“Interned on the Campus”: Takanobu Mitsui ’43 and the Japanese Student Experience at Dartmouth During World War II

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Introduction

World War II shook and transformed Dartmouth College just as it did the United States as a whole. While the fighting took place overseas, especially in Europe and the Pacific, Americans on the homefront battled in their own ways. Students at Dartmouth were no exception—many enlisted once the naval base in Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Empire of Japan in December 1941; others trained in Hanover to be officers; all certainly felt the effects of war in one way or another. It was a challenging and uncertain time for all of Dartmouth.

Perhaps none, though, endured as much hardship in the early 1940s on Dartmouth's campus than did Takanobu Mitsui, a member of the Class of 1943 who was born in Japan. When he traveled from Japan to Hanover, New Hampshire in the summer of 1939, he left a familiar home to study at a predominantly white, secluded New England town. Dartmouth was then a college of all men; while demographic information is limited, an overwhelming majority of those men were white. Even before the war even started, his status as a racial minority from a foreign nation, with very limited written or spoken knowledge of English, placed him at a disadvantage. Another Japanese student, George Shimizu '43, offered some belonging and familiarity as his roommate, but it is safe to say that Mitsui stood out in the college's racial margins.

When war finally engulfed the United States, Mitsui's situation turned downright precarious. After all, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's internment policies would soon uproot hundreds of thousands of Mitsui's fellow Japanese and Japanese Americans on the West Coast of the United States. This possibility dangled over Mitsui. Japan was the enemy, and to many Americans—and that included many at Dartmouth—those who looked Japanese, no matter their loyalties or ideologies, were also the enemy. But internment was only the most conspicuous and discriminatory demonstration of prejudice. Racism existed in other forms, and these hit directly

at Mitsui. His loyalties were questioned, his actions were suspicious. Many Dartmouth students, on campus and in the Pacific, also joined with a great number of white Americans in looking down upon the Japanese as an inferior race. As Barabara Dent Hinman, the wife of Richard Hinman ’45, later recalled, it was as if Mitsui was “interned on the campus.”[1] This article will shed light on this history and question the attitudes and actions directed at Mitsui.

All history, though, is neither black nor white, and omitting the nuance of Mitsui’s story would do a disservice to both him and to Dartmouth. Despite the atmosphere of racial intolerance and wartime jingoistic aggression directed at Japan and its people, Mitsui was supported and protected by College officials. President Ernest Martin Hopkins played a central role in managing the affairs of Mitsui. Hopkins regularly corresponded with him, he ensured he was financially comfortable, he looked after his safety, and perhaps most especially, provided an environment that shielded him to an extent from an overly intrusive government. The evidence in the archives strongly supports the argument that Hopkins admirably navigated Mitsui’s presence on campus. One must avoid simplification here too, though. Hopkins was a complicated man, and his motivations deserve careful consideration. Did Mitsui’s family background, which included powerful and wealthy Japanese businessmen, have anything to do with his active support for Mitsui? Another aim throughout this article is to closely examine Hopkins’s actions vis-a-vis Mitsui.

Ultimately, though, Takanobu Mitsui persisted through the war as a perceived enemy on foreign soil. He continued with his academic pursuites and graduated, and many times benefitted from the support of administration and his fellow students. Dartmouth provided him a home at a

[1] Interview with Barbara Dent Hinman, November 2007. The War Years at Dartmouth: Oral History Project. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.

time when other Japanese Americans were taken from their own and put in camps, and at a time when other colleges forbade Japanese students from studying on their campuses.

Historical Background

Anti-Japanese and anti-Chinese hate predated the war and Mitsui's arrival, especially with the influx of immigration from East Asia at the end of the nineteenth century. During the Meiji period (1868-1912), Japan modernized, increased taxes, and as a result, many farmers immigrated to the West Coast of the United States.[2] In 1880, there were 148 Japanese people counted by the U.S. census; by World War I, there were 285,115.[3] With this dramatic arrival of foreigners came negative reactions from white Americans. According to historian Wendy Ng, the "Japanese were stereotyped as being part of the 'Yellow Peril' — an image in which hordes of Asians threatened to invade and conquer the United States."[4] Neither Japan's militarization in the 1930s nor the attack on Pearl Harbor invented anti-Japanese rhetoric in the United States; it was there well before.

When Pearl Harbor was bombed, various organizations as well as Heart publications on the West Coast demanded actions against the Japanese people in the United States, including demands to intern them.[5] Martin Dies, chairman of the House Un-American Activities Committee, spoke of a "fifth column" in the U.S. — the Japanese Americans — who were responsible for Pearl Harbor, and Lt. Gen. John DeWitt, commanding officer of the army's Western Defense Command, requested that the Japanese population on the West Coast be removed.[6] Finally, on February 19, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order No.

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[2] Ng, Wendy. *Japanese American Internment During World War II: A History and Reference Guide.* Greenwood Press, 2002, p. 2.
[3] *Ibid,* 3.
[4] *Ibid,* 8.
[5] Myer, Dillon S. *Uprooted Americans: The Japanese Americans and the War Relocation Authority during World War II.* University of Arizona Press, 1971, p. 15.
[6] *Ibid,* 20.

9066, which authorized the military to establish areas where the Japanese could be interned.[7] Internment was the result of racial suspicion.

During the war, as John Dower has argued, racial issues were central to the fighting, at home and abroad. "To scores of millions of participants," Dower writes, World War II "was a race war."[8] The "psychological distancing" between the races facilitated hatred and killing.[9] Most importantly, the racial schemas employed during the war reduced the Japanese to beings "devoid of individuality," to mere monolithic others who simply followed their emperor.[10] Dower's scholarship is especially relevant and important to Mitsui's story and to this article because it helps explain the national consciousness that Dartmouth was caught up in. When students were suspicious of Mitsui, it had something to do with the fact that to them, all Japanese were the same. There was no idea of the Good Japanese like there was the Good German. Mitsui was in the middle of this race war.

Mitsui's Family Background and Matriculation

Takanobu Mitsui's father, Takanaga Mitsui, was a member of the Dartmouth Class of 1915. The Mitsui family came from a wealthy background and were the namesake of the powerful Mitsui *zaibatsu.* In pre-war Japan, these business conglomerates were at the center of the industrialization that occurred throughout the Meiji period between 1868 and 1912.[11] The Mitsui *zaibatsu* traces back to 1649, when Takatoshi Mitsui founded his own financial business.[12] Mitsui's business innovations that began during the Edo period eventually became "the driving

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[7] Myer, Dillon S. *Uprooted Americans: The Japanese Americans and the War Relocation Authority during World War II.* University of Arizona Press, 1971, p. 23.
[8] Dower, John. *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*. Pantheon Books, 1986, p. 4.
[9] *Ibid,* 11.
[10] *Ibid,* 30.
[11] Kikkawa, Takeo. *History of Innovative Entrepreneurs in Japan*. 1st ed. 2023. Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore, 2023. doi:10.1007/978-981-19-9454-8, p. 20.
[12] *Ibid.*

force turning Japan into the first industrialized nation outside of Europe and the United States."[13] As key holding companies with ownership of hundreds of companies, *zaibatsu* like the Mitsui were extremely influential in Japan. Mitsui was involved in shipping, trade, and finance. Under the leadership of Takashi Masuda, the Mitsui Trading Company and Mitsui Bank were founded in 1876.[14] The Mitsui *zaibatsu* formed one of the four great business conglomerates of Japan, along with Mitsubishi, Sumitomo, and Yasuda, and as a titan of industry was one of the nation's largest producers of armaments.[15] Takanobu Mitsui's connections to this powerful Japanese family were well-known during his time at Dartmouth, and as we shall see throughout his story, proved to further arouse suspicion and criticism about his enrollment at Dartmouth. President Hopkins acknowledged this during the war when he wrote,

