

TADAIMA PRESS KIT

LOGLINE

After the closure of the US Internment Camps at the end of World War II, a Japanese American family returns home and must find the strength to rebuild both their house and their family amidst the emotional and physical destruction caused by the war. TADAIMA honors the legacy of Paul Takagi, 92-year old former internee, WWII veteran, Berkeley Professor Emeritus, and the Director's grandfather. The film stars Toshi Toda, Vivian Umino, Mackenyu Maeda, and Jordyn Kanaya.

SYNOPSIS

George, Akiko, Kaori, and Kazuo return to their former house in the summer of 1945, following the end of World War II and the closure of the Japanese American Internment camps. Arriving home, they find the house ransacked by vandals and in a state of disrepair. Emotions flair and each individual member of the family react differently to the homecoming. While rebuilding their home, the family is able to recover a "takarabako" – a chest of memorable items that had to be left behind before the evacuation, bringing the family closer together. As the day draws to a close, there is a glimmer of hope that the future holds better days.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Robin Takao D'Oench is a Writer, Director, Producer from New York City. A New York University Tisch: School of the Arts and Stern: School of Business Graduate; Robin currently works in Film/TV/Commercials in the New York City and Los Angeles area. TADAIMA is Robin's first short film.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

My great-grandfather came to the United States in the 1920s. With the hope for a new life, he bought a home and a farm. By the 1930s he owned a grocery store and had started a family in Northern California. Following the attacks on Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt executed Executive Order 9066, evacuating every Japanese American from the West Coast and interning them in one of twelve relocation centers scattered across the American deserts. My great-grandfather lost his farm, his store and his home. He and his family were interned at the Manzanar Relocation Center in Owens Valley, California. My grandfather, Paul Takagi, was a teenager when he entered camp.

American schools do not cover the camps as part of an average curriculum, thus clouding a major chapter of American history. In school, my peers and I watched GLORY, ROOTS, HOTEL RWANDA, SCHINDLER'S LIST, and GHANDI as contextual examples to the moments in history that we were studying. The exams did not center on the films, but for the class it was an effective method of opening up discussions and informing a large body of people to these events.

I want to make this story because I feel as though many of the stories of minority Americans were not being represented on the screen or in our conversations. The surviving Nisei, the generation of Japanese Americans born in this country, are in their seventies and eighties, meaning the last of this generation of people is passing on. This film is meant to serve as a symbol of respect and acknowledgement to those people who came before us.

TADAIMA is a story about starting over. It's about taking that "sickly pit" in the bottom of one's stomach and turning it over. The story conveys feelings of loss, displacement, racism, emasculation, confusion and frustration; above all, however, the strongest emotion that I am aiming to capture within this film is hope. Hopefully this film can be a step in the right direction of bringing a shed of clarity to what is otherwise a very dark period of American history. I want to make a short film that plays like a single scene out of a much larger picture. "Tadaima" translates to "At last, I am home."

-Robin Takao D'Oench

