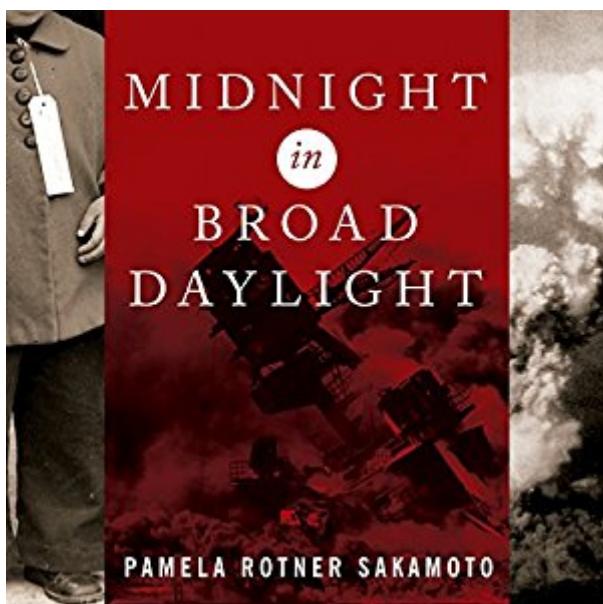


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# Midnight In Broad Daylight: A Japanese American Family Caught Between Two Worlds



## **Synopsis**

After their father's death, Harry, Frank, and Pierce Fukuhara - all born and raised in the Pacific Northwest - moved to Hiroshima, their mother's ancestral home. Eager to go back to his own land - America - Harry returned in the late 1930s. Then came Pearl Harbor. Despite being sent to an internment camp, Harry dutifully volunteered to serve his country. Back in Hiroshima, his brothers, Frank and Pierce, became soldiers in the Japanese Imperial Army. As the war raged on, Harry, one of the finest bilingual interpreters in the United States Army, island hopped across the Pacific, moving ever closer to the enemy and to his younger brothers. But before the Fukuharas would have to face each other in battle, the US detonated the atomic bomb over Hiroshima, gravely injuring tens of thousands of civilians, including members of their family. Alternating between the American and Japanese perspectives, *Midnight in Broad Daylight* captures the uncertainty and intensity of those charged with the fighting and provides a fresh look at the dropping of the first atomic bomb.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

This is a brilliant combination of history and biography written in stylish prose that captures the reader from the start. Many of the editorial reviews have stated already stated that this is "riveting in its alternating American and Japanese perspectives, and a fresh look at the dropping of the atom bomb over Hiroshima, this story is inspirational as well as educational." This is truly an epic tale. You are taken on a family journey; portrayed with style and grace. I was captured and entranced from the outset. Ms. Sakamoto should be highly praised for discovering this heartbreakingly, heartrending story, and praised for the detailed research that went into the preparing this complex

story. I loved taking the journey, enjoyed the format, and the entwining of history and biography. I agree with others that it is "a richly textured narrative history. . . . A beautifully rendered work wrought with enormous care and sense of compassionate dignity." You will discover that you have much to learn about the Japanese-American experience during WWII. As with all good history and biography, there are many lessons applicable to modern day discourse. This book has challenged many of my present day views. Good! That's a sign of a superb historian! As one reviewer has noted, this is an intimate and evocative portrait of a family, "an indelible portrait of a resilient family, a scathing examination of racism and xenophobia, an homage to the tremendous Japanese American contribution to the American war effort, and an invaluable addition to the historical record of this extraordinary time." I agree wholeheartedly. You will not be disappointed. I hope the book receives the awards it justly deserves. Timely and beautifully written. This should be a top ten book on any reviewers list.

Engrossing book. Non-fiction that reads like a good novel. Sakamoto captures the sense of loss and righteous confusion felt by the Fukuharas over their situation. The reader can empathize with all members of the family and feel their pain and yet be in awe of their firmly-held belief that things will be OK and that they can endure their suffering in the present because there is light at the end of the tunnel. One of the best books (fiction or non-fiction) I have read in a long time!

Harry Fukuhara was born in Seattle, Washington in 1921 and through unlikely twists of fate ended up a priceless interpreter/translator for the MIS (Military Intelligence Service) during WWII. The saga of his family is told with meticulous research and detail by Pamela Rotner Sakamoto. Against his will, Harry was taken by his mother to Japan with his siblings after his father died. After securing a promise that he could return if he graduated from high school there, he applied himself and finally did return, but to an America that was not welcoming to him in 1938. The sojourn in Japan, however, had secured him a solid education in that arcane language and a deep understanding of the vocabulary of war because his high school had been militarized. This was to prove invaluable when he volunteered for the Army. Each member of his family went through his/her own struggle to survive, some of them living through the horrors of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. Aside from Harry's own incredible story, I was surprised to learn so much about the life and times of Nisei (second gen Japanese-Americans) in Japan as well as on the West Coast. Even those who are familiar with the incarceration of Japanese-Americans in the camps following America's declaration of war may find much of this story new to them. I didn't realize that for Nisei who happened to be in

Japan pre-war, life was difficult as they were looked upon with hostility which got even worse once war started. The same applied on the West Coast where they were subject to discrimination before the war, too. At times, I found that Sakamoto's efforts at accuracy seemed to make the flow of the story a bit rough, such as the extensive use of direct quotations to express the feelings and actions of people. Nevertheless, this is one heck of a story and worth reading more than once. I recommend it! After reading my Kindle copy, I decided to buy the hard copy and was surprised to find that it contains many photographs none of which is on the Kindle version.

Pamela Rotner Sakamoto has written a beautifully written and meticulously researched story of a Japanese American family torn apart by the tragedy of war. This is a spell-binder...a page-turner. The reader with only a modicum of knowledge about WW2 (remember that big bomb the Americans dropped?) will feel a sense of dread as the war marches on and the family on both sides of the conflict must sacrifice and suffer. Despite the challenges, the story becomes one of the indomitable bond of family that outlives the war. This is history of the best sort. Engrossing, readable, entertaining, compelling, and educational. The author is an academic through-and-through, but she does not write like one. She weaves a tale that helps us to understand the war from a unique perspective of a nuclear family that experienced the conflict from completely different angles. One of my favorite aspects of the book is how well it dealt with the prejudice this family experienced both in the US and in Japan. This family is betwixt and between two cultures, two languages, two very different political worlds...and yet neither world fully embraced them at the time. This book is accessible by everyone, including high school students (I have recommended it to several I work with as an educational consultant). But to be clear, the fact that it is accessible does not detract from the erudition of this historical work.

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