> It isn't going to help the prestige of the Mitsui name probably when the fact is made public within the near future that the House of Mitsui is financing the intensive drug traffic by which all of the subject populations are being corrupted in the use of opium. Nobu isn't responsible for this, but it is not a pleasant connotation in regard to the family activities.[16]

His father, Takanaga, went to Dartmouth when Japan was much friendlier to the United States. In 1915, when he graduated, the U.S. was not yet in the war, and even still, Japan was on the side of the Allies, so his family ties thus proved much less troublesome at Dartmouth. The Mitsui name certainly meant something to administrators, though. It still does, in fact: in 2011,

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[13] Kikkawa, Takeo. *History of Innovative Entrepreneurs in Japan*. 1st ed. 2023. Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore, 2023. doi:10.1007/978-981-19-9454-8, p. 88.
[14] Guth, Christine M. E. "Introduction." In *Art, Tea, and Industry: Masuda Takashi and the Mitsui Circle*, by Christine M. E. Guth. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993. Accessed March 10, 2025. https://aaeportal-com.dartmouth.idm.oclc.org/?id=-19188.
[15] *Ibid.*
[16] Hopkins to Dean Bill, August 1, 1942. Students (A-M), 1942 - 1943, Box: 7046. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts, August 1, 1942

Mitsui and Company contributed three million dollars to establish the Mitsui Endowed Professorship.[17]

Takanaga had a pretty standard college experience when compared to his son's. Much of the correspondence with him in his and President Ernest Fox Nichols's records involve his poor academic performance.[18] Most notably, however, his relationship with President Nichols foreshadowed, in a way, that between his son and Hopkins. During his stay at Dartmouth, he contracted appendicitis. President Nichols personally corresponded with him and saw that he was properly cared for and tended to.[19] Nearly three decades later, when his son would go through even more challenging times, the administration would yet again be there to support the Mitsui family.

Having enjoyed his experiences as an undergraduate, Takanaga later wrote to President Hopkins inquiring into the possibility of his sons also attending. In July 1938, the elder Mitsui expressed appreciation for his Dartmouth days and asked for an application for his sons. President Hopkins responded, writing, "I like to keep the thread of tradition alive in the succession of the sons to membership in the College from which the fathers graduated, and this, of course, is particularly true in the case of a father like yourself who dwells at some distance from the shores of America."[20] He also assured him "how gladly [they] would receive other members of the family if it should develop that your sons had the same interest in Dartmouth that

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[17] Dartmouth College News, "Mitsui & Co. Strengthens Dartmouth Partnership with New Endowed Professorship," 15 September 2011.
[18] Mitsui, Takanaga (101), 1912 - 1914, Box: 6703. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1909-1916: Ernest Fox Nichols) records, DP-10. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] Hopkins to Takanaga Mitsui, July 11, 1938. Students (Prospective), 1938 - 1939, Box: 6999. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.

you yourself had."[21] Takanobu would enroll the next year, in 1939, and his other son, Mamoru, would later join the Class of 1958.

The young Takanobu Mitsui sailed from Yokohama, a port city south of Tokyo along Tokyo Bay, to the United States on July 10, 1939 aboard the Tatsuta Maru.[22] Mitsui recalled in his memoirs how "in those days just before the war, sailings of ocean liners involved international travel were, I believe, rather spectacular occasions."[23] Passengers aboard included a variety of businessmen, scholars, athletes, diplomats, and tourists. The Tatsuta Maru set sail across the Pacific Ocean, headed for Honolulu, Hawaii. Mitsui recalls one evening when, after he finished dinner with an acquaintance of his father, businessman Mr. Matsuo, and two Americans, he went out to the deck to watch the dark sea sparkle in the moonlight:

> My thoughts, which were somehow already being taken over by feelings of separation from Japan, turned back to that old me who had left his homeland. How was this evening back in our house in Tokyo? Were they all perhaps right now talking about me? At dinnertime, what changes did they make in the order of seating? Was my study desk where I had put it? What about my bed?[24]

Even while still on the ship, Mitsui already began to feel homesick. While he had been sent with "guides" by his father, he was mostly alone on his journey to an entire new world. Despite his family's wealth and support, and with the routine of college life ahead of him, he still experienced the woes of immigration and travel typical of many. For Mitsui, he recalled, this was " a major event. Not merely was I being thrust into what we schoolboys called the 'real world,' suddenly sent away alone to a foreign country, what I had been experiencing since that morning [he set sail] could well be called an initiation."[25]

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[21] Hopkins to Takanaga Mitsui, July 11, 1938. Students (Prospective), 1938 - 1939, Box: 6999. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[22] Edward Rasmussen papers, MS-1069. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[23] *Ibid.*
[24] *Ibid.*
[25] *Ibid.*

Mitsui's freshman-year experience was a mixture of ordinary growing pains, common to all who first arrive at university, and atypical challenges, due mostly to the language barrier and cultural differences. As a newcomer, he was "driven hard" by carrying upperclassmen's luggage, moving their furniture, and beating their rugs.[26] He wore his green freshman cap. He was hazed like a typical Dartmouth student: they rounded the freshman up, formed them into lines, and forced them to do stunts "like circus animals," then given cold showers and forced to run half-naked though Hanover.[27] The start of classes provided Mitsui some relief from these tantalizing rituals. The hazing, though, gave Mitsui a shared experience with his fellow classmates; he was not targeted for his differences, but rather endured the challenges like everyone else. A story related by Mitsui captures the surprising camaraderie of the hazing. An upperclassman told him to help him move something, but because of his limited knowledge of English, he did not properly understand the request. After, though, he recalled,

> I owe a debt of gratitude to this upperclassman's 'Hey, you!' because while working all morning carrying in his luggage, moving his furniture and beating his rugs, he came to realize I didn't know English very well and his attitude greatly changed. Toward the end, he began to ask about things like when and where I came from, and to offer two or three suggestions about things to watch out for at College.[28]

Other students like John K. Jouett '43, Philip Brooks '43, and Robert Ehinger '43, just to name a few, recalled similar experiences to Mitsui's; they too wore their beanies and carried furniture.[29] In listening to the interviews from *The War Years at Dartmouth* oral history project, one gets the sense that Mitsui shared similar experiences with the other Dartmouth '43s.

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[26] Edward Rasmussen papers, MS-1069. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[27] *Ibid.*
[28] *Ibid.*
[29] Interview with John Jouett, September 2008. The War Years at Dartmouth: Oral History Project. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts; Interview with Philip Brooks, September 2008. The War Years at Dartmouth: Oral History Project. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts; Interview with Robert Ehinger, September 2008. The War Years at Dartmouth: Oral History Project. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.

