



Nikkei

Japanese Canadian National Museum Newsletter

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The Making of the Japanese Canadian National Museum by Grace Eiko Thomson

*Entrance to the
National Nikkei
Heritage Centre.
(Carl Yokota
photo, 2000)*



I think the most exciting thing that is happening at the Japanese Canadian National Museum at this time is that we now have a proper gallery space to hold exhibitions. This will create opportunities to show off our expanding collections, and to hold public and education programs discussing various issues that are pertinent to our community, and relevant to the larger Canadian society.

When I say *'proper'*, I mean that the museum spaces, both the gallery and the storage for the collections, are now air controlled. They conform with national museum standards required for temperature and humidity control best suited to preserve all materials held in the Museum Collections, or exhibited in its gallery.

The Museum is designated as a national museum. What does that mean, and how can we respond to such an obligation? The readers of this article, viewers of the

Museum exhibitions, and donors to our Collections, will have many thoughts on these questions, and we are interested to learn about any thoughts or ideas. In the

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Announcements

Internment Camp Tour

September 17-21, 2000
Kaslo, Sandon,
New Denver, Slocan

Inaugural Exhibition

September 22, 2000
National Nikkei Heritage Centre,
6688 Southoaks, Burnaby

Annual General Meeting

October 29, 2000
National Nikkei Heritage Centre,
6688 Southoaks, Burnaby

Cumberland Japanese Canadians Lecture

November 16, 2000
National Nikkei Heritage Centre,
6688 Southoaks, Burnaby

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meantime, the proposed inaugural exhibition, and future exhibitions, will be conceived to target specific audiences across Canada, designed and fabricated to travel to locations across the country. In fact, the inaugural exhibition (designed by D. Jensen & Associates Ltd., of Vancouver, designers of the award winning North West Territories Pavilion at Expo '86) is already booked to be installed in the Nanaimo District Museum, in Nanaimo, B.C., and in the Manitoba Museum of Man & Nature, in Winnipeg, Manitoba, after it comes to an end at this location in the City of Burnaby's Nikkei Place. It is expected, as soon as staff is freed up from the immediate tasks of preparation for the opening, scheduled to take place on September 22, Heritage Day, that we will be advertising the exhibition for further bookings to other locations.

The education program for the Museum is concerned not only to respond to this region. Currently, the education program coordinator, Masako Fukawa, is working with a committee to produce education resource kits responding to local and national elementary and secondary school curricula. The kits are meant to assist teachers and tour guides to view the exhibition with students and the public, respectively. The resource kits are also expected to travel with the exhibition to host museums for their regional use.

As a national museum, we would also be looking at how we may outreach to other communities. For instance, last year, I visited New Denver's Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre, and other interior sites, which were enforced homes to many Japanese Canadians during World War II. While the New Denver site is well organized with programs of exhibition and education, up to date in content, there were

indications that it could use some help to keep its programs maintained. Other sites appeared to me to be needing upgrading. I also visited Toronto's Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre and Momoji Gardens and reviewed their holdings of archival photographs. The question I asked myself then is, what is the responsibility of the Japanese Canadian National Museum in these contexts? These are historically significant sites that hold memories of our communities important to Canadian history and heritage. Should we be providing services to make sure sites like New Denver, are maintained, and collections preserved? How should we go about doing this? What do you, as members of the Museum, think?

The exhibition space at the Japanese Canadian National Museum is not large. It measures approximately 1140 square feet, not large enough to produce exhibitions that fit comfortably into national venues, which are usually about 2,500 square feet in size. However, on the positive side, it is a space from which new beginnings may be encouraged and thoughts transformed into programs relevant to our situations at this point in our history. There are opportunities for collaborative work or exchanges with other locations, where collections are held, i.e., Toronto and New Denver. Also, we may continue to assist artists and researchers who reference the Museum's materials towards producing their own projects.

