. She was born in the Tule Lake Segregation Center during her parents' four-year imprisonment in the WW II American Concentration Camps. As a licensed psychotherapist specializing in cross-cultural counseling, she has conducted groups for Japanese Americans who, like herself, were children in the prison camps. She has been researching the long-term impact of the internment for the past fifteen years and her work culminated in the production of the ***Children of the Camps*** documentary, which was nominated for a Northern California Emmy and was broadcast nationally on PBS in from 1999 to 2003. With funding from The California Endowment, Dr. Ina utilized the Children of the Camps documentary as a community intervention program, and conducted 110 screenings in various Japanese American communities in the US and in Japan. In 2004, she served as consultant and assistant curator for an exhibit titled, **Snow Country Prison: Interned in North Dakota**, which was based on her father's wartime haiku poetry and other historical documents she has collected.

# Director's Biography

## Stephen Holsapple – Co-Director/Editor

Education - M.A., California State University, Sacramento, Painting and Filmmaking, 1972.  
B.A., California State University, Sacramento, Art, 1969.

Occupation - Independent video and film producer/director/editor, 1990-present.  
Director of Post-Production, Blaise Media, 1984 - present.

\*Director/Editor of ***Children of the Camps***, a documentary and educational project, February 1998-February 2000

\*A partial resume of projects utilizing documentary approach include:

***“Chance of a Lifetime”*** - National Bone Marrow Registry ('90), ***“Every Child Needs a Home”*** - Sacramento Children's Home ('90), Sutter Center for Women's Health - profiled two families contrasting birth experiences ('92), ***“Focus of Hope”***, the Mustard Seed School for Homeless Children ('93), ***“Portraits: The Art of Science of Nursing”*** - documents the lives of four nurses ('93), ***“Revising the Future”***- A perspective on the revision of California's Constitution ('95), California Birth Defects Program - created to promote the research of the causes of birth defects ('95), ***“Harvest of Shame”*** - a current perspective on the lives of California's migrant farm workers ('96).

## Industry Related Awards and Achievements:

\*Northern California Emmys (2), ***“Big City Gambler”***, 1986

\*Houston Film Festival Gold Award, ***“Sorghum”***, 1988

\*Telly Award, ***“Envision 18”***, 1992

\*Best Comedy Short, Chicago and Atlanta Film Festivals, ***“La Scala DeVito”***, 1992,  
Director of Photography

\*The Wilkerson Fellowship Mayoral Award - awarded by the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission for lifetime achievement on a national level in the technical arts – filmmaking/audio arts/performance arts, 2001

**Stephen Holsapple** is a Northern California Emmy-award winning filmmaker, artist and musician whose career in these related fields has spanned over 25 years. He has worked extensively in the Sacramento area since the early 80s, working independently as a director, producer, editor and actor. His award-winning credits include **Big City Gambler**, winner of 6 Northern California Regional Emmys, **Sorghum**, winner of a Houston International Film Festival Gold Award, and **La Scala di Vito** (a Leon Corcos Film), winner of best comedy short at both the Chicago and Atlanta Film Festivals. He also won a Telly Award for his montage opening of **ENVISION 18** (1993), one of the world's largest graphic conferences. Over the last ten years he has directed, filmed and/or edited numerous projects for international clients like Magnavox, Olympus, Intel.

## Other Production Personnel Biographies

### **Emery Clay III – Co-Director / Director of Photography**

Mr. Clay, Director/Director of Photography/Editor has been nominated 24 times and received 4 Northern California Emmys for projects in the United States and abroad. He has shot and produced numerous projects for *A & E*, *Discovery*, *History*, *BBC*, *PBS*, *CBS*, *NBC* and *ABC*. His documentaries include, **Children of the Camps** (PBS), **Operation Reunion** (History Channel), **AIDS- A Conspiracy of Silence**, **A Soldier Returns** (Vietnam), **Return to the War Next Door** (Central America), **Afghanistan Journal 1985** and **Subcultures Revealed**, which won a Telly, an Aurora and gold medals at the 2004 New York and Los Angeles film festivals. Most recently, Clay has dedicated a great deal of his time to helping non-profit groups to find a "video-voice." Some of these include: Sports for the World's Children, Camp Sunshine (camp for kids with HIV) and Gender Equity in Education (at risk youth training.)

### **Kim Ina - Associate Producer / Outreach Coordinator**

Ms. Ina has worked as a freelance producer/photographer/editor in the educational video industry for the past 8 years. She has been involved in the production, dissemination, and outreach of several documentary and print projects. These include the **Children of the Camps** Documentary and Educational Project (nominated for a Northern California Emmy), **Conscience and the Constitution** (for ITVS), the **Color of Fear** (Gold Apple Award, National Educational Media Network), *From Our Side of the Fence*, and *Generations: A Japanese American Community Portrait*. She has also produced several in-house training videos while working at Stir Fry Productions for Lee Mun Wah (producer of the *Color of Fear* and the *Color of Fear II*), and several music videos for the Sports for the World's Children Foundation (of which she is Founder and Executive Director), a nonprofit in San Francisco that distributes used and new sports equipment and school supplies to communities and schools with limited resources, and Upward Bound in Napa, California, a summer program for teens striving to be the first in their families to go to college.

### **Fred Meggs - Composer**

Mr. Meggs has been an independent music composer and producer since 1986. Over the last 18 years he has scored 5,000 broadcast TV commercials and 50 documentary soundtracks. He is currently composing for a number of TV shows airing on the Discovery and A & E Channels.

### **Masayuki Koga – Shakuhachi Instrumentalist and Composer**

Mr. Koga is Director of the Japanese Music Institute of America. He heads the musical group "Essence," which was selected for the 2000-2006 Touring Artists Directory by the California Arts Council.

# Crew

<b>Executive Producer/Co-Director/Writer:</b>	Satsuki Ina
<b>Co-Director/Editor:</b>	Stephen Holsapple
<b>Co-Director/Director of Photography:</b>	Emery Clay III
<b>Associate Producer:</b>	Kimberly Ina
<b>Post-Production:</b>	Bob Murray, Trapeze Ltd.
<b>Music Score/Soundtrack:</b>	Fred Meggs
<b>Shakuhachi Music Composer:</b>	Masayuki Koga

# Cast

(re-enactments/vignettes)

<b>Storyteller:</b>	Satsuki Ina
<b>Narrator:</b>	Lawson Inada
<b>Itaru Ina (voice):</b>	Lane Nishikawa
<b>Shizuko Ina (voice):</b>	Megumi
<b>Shizuko Ina (adult):</b>	Kimberly Ina
<b>Itaru Ina:</b>	Christopher Sato Wong
<b>Kiyoshi Ina:</b>	Jason Otow Chad M. Wong Bradley Yasuhara
<b>Satsuki Ina (baby):</b>	Jack Hayashi
<b>Satsuki Ina (child):</b>	Jennifer Hayashi Morgan Oto Melissa Otow
<b>Mitigation hearing officer:</b>	Martin Pierucci
<b>Kenji Kimoto:</b>	Gregory Umeda
<b>Maternal Grandmother:</b>	Mary Kawano Fong

**Shizuko Ina (child):**

Kianna Ohara

**Mitigation hearing stenographer:**

Gail Covey

**FBI interrogator:**

Carey C. Covey

**Other voice talent:**

Dutch Falconi  
Mark Herzig  
Stephen Holsapple  
Ken Kiyoshi Ina  
Martin Pierucci  
Sumitaka Saito  
David Whitaker

**Extras:**

Hoyt Fong  
Alan Koike  
Wayne Maeda  
Richard Tatsuo Nagaoka  
Stan Umeda