Later on, as was typical of Dartmouth men, Mitsui also joined a fraternity. He recalled in his memoirs:

> With the opening of the academic year in September, upperclass members of fraternities started looking for outstanding members of the new sophomore class to invite to join their fraternity . . . For about a week, the new pledge is requited [sic], upon meeting an upperclassman of the fraternity he is joining, without fail to greet him with a prescribed salutation and be prepared at any time to supply him on demand with cigarettes, matches, chewing gum and other things of that sort . . . But at last we were finally accepted as brothers."[30]

Mitsui did not indicate which fraternity he joined, but it is clear that he was not prevented from joining a fraternity because of his race. This is especially telling because Mitsui attended Dartmouth years before President John Sloan Dickey's efforts to integrate the fraternities and prevent discrimination in the 1950s.[31] Ultimately, Mitsui felt welcome at Dartmouth:

> When we had first arrived on campus, the upperclassmen had driven us hard. Then again, as initiates entering a fraternity, they had given us a difficult time, but the result of what is called initiation had to a surprising extent lead [sic] increasingly to moments of closeness toward our classmates and to our upper classmates as well. Then as real brothers, or even better, as a fellowship of comrades, we studied together, we played together, and we helped each other deal with problems. It was because of this that by the time of my junior year, I came to the realization that . . . this way of living leads to a deepening of mutual understanding among men, that cooperation promotes well-being, uplifts the spirit and other benefit [sic] more than one can say.[32]

The language barrier proved to be a challenge for Mitsui at first. For the first four months of his first semester, Mitsui was placed into a special English class to learn the language. According to Mitsui, he learned English by reading five or six volumes of classic literature and weekly sections of *The New York Times.* While reading them, he would submit three 1,000-word themes each week.[33] Mitsui recalled, "Handicapped as I was by limited understanding of the

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[30] Edward Rasmussen papers, MS-1069. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[31] Hopkins, Joseph Martin. "Segregated Fraternities in Our Colleges." *The Christian Scholar* 41, no. 2 (1958): 109–13. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41177068, p. 110.
[32] Edward Rasmussen papers, MS-1069. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[33] *Ibid.*

language, it is no exaggeration to say this left me no time off. I was chained to my desk even on weekends."[34] Mitsui came to appreciate the American education system. He wrote that he had a "good deal of admiration for the study habits of American students. In particular, they seem to have been conditioned from an early age to approach study not as if programmed to do it, but to do it spontaneously, voluntarily."[35] He quickly became accustomed to Dartmouth despite the initial challenges.

In addition to enjoying his studies, joining a fraternity, and feeling welcomed by the community, he also wrote about the fun he had. One time he bought a "wreck of a car" which he drove around "with an air of triumph."[36] It is safe to say that, before the war, Mitsui enjoyed his college days, ostensibly free from the brewing storm that was engulfing the world. Pearl Harbor would change all of that, of course. He wrote, "I having known peacetime college life felt sorry for the younger men who lost that opportunity. War had plainly robbed them of that most happy experience."[37]

Pearl Harbor: Reactions and Impact

The bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 shocked the United States, and Dartmouth was not immune to this surprise. Still, as Mitsui recalls, "I should have seen it coming."[38] Leading up to the Japanese attack on Hawaii, reports in *The Dartmouth* portended worsening relations between Japan and the U.S. As early as 1940, sparse references to the situation in Japan made their way into the pages of *The D.* In October of 1940, Admiral Henry E. Yarnell came to Dartmouth to give a talk. Yarnell, a naval commander in the Pacific, had warned of the need to properly prepare for escalation with Japan for years before Pearl Harbor was

[34] Edward Rasmussen papers, MS-1069. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[35] *Ibid.*
[36] *Ibid.*
[37] *Ibid.*
[38] *Ibid.*

bombed.[39] *The D*'s October 3 article, titled, "Admiral Yarnell Favors A Stand Against the Japanese," reported that Yarnell "stated before a large audience in Webster Hall last night that the 'conflict between two ways of life, the democratic and the militaristic,' is clearly shown in the clashing of American and Japanese interests in the Far East and that it would be better for us to 'take a stand' there now than take it, as we would have to, in his opinion, at a later date."[40] Already the potential conflict was framed as a contest not between mere nations but between democratic and militaristic civilizations.

News of Japan thinned out in *The D* for about a year, but things picked up again a year later, when Admiral Yarnell's warnings seemed to carry some weight. On October 29, 1941, a headline read, "Naval Officer Predicts Pacific Crisis to be as Acute as That in Atlantic."[41] In late November, articles read "Tojo Blames ABCD Powers" and "Roosevelt Speaks to Nipponese Minister."[42] Articles about Japan were by this time a daily occurrence; war was knocking at the Dartmouth community's door. Mitsui mentioned how, during this time, he "had become super-sensitive to hearing words like 'Jap' or 'Japan,' and whenever [he] spread out a newspaper, almost wherever [he] looked, those words would strike [his] eye."[43] These articles were written by the Associated Press and printed on the front page of *The D.* On December 5, just two days before the attack, a headline read, "Japanese Crisis Looms."[44] One sure did.

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[39] Blazich, Frank A. "NEPTUNE'S ORACLE Admiral Harry E. Yarnell's Wartime Planning, 1918-20 and 1943-44." *Naval War College Review* 73, no. 1 (2020): 121.
[40] "Admiral Yarnell Favors A Stands Against the Japanese," October 3, 1940. *The Dartmouth*, 1940-1941. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[41] "Naval Officer Predicts Pacific Crisis to be as Acute as That in Atlantic," October 29, 1941. *The Dartmouth*, 1941-1942. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[42] "Tojo Blames ABCD Powers," November 17, 1941. *The Dartmouth*, 1941-1942. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts; "Roosevelt Speaks to Nipponese Minister," November 18, 1941. *The Dartmouth*, 1941-1942. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[43] Edward Rasmussen papers, MS-1069. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[44] "Japanese Crisis Looms," December 5, 1941. *The Dartmouth*, 1941-1942. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.

Pearl Harbor was bombed on a Sunday. Many students recall studying in Baker Library that afternoon. Mitsui was in his dorm in Middle Mass, struggling to retain his reading assignments after an unproductive Saturday, when he heard shouting from down the hall: "They're saying Japanese forces are bombing Hawaii!"[45] At first, despite the warnings, he did not believe it. "Maybe it's another Orson Welles," he thought, referring to the infamous broadcast in 1938 of H.G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds,* which caused panic as people thought an actual Martian invasion was taking place. Mitsui soon realized it was not some dramatic narration but rather the news of actual events.

Despite the shock, Mitsui went to the Nugget Theater to see a film, as was his custom. When the movie was over and Mitsui and his friends left, they found themselves surrounded by five or six men, whom they "not unreasonably took" to be students.[46] They were actually reporters who wanted an interview with Mitsui. As unsure as everyone else, he could not provide them with many answers.

When back at his dorm in Middle Mass, Mitsui "looked over to where my room was, and saw that in my absence a crowd had gathered outside of it. Most of the time I had been there, where I lived had been something of an attraction, but this was different."[47] As a Japanese student, he aroused quite a bit of interest from the student body. *The D* reported on the front page on December 8, "Mitsui '43 Plans to Finish Education Here," writing,

> Takanobu Mitsui '43, a member of one of the nine leading Japanese families, stated last night that he was going to remain in Hanover and finish his education. Upon the advice of one of his close friends, a Dartmouth man and a classmate of his father, he cabled his father "that he was in no personal danger." He has already had one conference with Dean Neidlinger and will meet President Hopkins next week. In the interview 'Nobu,' as he has

[45] Edward Rasmussen papers, MS-1069. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[46] *Ibid.*
[47] *Ibid.*

> been nicknamed, said that he "would stay with a friend over the vacation, finish his college work, and possibly do post graduate work in this country."[48]

At first, "being classified as an enemy at first left [Mitsui] feeling forlorn and helpless, but the goodwill expressed by school authorities, the student government body and our close friends was supportive and warmly welcome."[49] In fact, the student government even voted to ensure his personal safety.[50] One student, Andrew M. Wood '42 wrote to his parents:

> Some of the boys there were worrying about what was going to become of Takanobu Mitsui, student from Japan, scion of one of the nine foremost families of the place, or something of the kind–-you may have read about him in the Herald–and saying we must try to help him out. I told them I didn't think the Dartmouth Christian Union could go to him and tell him they're sorry about the terrible situation he's in or anything like that, but I do agree that something should be done if anything pops up that smells of persecution–especially since the guy is about five feet tall.[51]