The Inaugural Exhibition

Titled *Re-shaping Memory, Owning History: Through the Lens of Japanese Canadian Redress*, the inaugural exhibition begins and ends with the event of the redress achievement. But the theme is not about redress, but about the

Continued on page 4

Victoria, B.C.
May 15, 2000

My Fellow Canadians,

I would like to urge each and everyone of you to lend your support to the challenging work of the Japanese Canadian National Museum. The Museum is a relatively new institution which has as its mission, the collection, preservation, and exhibition of historical materials relating to the story of the Japanese Canadian community from 1877 up to the present. It is organized as a voluntary society with a representative Board of Directors, a nucleus of professional staff, and a growing circle of interested and enthusiastic volunteer members.

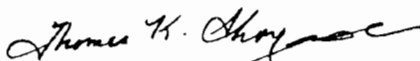
In September, 2000, the Museum will be presenting its Inaugural Exhibition—"The Story of Japanese Canadian Internment and Redress"—two interrelated events of historical significance to all Canadians. This will be shown in their first permanent museum facility at Nikkei Place, within the impressive National Nikkei Heritage Centre in Burnaby, B.C. After a year, this exhibition will travel across Canada.

I thank the people of the Museum for their efforts in building a legacy for future generations. This legacy can only be maintained if it is supported by all Canadians and especially by the Japanese Canadian community. I urge all of you to support the Museum through attendance of their exhibitions, taking out memberships, giving donations and gifts, and serving as volunteers.

Government and foundation grants can be generous, but funds from these sources can only partially support projects such as exhibitions. Matching funds have to be raised. As well, they do not pay for such operating expenditures as rent, utilities, and staff salaries—the everyday costs associated with the main work of collecting, cataloguing, and preserving.

Without your support, the Museum cannot survive. Let's make sure it will continue to fulfill its goal and leave a valuable inheritance for future generations.

Sincerely,


Thomas K. Shoyama, OC

Thomas K. Shoyama –Supports JCNM Fundraising Campaign.

Thomas K. Shoyama is one of the most eminent of Japanese Canadians. He was awarded the Order of Canada (hence the "O.C." after his name) for his service to the nation as Deputy Minister of Finance to the federal government and previously, Deputy Minister of Finance with the provincial government in Saskatchewan. Within the Japanese Canadian community, he was a leader from his mid-20's and served as one of the earliest English Editors of *The New Canadian* newspaper. He wrote stirring patriotic editorials after the war with Japan had begun and backed up his words with actions as he enlisted in the Canadian armed forces as soon as they began to accept Japanese Canadians.



Thomas Shoyama (Midge Ayukawa photo, 1999)

uniqueness of our history, a history over which we had little or no control. From the earliest days of the pioneers, conditions of restraints and restrictions, and racism and disenfranchisement, existed for people of Japanese, Chinese and (East) Indian origins, living in Canada. The attack on Pearl Harbour by the Japanese military provided an excuse for an initiative by the Canadian government that forever changed the lives of the then Japanese Canadians—lives of some 22,000, many of whom were naturalized, or were born in Canada. Incarceration, confiscation and liquidation of personal properties, to extreme measures of dispersal and deportation, were all conducted by the federal government in power, made possible under The War Measures Act, in 1941, and extended to 1949. Underlying these acts were 'the politics of racism,' clearly revealed to us by Ann Gomer Sunahara in her book of that title (1981).

As the exhibition title suggests, the theme is about a history re-revealed through the lens of redress. It is a history that is significantly transformed by time and space, and thought and memory, in the minds of those Japanese Canadians who experienced both the conditions in Canada in the '40s and the redress achievements of the '80s. There is curatorial attempt to present an exhibition spoken from a unified voice of any one community, but by many 'selves', constituted by specific time frames and conditions. The stories are told in layers of voices raising thoughts and memories of the past, as well as the anguish and exhilaration of the presents. They are excerpts from newspapers, contemporary to, and more recently from, the events, government documents, texts, personal diaries, letters, oral histories, and interviews. Poignant photographic images, many already iconic, and etched indelibly with painful associations onto our memories, add to the voices, as do insightful poems and writings by contemporary poets and artists.