Letters and other records indicate that much of the student body supported or felt sympathy for Mitsui immediately after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. In fact, Mitsui later recalled, "Besides the reporters, there were my friends who never expressed hostile feelings to me, but who, as much as they could, tried to say what was helpful and supportive."[52]

Still, some students recall negative reactions against his presence on campus. John Jouett, who lived next to Mitsui in Middle Mass, recalled in an interview how "I think we went and beat him up."[53] Jouett and another '43, Robert Field, mentioned a letter to the editor that Mitsui had written concerning the negative reaction of the townspeople against him.[54] Jouett noted how he

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[48] "Mitsui '43 Plans to Finish Education Here," December 8, 1941. *The Dartmouth*, 1941-1942. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[49] Edward Rasmussen papers, MS-1069. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[50] *Ibid.*
[51] Andrew Wood to parents, December 10, 1941. Correspondence, 1939 - 1942, 1. Andrew M. Wood letters, MS-1102. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[52] Edward Rasmussen papers, MS-1069. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[53] Interview with John Jouett, September 2008. The War Years at Dartmouth: Oral History Project. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[54] Interview with Robert Field, March 2008. The War Years at Dartmouth: Oral History Project. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.

"was probably one of them" whom Mitsui was writing about.[55] Without record of that letter it is unclear what specific grievance Mitsui had about those people, but it is certain that a group of people objected to him being in Hanover as a person from Japan.

Ultimately, Pearl Harbor changed Dartmouth rapidly. Many students immediately enlisted in the war. Naval trainees would soon arrive in Hanover. The curriculum would change. America was at war, and so was Dartmouth—and Mitsui was at the center of it all.

President Ernest M. Hopkins and Financial Support

After Pearl Harbor, President Ernest Martin Hopkins routinely corresponded with Mitsui. Over the next few years, Hopkins acted as a guardian of Mitsui and looked after his interests. The administration provided him with support, helped him with immigration officials, ensured his safety on campus, and provided funds when he was unable to access his own. Hopkins's immediate offer of assistance likely had something to do with the college's prior relationship with Mitsui's father. As an alumnus and decades-long president, as well as an unconventional college leader with business experience, President Hopkins most definitely felt the need to keep his wealthy alumni pleased. Caring for the youngest of the Mitsui dynasty was a priority; the subsequent relationship between Hopkins and Mitsui makes that clear.

Hopkins was concerned about Mitsui as relations with Japan soured in early December 1941. Charles Griffith, a member of the Class of 1915, frequently corresponded with Hopkins about Mitsui and provided him with assistance. Hopkins wrote to Griffith stating that Mitsui's grades, under normal circumstances, would have required them to force him to leave Dartmouth, but the "chaotic conditions at [Mitsui's] home" obligated Dartmouth to keep him there.[56]

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[55] Interview with John Jouett, September 2008. The War Years at Dartmouth: Oral History Project. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.

[56] Hopkins to Charles Griffith. Students (Undergraduates) (A-M), 1941 - 1942, Box: 7036. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.

Hopkins also thanked Griffith for sponsoring Mitsui as a foreign student.[57] The continuation of Mitsui's studies remained a concern: on December 2, Griffith wrote Hopkins asking him to urge Takanaga Mitsui to let his son stay at Dartmouth.[58] The last correspondence before Pearl Harbor expressed further worry about the global situation. Albert Dickerson of Hopkins's office wrote to Griffith:

> Mr. Hopkins was hoping to have some chance perhaps while passing through Washington to get a line through the State Department on the wisest course for Takanobu. He was a little concerned lest our encouragement of the boy to remain in college might conceivably result in his being interned if war should break out. Mr. Hopkins expresses his own willingness to go the limit personally if any device of guardianship could protect Takanobu against such a situation.[59]

There seemed to be a debate about whether or not Mitsui's continued presence at Dartmouth was good for him or not. Initially keeping him was a favor; just before Pearl Harbor, Hopkins wondered whether he had put the boy at risk by advocating to keep him in the United States.

On December 15, Dickerson wrote again to Griffith to report on Mitsui's status. He "looked well" and "appeared to be under no particular nervous strain."[60] Hopkins made sure that Mitsui knew to "feel free to come in with any problem that may arise."[61] At President Hopkins's request, members of Palaeopitus, a senior society that then acted as the main body of student governance, were tasked with protecting Mitsui.[62] Hopkins was responsive to the possible threat

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[57] Hopkins to Charles Griffith. Students (Undergraduates) (A-M), 1941 - 1942, Box: 7036. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[58] Griffith to Hopkins, December 2, 1941. Students (Undergraduates) (A-M), 1941 - 1942, Box: 7036. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[59] Dickerson to Griffith, December 4, 1941. Students (Undergraduates) (A-M), 1941 - 1942, Box: 7036. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[60] Dickerson to Griffith, December 15, 1941. Students (Undergraduates) (A-M), 1941 - 1942, Box: 7036. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[61] *Ibid.*
[62] *Ibid.*

against Mitsui after Pearl Harbor, and arranged to create a safe environment for him. Accordingly, no serious episodes transpired that put him physically at risk on campus.

At the turn of the year, Mitsui's financial situation became a consideration. Mitsui had been receiving funds from a cousin, Sadakazu Takaki, in the amount of ten thousand dollars. It was deposited with the Bankers Trust Company but, after the state of war between Japan and the United States, and what was presumed to be Takaki's sympathy with the enemy cause, the account was frozen.[63] Charles Griffith responded to a letter from Mitsui, who was worried about how to pay for the costs of living while in the U.S. Griffith wrote to Mitsui on January 9, 1942:

> You have asked about the best way to handle your finances until your own funds can be unfrozen. It is my suggestion that, under any circumstances, you should first report to the administration. Mr. Dickerson, I am sure, will be glad to talk to you about the college bills. I also believe that there are funds available for any student who needs financial assistance of somewhat temporary character. You should discuss this with him.[64]

Griffith also personally sent a check to Mitsui to take care of any immediate financial woes.[65] Ultimately, Dickerson and Hopkins did in fact make funds available to Mitsui. January 21, 1942 bursar records include a letter in which Hopkins requested "such funds as may be necessary from time to time to Takanobu Mitsui until we can determine on what basis to treat his membership during the duration of the present emergency of war between the United States and Japan."[66] Those funds were allocated by the trustees for Hopkins to make at his discretion for special purposes. Mitsui's circumstances qualified.

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[63] Hopkins to Dean Neidlinger, September 16, 1942. Students (A-M), 1942 - 1943, Box: 7046. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[64] Griffith to Mitsui, January 9, 1942. Students (Undergraduates) (A-M), 1941 - 1942, Box: 7036. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts
[65] *Ibid.*
[66] Hopkins to Norton, January 21, 1942. Administration: Bursar, 1941 - 1942, Box: 7025. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.

Hopkins opened the matter again when he wrote to the U.S. treasury department in September. He wrote to John L. Sullivan, the assistant secretary of the treasury and a Dartmouth alumnus, asking "whether it is entirely proper for the College to file an application for the assignment of funds from this account to pay Nobu Mitsui's expenses."[67] Hopkins explained that, should that not be possible, he would still continue to pay Mitsui:

> Rather than to make any application about which there would be the slightest question, I should prefer to continue to do what we are now doing and make College advances to Nobu in the form of loans, accepting the gamble that the Mitsui family might have something in the way of assets after the war, in which case I should expect no difficulty in getting the College reimbursed. This boy, however, is somewhat sensitive in regard to the matter and its being handled that way and feels very definitely that if his own status were understood, there would be no difficulty in his drawing upon these funds which have been deposited for his use.[68]

Hopkins spoke with Sullivan about the matter a few days later. Sullivan was not so sure that the College should make an application to access Mitsui's account, but insisted that Mitsui do so with the endorsement of the College. Sullivan "seemed to have definite reservations about the College making the application directly, not that this would be an effective way of bringing the matter to a head but whether the College ought to place itself in this position or not."[69] Sullivan's reservations about the College directly making an application persuaded Hopkins to continue using Dartmouth's special funds. Hopkins did so, though,

> with the hopes of collecting it later from the family. Incidentally, I understand that the Mitsui family's prospects of having anything of their own after the war are largely contingent upon Japan's being defeated, in which case the old industrial regime would probably be given the task of rehabilitating the country and incidentally would be allowed to preserve itself, whereas the whole Japanese economic program assumes, as in Germany, the expropriation of the assets of private individuals and private concerns.

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[67] Hopkins to Sullivan, September 16, 1942. Students (A-M), 1942 - 1943, Box: 7046. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[68] *Ibid.*
[69] Hopkins to Dean Neidlinger, September 22, 1942. Students (A-M), 1942 - 1943, Box: 7046. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.

> Perhaps by advancing this money to Nobu, he would be given an additional incentive to strive for a Japanese defeat.[70]

Providing Mitsui with funds was not absolute charity. Hopkins expected the wealthy Mitsui family to pay the College back for their help, and considering just how wealthy they were, Hopkins probably did not worry much about reimbursement later on. It was not complete benevolence on Dartmouth's part of course, but one cannot fault Hopkins, either, for expecting to be paid back. It was not his own money he was giving away, and he was dealing with Mitsui and Co., not a disadvantaged, low-income student. Either way, it is clear that Hopkins cared about the welfare of Mitsui. At one point, Hopkins even wrote to Dean E. Gordon Bill saying, "I divide my time equally nowadays between the affairs of Takanobu Mitsui and those of the rest of the Dartmouth constituency."[71] That is a telling statement, especially considering how tall an order it was to lead Dartmouth during a world war.

Naval Training and Japanese Students

Soon after Pearl Harbor was bombed, a naval training school was established by the federal government on Dartmouth's campus. President Hopkins essentially jointly ran the school with the U.S. Navy. This is especially important to Mitsui's story because it completely altered the campus environment. One day, it was a peaceful, quiet campus; the next, sailors came to learn how to be officers, and it became directly involved in one of history's bloodiest wars. To many on campus, Mitsui was an enemy on American soil. This did not provide the most tolerant or welcoming environment for Mitsui.

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[70] Hopkins to Dean Neidlinger, September 22, 1942. Students (A-M), 1942 - 1943, Box: 7046. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.

[71] Hopkins to Dean Bill, December 10, 1943. Students: Takanobu Mitsui, 1943 - 1944, Box: 7057. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.

In June 1942, Hopkins's consideration of welcoming further Japanese students at Dartmouth highlighted the problem with having international, "enemy" students on the same campus as naval officers to be. Robbins W. Barstow, the director of the National Japanese American Student Relocation Council, wrote to Hopkins about the possibility of Dartmouth accepting Japanese and Japanese American students who had been displaced by President Roosevelt's internment policies. In attempting to convince Hopkins, Barstow wrote,

> These Nisei have considered themselves to be loyal American citizens, but they have recognized the exigencies of a war situation and accepted the dislocation of their plans in a most commendable spirit of patience and good will. We certainly owe it to them and owe it to ourselves by way of validation of our democratic professions, to provide a maximum of freedom and opportunity along the lines of our best American traditions.[72]

Hopkins, while not personally opposed to having more Japanese students on campus, had some doubts about the possibility. After talking to students and faculty, he concluded that "there was a very definite feeling on the part of a majority of the group that peculiar circumstances made it extremely difficult for us to give any assent to the principle in action."[73] First, Hopkins argued that Dartmouth's strategic location on the East Coast made it not necessarily better than the situation on the West Coast. Second, he wrote that

> Furthermore, we have two Japanese students at the present time, including the scion of the great house of Mitsui and because of his name and the knowledge in regard to the family's prestige, a disproportionate amount of question and criticism has been aroused by our continuing to protect his status here.[74]

Third, Hopkins wrote that "on the 15th of July a Naval unit of a thousand men is to be established here, and some of the men at least who have to do with setting this up have

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[72] Barstow to Hopkins, June 17, 1942. Students (Japanese), 1941 - 1942, Box: 7036. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[73] Hopkins to Barstow, June 23, 1942. Students (Japanese), 1941 - 1942, Box: 7036. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[74] *Ibid.*

reservations about the two Japanese students already here."[75] Dean Bill expressed that the only people at Dartmouth who would be opposed to more Japanese students on campus would be the alumni, which could be taken care of by an article in the Alumni Magazine.[76] Hopkins responded that the Navy was already reluctant about taking on more Japanese students at Dartmouth because they "were in favor of eliminating all hazards by giving consideration to none" of the Japanese.[77]

Ultimately what prevented further Japanese students from coming to campus was the presence of a naval training site. If it would have been a bad idea to welcome further Japanese students, it must not have been the best environment for the ones already there. In fact, a year later, Hopkins noted how "The Commanding Officer here tells me that are having an occasional difficulty in curbing the antagonism of one or another of the trainees in the Marine Corps or in the Naval Unit, though the Commanding Officer himself is entirely friendly with Nobu."[78] Having those on campus who were trained to kill Japanese soldiers compounded the problem and made matters even worse for Mitsui.

Media and Opinion at Dartmouth

The media milieu at the time offers insight into the racist, xenophobic, and jingoistic views directed at the Japanese by Dartmouth students. This was true throughout the United States, as John Dower's scholarship indicates.[79] The existence of these remarks in *The*

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[75] Hopkins to Barstow, June 23, 1942. Students (Japanese), 1941 - 1942, Box: 7036. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[76] Dean Bill to Hopkins, June 24, 1942. Students (Japanese), 1941 - 1942, Box: 7036. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[77] Hopkins to Dean Bill, July 2, 1942. Students (Japanese), 1941 - 1942, Box: 7036. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[78] Hopkins to Griffith, October 4, 1943. Students: Takanobu Mitsui, 1943 - 1944, Box: 7057. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[79] Dower, John. *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*. Pantheon Books, 1986.

Dartmouth or in correspondence between servicemen and those on campus indicate the sort of environment Mitsui was up against. Not all students were supportive of him.

One thing to keep in mind is that, as simple as it sounds, *The D*'s coverage of the war in the Pacific constantly reminded Mitsui of the conflict between his neighbors back in Japan and between the ideals of the country in which he was studying. Every day, headlines like "U.S. Fleet Blasts Japs" or "Jap Convoy is Mutilated" bombarded Mitsui with the reminder of death and destruction against his homeland.[80] While he supported the U.S. war effort and its democratic way of life, he still had family in Japan and cared for his people. After all, Mitsui recalled how reading these headlines made him "super-sensitive."[81] Other headlines also reminded him of the threat of prosecution or internment. On January 29, 1942, an article in *The D* reported that a "Jury Indicts Six As Jap Agents."[82] Mitsui had to focus on class while reading these headlines.

One overtly racist piece made its way into *The D* shortly after Pearl Harbor. As part of a column with the subsection titled "A Monkey Shaved," an author joked, "The Japanese are conducting this war under the Geneva Protocol of 1925 which prohibits the cruder methods of warfare such as dropping germs or bacteria on the opposition. Presumably this means that Nippon will abandon use of parachute troops."[83] The racist comparison of Japanese people to bacteria is in line with Dower's scholarship on the widely-promulgated belief in a subhuman Japanese race. It is evident that Dartmouth's campus was not sheltered from these ideas.