The exhibition touches briefly on the post-war years moving into the redress movement. In fact, in-depth analyses of any segment of the exhibition are not possible in this particular exhibition due not only to space, but also with respect to time allotted to produce the exhibition. However, undoubtedly, details will be produced as topics for discussions in concurrent public programs, as well as through video screenings.

Of interest is the fact learned through the process of research that the Museum's collections, to date, hold little in materials which speak to the post-war changes to our communities. Little has been documented about the Japanese Canadian community, which cannot be considered singularly, but with reference to the vast changes which have occurred from within. The sansei knew little about their nisei parents' experiences, but were

instrumental in effecting the discourses necessary for the redress movement to begin. During the '60s and '70s, when students throughout the world were involved in various human rights movements, many sansei became sensitized to their own disconnections. With loss of language and lack of confidence in, and knowledge of, their own heritage, most were choosing to marry outside of their own cultural communities.

With the influx, in the late '60s and '70s, of the new, educated and entrepreneurial, immigrants from Japan, there began what Yuko Shibata (a *shin-ijusha*) refers to as 'cultural sharing.' The immigrants having had little or no experience with Canadian culture, shared their own heritage with the sansei, who had little knowledge of their own heritage. It is believed by many in this group that this new awakening and acknowledgement of heritage, long buried by nisei parents, for the sake of their 'Canadian' children, were significant to the redress movement. *Shin ijusha* like Takeo Yamashiro, Michiko Sakata, Noriko Horita Okusa, Tatsuo Kage, and Yuko Shibata contributed greatly to what was a transition period, in Vancouver.

The rise of intermarriage amongst Japanese Canadians, and the significance of the number of children born to these intercultural parents, now affect our consideration about who, or what, is meant by Japanese Canadian community. There is no doubt that our community is not a singular one, but multi-cultural from within and with-out. For these reasons, it is expected that the new Museum must represent, through its exhibitions and collections, spaces for dialogues around identities and communities, issues of concern shared by all Canadians, and voices must be raised to make sure we do not fall into elitism and exclusionist practice.

In closing, I acknowledge the invaluable assistance of our staff (particularly Susan Sirovyak, Curator of Collections, Daien Ide, Research Assistant, and Reiko Tagami, Reference and Public Programs Coordinator) who contributed to the preparation of the inaugural exhibition.

Grace Eiko Thomson is executive director of the Japanese Canadian National Museum, and is also the curator of the inaugural exhibition to open September 22, 2000.

Acknowledgements

The Japanese Canadian National Museum is grateful for the generous financial support received in the production of both the Museum and the inaugural exhibition, and thanks the following:

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Reflections on Redress by Art Miki



*Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Art Miki at the redress ceremony.
(Art Miki photo, 1988)*

As I reflect on the significance of the historic redress settlement, I believe that the redress settlement had tremendous personal impact on Japanese Canadians. A nisei from Hamilton remarked, "I felt the redress settlement was something of a closure for me." Another person commented, "I think that redress was important because it had a

psychological effect and helped our elders to open up and gain peace of mind." For others redress lifted the feeling of guilt that perhaps they were responsible for the government's actions and helped to infuse pride in their own identity. One woman said, "Since redress my awareness has grown and also my sense of myself. I feel that it's easier to walk

tall and talk about my culture."

On September 22, 1988 while sitting in the gallery of the House of Commons in the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa, I witnessed a historical event that was the beginning of a healing process for the Japanese Canadian community. I heard the Prime Minister Brian Mulroney acknowledge that "the government of Canada wrongfully incarcerated, seized property, and disenfranchised thousands of Canadians of Japanese ancestry." He issued an apology to the victims, some of whom were present in the gallery, and announced a comprehensive redress settlement that had been negotiated a month earlier with the National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC). This agreement was of great historical importance not only for Japanese Canadians but for all Canadians.

I know that the announcement of a redress settlement caught many Japanese Canadians by surprise. It shocked those skeptics who told us that redress was impossible and who attempted to discourage us from continuing the campaign. One nisei commented to me recently, "I never thought that it could ever happen."