Mitsui himself engaged with the media; the response to his writing indicates just how he was received on campus. On July 28, 1942, *The D* published an editorial titled, "Looking Down

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[80] "U.S. Fleet Blasts Japs," November 17, 1942. *The Dartmouth*, 1942-1943. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts; "Jap Convoy is Mutilated," March 4, 1943. *The Dartmouth*, 1942-1943. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[81] Edward Rasmussen papers, MS-1069. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[82] "Jury Indicts Six As Jap Agents," January 29, 1942. *The Dartmouth*, 1942-1943. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[83] "A Monkey Shaved," December 11, 1941. *The Dartmouth*, 1941-1942. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.

a Barrel."[84] In it, they argued against overzealous post-war planning that could get in the way of the then-present fighting. When post-war thinking "subtracts man hours from fighting the war, when it breaks down people's unity, when it is used as an escape from our losing position, it endangers our success."[85] Mitsui, who was involved with an organization dedicated to post-war problems, disagreed. In a July 30 op-ed titled, "Mitsui, Criticizing Editorial, Insists U.S. Needs Free Discussion to Know 'What You Are Fighting For," he wrote that "I am, however, still inclined to feel that there are a lot of people who are not fighting at all."[86] To him, post-war thinking was essential to the fighting, because it gave meaning to it all. America was fighting for democracy, and for the war to be at all successful, they needed to prepare for what that would look like for the world and Japan once the fighting stopped. Mitsui also wrote,

> I am afraid I have misunderstood Americans. It is not better than Japan or Germany. I wish I had gone back and fought for my own country rather than 'wasting' time and energy around here. If this were the American spirit, and you did not have to know what you are fighting for, this was is nothing more than the old truth, 'It takes two sides to make a fight.[87]

Saying he felt like fighting for Japan was understandably controversial. For his part, President Hopkins mentioned how he "would very much rather that Mitsui write his letters to [Dean Bill] than to *The Dartmouth*."[88] He did not want Mitsui getting into trouble for writing unwanted letters to *The D.* In his memoirs, Mitsui recalled how "the next day the response was attacks by the narrow-minded opposed to the least suggestion of what they called meddling by an enemy

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[84] "Looking Down a Barrel," July 28, 1942. *The Dartmouth*, 1941-1942. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[85] *Ibid.*
[86] "Mitsui, Criticizing Editorial, Insists U.S. Needs Free Discussion to Know 'What You Are Fighting For," July 30, 1942. *The Dartmouth*, 1941-1942. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[87] *Ibid.*
[88] Hopkins to Dean Bill, August 1, 1942. Students (A-M), 1942 - 1943, Box: 7046. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.

foreigner in American affairs."[89] He certainly was not as free to contribute to political discussions as much as his fellow classmates; this was because of his race and nationality.

The most racist and troubling remarks came not from *The D*, but straight from the Pacific. Students who had graduated or left early to enlist often wrote home or to administrators. These letters were collected to record perspectives of Dartmouth students in the war. Because they were directly involved in the fighting, they often had the worst things to say about their enemies. One can hardly claim that these ideas did not spread to other students — many of whom were officers in training as it was — while Mitsui was on campus, either.

Calvert Sheriff Bowie, member of the Class of 1940, wrote in April 1943 from the Pacific theater:

> I heard a U.S. news commentator in the States tonight say we should hate, (speaking of Doolittle's boys who were executed) because of that Jap atrocity. Of course, that was an official action, not one of individuals, but still, if you can't find more reasons than that (even just for atrocities) to hate them, you just haven't got the word. Of course, we (i.e. U.S. soldiers and marines) can't be white-washed as far as that goes - no quarter is ever given, asked or not - but they (Japs) are simply diabolically cruel and bestial.[90]

Sheriff Bowie went on to explain how U.S. defeat in the war would be disastrous to Americans because of the "horror and annihilation" it would bring.[91] To him, this was not a war between honorable opponents, but one between righteousness and viciousness. The Japanese were framed as beasts. These "bestial" people also lacked human logic: Russell Hartranft Jr. '42 wrote of the "fanatical, inhuman attempts of the enemy to repel us. There is no formula for the Japs, never are their actions explainable on a rational basis."[92] To some Dartmouth men, the Japanese's atrocities were so cruel that they could not be explained by conventional logics of war.

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[89] Edward Rasmussen papers, MS-1069. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[90] Sheriff Bowie to parents, April 22, 1943. Box 3, circa 1941-1945, Box: 3. Dartmouth World War II narratives, MS-460. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[91] *Ibid.*
[92] Hartranft Jr. to parents, March 7, 1945. Box 4, circa 1941-1946, Box: 4. Dartmouth World War II narratives, MS-460. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.

Anthony Brackett, member of the Class of 1946, wrote home in March 1943 describing the spirit of the American troops:

> Keep the morale up, because you needn't give it a second thought here, I've never seen such a spirit as there is here. While they're at work, everyone is putting his very best at whatever task there is. It all goes to make up the machine. It doesn't take a very big part to stop a machine but this one is in perfect condition. No worry of break-down here. Give them a chance and they'd murder every damn Jap and Nazi alive, with gusto.

There was certainly an aggressive, jingoistic desire to kill the Japanese. After Pearl Harbor, a *Dartmouth* headline read, "Boston Men Jam Recruiting Offices; Eager to Fight Japs."[93] Killing them was their patriotic duty. In some ways it was a game, too, almost like hunting animals. Hudson Bridge, member of the Class of 1940, wrote in February 1944 that he studied his map "for a short period and ran over a few Jap phrases that might be of value to trick the little so and so into the open."[94]

Perhaps the most racist example in the World War II perspective archives attempted to order white Americans, the Japanese, and other Pacific Islanders within a racial hierarchy. Charles Camp '42 wrote in November 1944 that

> The natives ran around like monkies, were filthy, and for the most part suffered from a fungus disease, quite unpleasant to see…The younger women, tho I cannot imagine them being attractive even to a Jap, were appropriated for the satisfaction of a desire the Japs appear to have an overabundance of…It was later explained to me by an Army Officer stationed in this area that the Japs had taken great delight in stripping the women and taking all varieties of candid photos.[95]

Camp portrayed the islanders as "monkies," but suggested that the Japanese were cruel to take advantage of them. In this schema, of course, his fellow white soldiers were benevolent above

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[93] Brackett to parents, March 7, 1943. Box 3, circa 1941-1945, Box: 3. Dartmouth World War II narratives, MS-460. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[94] Bridge to parents, February 26, 1944. Box 3, circa 1941-1945, Box: 3. Dartmouth World War II narratives, MS-460. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[95] Camp to Albert Dickerson, November 14, 1944. Box 3, circa 1941-1945, Box: 3. Dartmouth World War II narratives, MS-460. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.

all. Even the tone of his language implies a system of belief that reduced the humanity of the Japanese people.

The point in bringing out these racist beliefs is not to suggest that every, or even most, Dartmouth student on campus held these views. There is hardly any evidence to suggest that. By Mitsui's own accounts, his fellow students treated him well. But enough of it exists to suggest that Mitsui studied on a campus where such hate was present and at the very least spread by some students.

Discrimination in the Dartmouth Broadcasting System

Mitsui was perhaps most overtly discriminated against when he was excluded from participation in the Dartmouth Broadcasting System (DBS). On July 3, 1942, a member of the Hanover community whose connections to Dartmouth are otherwise unknown (perhaps he was involved in DBS), John H. Shaw, wrote to Hopkins with concern about Mitsui's involvement in the organization. Because they did not want to "arouse question in regard to his activities," he thought it "highly desirable that his name shouldn't be identified in any way with the DBS."[96] He added:

> The two points at which question arises most quickly and most urgently in regard to any of the enemy aliens in this country is in regard to association with radio broadcasts in any way and concerning the possession and use of photographic apparatus. While none of us who know Nobu would be inclined to have any question about the matter, the coming of a Naval unit to Hanover would almost inevitably cause doubt and criticism and in all probability protest if Nobu was associated with the DBS in any way.[97]

President Hopkins evidently agreed. He sent a letter to Mitsui through Shaw, and Mitsui wrote back to Hopkins that he would officially withdraw from the organization.[98] He explained that he

[96] Shaw to Hopkins, July 3, 1942. Students (A-M), 1942 - 1943, Box: 7046. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[97] *Ibid.*
[98] Mitsui to Hopkins, July 6, 1942. Students (A-M), 1942 - 1943, Box: 7046. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.

was, as a physics major, interested in the organization as a hobby, and had taken a class about it with Professor Willis Rayton. He also enjoyed the practical experience of installing a transmitter.[99] Because of this, he still desired to work with DBS in an unofficial capacity. Hopkins did not think that was a great idea, writing, "It is decidedly best, however, in these times to avoid anything which would be open to misunderstanding and misconception."[100]

Throughout the ordeal, Mitsui was extremely apologetic and was worried that he had done something wrong (of course he did not, and Hopkins told him as much). He wrote, "I have done anything too much, I hope you understand that I did not mean to trouble anyone in any way whatever."[101] He added that he was grateful to Hopkins and to the Dartmouth community for trusting him, and that he had been conscious of the fact that he had been taking a heavy risk.[102] His exclusion from DBS captures the concrete effects that suspicions of Mitsui's race had on his time at Dartmouth. In reading his letters, it is clear that he was an authentically curious student who wanted to learn more. What mattered more, though, were the outside perceptions of his activities in radio. Had the war not happened, Mistui most likely would have been allowed to participate in the organization. This goes to show how war worsened his undergraduate experience, and how that was directly tied to his race and nationality.

Repatriation and the Threat of Internment

January 1943 brought further tribulations for Mitsui. He had been requested by immigration authorities to have a meeting in New York. Mitsui travelled down to meet Griffith and a few others for this meeting. There, he would be asked whether or not he wanted to be

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[99] Mitsui to Hopkins, July 6, 1942. Students (A-M), 1942 - 1943, Box: 7046. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[100] Hopkins to Mitsui July 10, 1942. Students (A-M), 1942 - 1943, Box: 7046. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[101] Mitsui to Hopkins, July 6, 1942. Students (A-M), 1942 - 1943, Box: 7046. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[102] *Ibid.*

repatriated to Japan.[103] The Japanese government made a list of those in the United States whom they wanted back in the country, and Mitsui had been put on the list. Mitsui was inclined to decide the same way as [he had] done several times before."[104]

Although he desired to stay in the U.S. and at Dartmouth, it was still a difficult decision for him to make. As Mitsui explained to President Hopkins in a January 11 letter,

> I have, hitherto, been trying to be quiet and vague about my position in order to avoid any harm in both Japan and the United States. I mean, if I said that I stand for Japan's cause, both the people and the government of the United States would not like it and if I said I stand for what the United States stand [sic] for, the Japanese government and possibly the people would not like it.[105]

He was torn between two nations, and he did not want to alienate himself from either. By being asked whether he wanted to be repatriated, he was in effect deciding which country would view him as an enemy and a threat. He wanted to study in the United States, but he naturally did not want to abandon his home country, either, or his family there.

Mitsui also made it clear that he supported the American war effort, and that his indecision about repatriation did not indicate anything about his views of the war. "I stand definitely for democracy," he wrote.[106] He added that he was betting on an Allied victory, and that "If it is an offence to my family, it is just too bad, but as far as I am concerned, it cannot be helped."[107] Further complicating his decision was his belief that he might offend and burden Dartmouth by wishing to stay. Mitsui was certain that it was his father who had had him added to the repatriation list by the Japanese government. He asked President Hopkins, "would you let me stay here even against my father's will?"[108] Mitsui was worried that he was only being kept at

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[103] Mitsui to Hopkins, January 11, 1943. Students (A-M), 1942 - 1943, Box: 7046. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[104] *Ibid.*
[105] *Ibid.*
[106] *Ibid.*
[107] *Ibid.*
[108] *Ibid.*

Dartmouth as a favor to his father, and thus without his father's approval the College no longer wanted him there. There is no indication that Hopkins felt this way.

Mitsui wrote to Hopkins after the meeting in New York with a much more certain attitude. One factor he previously failed to consider made his decision much easier: he learned that those who answer in favor of being repatriated would be immediately interned like the Japanese on the West Coast after the outbreak of war.[109] "I understand the internment camps are not pleasant places," Mitsui wrote, "and it would be the worst to intern myself deliberately for an infinite period, thus postponing my [academic] work."[110]

Internment hanging over one's head was not normal for a student; it surely had an effect on Mitsui's mental well-being. This moment was perhaps one of two moments when Mitsui was dangerously close to being put in an internment camp (the other, when he graduated and lost student status, will be covered in the next section). Nevertheless, the episode in New York is an example of the support provided by Dartmouth. Hopkins corresponded with him, and Griffith, the alum who acted "in loco parentis" for Mitsui, was in New York to counsel Mitsui through the meeting.[111] Not only did Hopkins protect Mitsui from rogue students on campus, but, in a way, he also protected him from a government set on exposing him as an enemy.

Graduation and Uncertainty

Graduation from Dartmouth left Mitsui with a lot of uncertainties about his time in America. Being a student enabled him to stay in the country after Pearl Harbor. Graduation would have meant he no longer had the legal ability to stay in the country; he had to find some academic pursuit to prolong his stay. 1943 proved to be an especially perilous time for Mitsui,

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[109] Mitsui to Hopkins, January 12, 1943. Students (A-M), 1942 - 1943, Box: 7046. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[110] *Ibid.*
[111] Dickerson to Griffith, January 12, 1942. Students (Japanese), 1941 - 1942, Box: 7036. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.

too, as suspicions grew both in Hanover and in the United States more broadly. Again, Hopkins and Dartmouth were there to offer him help.

On October 4, 1943, Hopkins wrote to Griffith to update him on Mitsui's situation. At Hanover, things were worsening:

> There is a definite sentiment in unpleasantness in sentiment beginning to loom up. The Concord Monitor, the editorial staff of which is entirely friendly to the College, carried an article the other night headed something to this effect, "Dartmouth Protects Wealthy Japanese." This isn't quite the wording; it may have been, "Scion of Japanese Wealth" but at any rate, you get the idea. There was a somewhat extended account of the Mitsui family and the flat-footed statement that since he was cut off from home, the College must be paying his expenses, etc., etc. [112]

Hopkins's support of Mitsui was known even beyond the confines of Hanover, and by 1943 it was increasingly controversial. Hopkins even noted how the armed services were "somewhat embarrassed by the implications that Dartmouth in one way or another has secured special consideration for [Mitsui] which would not ordinarily have been given."[113] Hopkins still emphasized that he wanted to continue to support Mitsui, and would do so if needed. He recognized, though, that keeping him at Dartmouth may not have been the best for him:

> Thinking of it from the boy's standpoint, however, all of his friends have graduated and gone, most of them into the service, newcomers are little inclined to accept his advances or to make any advances of their own, and out of the various mutterings around here it is not impossible that some super-patriot inspired by alcohol will not sooner or later make physical assault on him. That has already been prevented in a couple of cases, about which I think and hope he knows nothing.[114]

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[112] Hopkins to Griffith, October 4, 1943. Students: Takanobu Mitsui, 1943 - 1944, Box: 7057. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[113] Hopkins to Mitsui, November 20, 1943. Students: Takanobu Mitsui, 1943 - 1944, Box: 7057. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[114] Hopkins to Griffith, October 4, 1943. Students: Takanobu Mitsui, 1943 - 1944, Box: 7057. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.