Looking back on the redress campaign and that important date, September 22, several thoughts came to mind. I learned through my involvement with the redress process of the importance of exerting our rights as citizens. As a Canadian citizen we have a responsibility to speak out on issues that affect our

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country. Although some Japanese Canadians thought that the NAJC should not pursue redress and open up "old wounds", most Canadians did not react negatively while the NAJC waged a campaign against the government's past racist policies and actions. The process of seeking an acknowledgment from the government can be considered an important citizenship responsibility. We wanted to demonstrate that the policies imposed upon Japanese Canadians during and after the Second World War were wrong. The documentation of the experiences of Japanese Canadians through the media was a tremendous educational transaction that helped Canadians become more aware of the mistreatments imposed by the government and created a greater understanding of the redress process in the minds of all Canadians including Japanese Canadians. Thus any collective reaction against redress was minimized. Consequently, the action the Canadian government took to recognize the past injustices has helped make Canada a stronger country in addressing racism and discrimination. The NAJC continues to make as its top priority the mandate to speak out against human rights violations and racism.

I have gained respect and confidence that Canadian people do treasure the values of fairness and equality. Roger Obata often told me that if politicians knew the true story of what happened to Japanese Canadians, they would give us redress without hesitation. However, in the end it was the positive support for reconciliation expressed by ordinary Canadians through polls, editorials and media reports that eventually influenced the

government and the politicians to offer redress. When rights are violated or injustices inflicted upon its own citizens, Canadians do have sympathy for the victims and are willing to express their feelings. I recall a phone call that I received from a veteran who strongly opposed any compensation for Japanese Canadians. At first he told me that I should go back to where I came from if I didn't like Canada. I explained to him that I was born in Canada and patiently described what happened to Japanese Canadians, especially the confiscation of property and the internment. He listened. I asked him to try to put himself in our place and imagine what he would do if his property was taken away by the government for no reason except because of his ethnic background. His response was, "I would go after the government and fight to get my property back. That is not right." I said to him, "That is what we're trying to do." I think he was able to grasp the significance of our actions as he offered me his best wishes.

After negotiations were terminated with Hon. David Crombie, Minister for Multiculturalism in July 1987, the NAJC altered its campaign strategy and focused on the mistreatment of Japanese Canadians as a Canadian human rights issue. For me this was the turning point in the campaign. The National Coalition for Japanese Canadian Redress was established by the NAJC in late 1987 inviting Canadians to support the efforts of NAJC to seek a fair and just settlement. The positive media coverage which we received during the campaign and the march on Parliament Hill had a tremendous influence on the national polls. The positive support for redress shown by

Canadians may have influenced our government to take action without fear of a political backlash.

Being mindful that the Japanese Canadian community was small in number and scattered across the country in comparison to other ethnic groups, we knew that we had very little political influence. Unlike in the United States, our community did not have a single politician at the federal level that we could lobby for support. However, we did have the promise from Prime Minister Brian Mulroney to address the historical injustice, words which he expressed as an Opposition leader. We had to rely on the influences of individual and opposition politicians and collective support of other Canadian organizations and individuals to defy the odds in achieving a major victory. This experience reinforced an important lesson for me that living in a democratic society, even minority groups can have a voice, be heard and be successful.

It was not always easy to maintain focus as people became frustrated with the roadblocks imposed by the government and the divisions formed within our own community. Throughout my travels I heard stories of hardships from individuals resulting from the internment reinforcing the importance of bringing our past to light and continuing to pursue the redress campaign. It took four years of continuous struggle, dedication and patience for the NAJC leaders. When that "window of opportunity" finally arrived in 1988 we were ready and the rest is history. The high level of persistence and commitment by the leaders, chapter organizations and the grass roots supporters of the NAJC to achieve redress is to be commended. ❁

Amerika Mura's "Books for Canada" Society by Stan Fukawa

The home village of many pre-war Steveston Japanese (Mio-mura, Mihama-cho, Wakayama-ken) is quite well-known in Japan as Amerika Mura. To the Japanese, Canada is just another part of North America and they do not think it strange to give Mio Village the nickname of America Village.