The isolated nature of Hanover, which once helped to shelter Mitsui from the national political scene and thus hostility directed at him, began to make him much more noticeable and striking, which did not play to his favor.[115] It is also evident that Mitsui's lack of recollections of antipathy from the students did not necessarily mean it did not exist; Hopkins seemed to have shielded him from it and kept those incidents hidden from the records.

Mitsui corresponded with Hopkins in October about his uncertain legal status and his plans to find employment. He wrote:

> According to the laws and regulations, I am admitted to the United States as what is called a non-quota immigrant student – class 1, which means that I have to be a full-time student and cannot work for wages at all. Class 1 can be changed to class 2 or 3, if necessary, an that would enable me to work to such an extent that the work would not interfere the ordinary school work required for my school status (highschool, college undergrad., grad., research, etc.) as a full-time student of a day school. But as a rule, the 'non-quota immigrant student' status cannot be changed unless I get out of the country and enter as something else – a visitor, for instance; hence I have to be a full-time student of some kind.

He had tried to attend Yale as a master's student, but learned that the army and navy prohibited Japanese students from studying there. The FBI especially was at the time obstinate about changing their policies even when the army lifted its ban.[116] Because he was prohibited from earning a salary under his student status, Mitsui was worried about finances yet again: "I may have to starve before this is settled."[117] Hopkins came to his aid again, letting Mitsui know he would continue to advance college funds to him as long as he needed it.[118]

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[115] Hopkins to Griffith, October 4, 1943. Students: Takanobu Mitsui, 1943 - 1944, Box: 7057. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[116] Mitsui to Hopkins, October 20, 1943. Students: Takanobu Mitsui, 1943 - 1944, Box: 7057. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[117] *Ibid.*
[118] *Ibid.*

Protecting Mitsui also meant continuing to shield him from immigration authorities. Hopkins wrote to Professor Sidney Cox that it was "becoming a little harder than formerly to do all that we would like to do and to give all of the protection against interference that we would like to give in a case like Nobu's."[119] Mitsui was, he wrote, "likely to suffer under the various measures inevitable for the group [of Japanese people in the U.S.] as a whole."[120] Discontent at the Tule Lake internment camp was mentioned as a contributing factor to an increase in government suspicion of Japanese people. Hopkins wrote to Dean Bill that to keep Mitsui out of a "concentration camp," it was necessary that his connection to Dartmouth remain unbroken.[121] Hopkins unilaterally declared Mitsui a graduate student in education, but he also gave him his bachelor's degree despite lacking the requisite credits. Hopkins joked, "Some day I am hopeful of getting a medal or something from Hirohito or his successor for my personal endeavors in the form of an uplift of Japanese culture."[122] His efforts enabled Mitsui to teach Japanese at Yale.

The FBI, Army Intelligence, and Navy Intelligence continued to check in on Mitsui.[123] When he wanted to travel, he had to gain written permission from Alexander Murchie, the U.S. Attorney for New Hampshire.[124] In February 1944, Mitsui was granted permission to travel to Chicago, despite Hopkins's previous warning that

> There is some suspicion that attaches to one who undertakes to move with too much freedom from one center to another in which major projects are underway for the armed services. Chicago by its very nature in geographical location becomes a very considerable

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[119] Hopkins to Cox, December 13, 1943. Students: Takanobu Mitsui, 1943 - 1944, Box: 7057. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[120] *Ibid.*
[121] Hopkins to Dean Bill, December 10, 1943. Students: Takanobu Mitsui, 1943 - 1944, Box: 7057. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.
[122] *Ibid.*
[123] *Ibid.*
[124] Mitsui to Dickerson, December 31, 1943. Students: Takanobu Mitsui, 1943 - 1944, Box: 7057. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.

> military center. Any suggestion of you transferring from New Haven to Chicago inevitably would raise question among those who had no personal acquaintanceship with you as to why you were shifting about in this way.[125]

Mitsui was looking for teaching positions in Chicago. On February 19, it was reported to Hopkin's office that Mitsui would be teaching Japanese at the University of Chicago, and that an application for clearance was submitted to the Provost Marshal General.[126] Interestingly, a month later, Hopkins's office was informed that the Provost Marshal General objected to Mitsui continuing to attend Dartmouth, although they recognized it did not matter because he would be in Chicago.[127] Why they apparently did not object to Mitsui being at Chicago is unclear; in the records it does not seem that his status in the country was revoked after he got the position at Chicago.

Ultimately, a few things are certain. First, President Hopkins continued to counsel Mitsui and provide him funds after he completed coursework at Dartmouth. His office stayed in touch and helped him with travel and necessary clearances. Hopkins also warned him of the risk associated with being Japanese that he did not necessarily experience in the early days of the war at Dartmouth. Second, it is clear that Hopkins protected Mitsui without the blessings of the federal government, and at times did so when it was unpopular. Third, Mitsui was able to find employment at Yale and the University of Chicago and was never interned or deported.

Conclusion: Mitsui's Resilience and Hopkins's Legacy

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[125] Hopkins to Mitsui, November 20, 1943. Students: Takanobu Mitsui, 1943 - 1944, Box: 7057. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.

[126] King to Dickerson, February 19 1944. Students: Takanobu Mitsui, 1943 - 1944, Box: 7057. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.

[127] Glaeser to Dickersron, March 21, 1944. Students: Takanobu Mitsui, 1943 - 1944, Box: 7057. Dartmouth College. Office of the President (1916-1945: Ernest Martin Hopkins) records, DP-11. Rauner Library Archives and Manuscripts.

Mitsui's Dartmouth experience was a complicated one that cannot be condensed to simple generalizations. In reading the letters of students, in reading *The D,* in learning about some of the reactions students had to Japanese students on campus, it is clear that racism existed at Dartmouth during World War II. Due in large part to the presence of a naval training school and to broader community suspicions about Japanese people in the United States, Dartmouth, like pretty much everywhere else in the country, was not a perfect environment for Mitsui to be in. On multiple occasions he struggled needlessly because he was Japanese. He was excluded from campus clubs, threatened with internment or deportation, and had critical students and government agents alike keeping a watchful eye — even when he did not know it at times.

It is also true that many in the Dartmouth community rejected the racist ideas common in the United States and offered support to Mitsui. Reading Mitsui's own letters reveals an attitude of cordiality and appreciation. His declaration that students were supportive, and his frequent thanks expressed to Hopkins, cannot be ignored. At a time when Japanese people were rounded up from their homes, many in Hanover made Dartmouth feel like home to Mitsui. Mitsui also maintained high spirits and pushed through with his studies despite the global situation. He never wavered and acted admirably, especially when marginalized and discriminated against.

President Hopkin's motivations are less established. Much of the evidence proves just how helpful he was to Mitsui. No evidence suggests he had ulterior motives or that his help was secretly nefarious; to argue this would be to distort the truth. However, Mitsui's wealth — which Hopkins mentioned when offering aid to Mitsui — cannot be eliminated as a factor for helping Mitsui. Perhaps he felt he owed Takanaga Mitsui, an alumnus with immense power in Japan. Hopkins must have been well aware of the implications his treatment of Mitsui would have. The fact that the records indicate much more involvement with Mitsui than with the other Japanese

student on campus — George Shimizu — indicates that wealth did play a role. Either way, President Hopkins trusted and protected Mitsui when others did not; that itself made Dartmouth a more inclusive place in the early 1940s.

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