Over the past six or so years, a retired teacher in Mio has carried out a campaign to send Japanese books and magazines to Canada and has succeeded in sending some fifteen thousand of them to the Japanese Language Schools in the Lower Mainland. This is a phenomenal number and the reasons for this campaign and of its success will become clear as we learn more about the teacher and his ties to Canada.

Yoshiya Tabata has always felt an affinity for Canada because he was born in Steveston in 1923 at the Steveston Japanese Hospital. He was the eldest son of an immigrant who fished the Fraser River from 1915 until the Second World War. Like a number of other families, his mother took the children to Japan for their education once the eldest reached school age. Often, where grandparents were available, the mother returned to Canada to work and earn money. In Yoshiya's case, his younger brother was sickly and his parents wanted the children to be in Japan for both educational and medical reasons. His father stayed in Canada by himself, sending money to his family.

In those days of virulent racism in B.C., even if young Asians graduated from university, they could not obtain work as professionals but had to labour as fishermen and farmers. Some thought it wiser for those with the aptitude for school to

be educated in Japan and obtain professional jobs there. Yoshiya Sensei began his teaching career in 1945. In 1981, after 36 years of working in the Mihama-cho elementary and middle schools, he retired.

An active person, Yoshiya Sensei began a political career upon his retirement as a teacher and served on the Mihama-cho Municipal Council for twelve years from 1982 to 1994. While on the Municipal Council, he visited Canada first, on his own, in 1983. During that visit, he read an article written by Roy Miki concerning the Japanese Canadian Redress Movement. He realized that many people in Mihama-cho might be eligible for compensation and so he visited the offices of the Greater Vancouver JCCA Bulletin to obtain extra copies to take home with him. He said he raised the matter at a Municipal Council question period on his return.

While he was there at the Bulletin offices in the old Japanese Hall on Alexander, they told him that the second floor of the building housed the Vancouver Japanese Language School. Being a teacher, he asked to see what the classrooms were like. While viewing the rooms, he was shocked to see that the few picture books in the classes were old and ragged. He remembered this when later, back at home, he was collecting recycling materials such as cardboard and old newspapers with a pickup truck in Mihama-cho, as a director of a handicapped persons' facility. This was one of the fundraising activities he engaged in as a volunteer. He noticed that people were throwing out near-new children's books and picture books that might be very welcome material for the Japanese Language Schools

in Canada.

Nine years later, in 1992, he found himself back in Vancouver as part of the Municipal Council delegation to Canada, where he was able to meet with the then principal of the Vancouver Language School, Mr. Motoaki Egawa. Mr. Egawa was shocked to learn that Japanese had to throw out these perfectly usable resources because they had much less room in their smaller houses and used book dealers would not accept them no matter how good their condition. He willingly agreed to accept the books on behalf of the local schools.

When he returned to Japan, Yoshiya Sensei set up a system for collecting the books through the schools. He first talked to the Superintendent of the local school district. The superintendent introduced him to the principals who then obtained the consent of their Staff Councils. After their consent was given, Yoshiya Sensei visited the schools to explain about the kinds of books that he would accept. Now, every parent is notified periodically and there is cooperation at all levels from the School Board to the students. Some parents are happy not only to present their books to the Books for Canada campaign but they also ask how they can help with the cost of sending the books and some enquire about joining the Books for Canada Society.

The first bundles were brought to Vancouver by Bob Iwata of Iwata Travel on some of his many trips back from Japan. They now send the books by sea through Nippon Express. The cost is borne by the members of the Books for Canada Society. There are over 100 society members, including 8 members from the Kanto region and

2 members from Kyushu. Membership fees are a thousand yen per year but many people pay three, five, or even ten thousand yen.

On the Canada side, Mr. Egawa has received the thousands of books and magazines, about fifteen hundred on each occasion. This represents a large commitment of time to distribute the material appropriately. Some books go to the library of the Japanese Language School and many to other Japanese Language Schools.

All the books have labels on them bearing the names of the donors, the school names and

addresses. They are placed there to encourage some correspondence from the recipients. If there is any discouragement with any aspect of the program, it is with regard to the low rate of responses from recipients, says Yoshiya Sensei.

Asked why he devotes so much time, energy and space in his home to this project, he says that Canada is the country of his birth and for many years, his family's source of livelihood in the Fraser Valley salmon industry. It's a kind of pay-back, he says. He is happy to be of service to Canada and Canadians.

When he visited his relatives and friends in Canada, he noticed that many Nikkei are marrying outside their ethnic group and race relations seem in general to be very good. In a world with so much inter-ethnic violence that not even the United Nations seems able to suppress, he feels that surely Canada can lead the world in finding ways for people of many different cultures to live peacefully together. His hope for our Japanese Canadian National Museum is that it will be a resource treasured by Canadians of all cultural origins. ●

Brief History of Japanese People in Vernon

The first Japanese to come to Vernon in 1900 was a man named Eijiro Koyama. He worked for Coldstream Ranch, a ranch about 5 miles east of Vernon. This ranch produced apples as well as raising cattle. Mr. Koyama was instrumental in bringing many Japanese people to work on the ranch. The ranch built a camp house called Keefer camp and housed up to 40 workers. Close to 100 Japanese people came to work on the ranch. Most of these workers were bachelors and worked for the ranch under Mr. Koyama for \$1.25 a day. In later years many of the workers left the ranch for other parts of B.C. but a few stayed behind to continue working on the ranch.

Settlement of Japanese families in Vernon started about 1915 and most of these pioneers purchased land along Bella Vista Road where the present Japanese Cultural Centre is located. The north side of Bella

Vista Road was owned mostly by Japanese farmers. Japanese families that arrived later purchased land along the Old Kamloops road. The farmers farmed between 15 to 100 acres producing vegetables and fruit.

In 1934, the Japanese families got together and built a hall on 1 acre of land donated by Mr. Tsutomu Chiba. It was called the Nokai Hall and after this hall was built various Japanese organizations were formed such as the Nokai, Fujinkai, JCCA and the Judo Club. These organizations used the hall for all their meeting and social functions such as Keirokai, Christmas party, Judo, JCCA dances, Japanese School, Sunday School, weddings, funerals and many other functions.

When the war broke out, the Japanese families established in Vernon were allowed to continue farming on their land and were not

evacuated. After the war, many of the Japanese people who were evacuated from the coast and interned came to work on these farms temporarily and then moved on to other parts of Canada. Those who remained in Vernon purchased land and farmed, others started businesses such as logging, sawmill and grocery stores.

In 1958, the old Nokai Hall was torn down and work on a new hall was started with the combined work force of the Nokai, JCCA and Fujinkai. The Hall was completed in 1959 and is the present existing hall. A new addition to this hall was built in 1993 with financing from donations from the Japanese community and a grant from the NAJC Redress Foundation. The hall continues to be the main gathering centre of the Vernon Japanese Community. ●

Japanese Canadians in Kamloops

Kamloops has a Japanese Canadian population of approximately 900. In addition, at any given time, there are 100 - 150 students

from Japan attending learning English both at the University College of the Cariboo and at a secondary school in Kamloops.

The Kamloops Japanese Canadian Association was organized in 1977 in the Japanese Canadian Centennial Year and began by taking

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Kamloops Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre. (Betty Inouye photo, 199?)

part in various Centennial activities. The KJCA is a social, cultural organization whose purpose is to foster fellowship amongst its members and participate in the furtherance of Japanese heritage.

The Kamloops & Area Chapter of the National Association of Japanese Canadians was originally the Kamloops Redress Committee formed in 1979 to represent the Japanese Canadians of Kamloops and area in the fight for Redress. In October, 1988, this committee was reorganized as the Kamloops & Area Chapter of the NAJC. The Kamloops & Area NAJC Chapter represents the area at the National level, sends representatives to meetings, and meets financial obligations to the National organization. It represents all people of Japanese origin in our area, not just members. The association has a Human Rights Committee that deals with racism. The other very active committee is

the History Preservation committee, which is committed to preserving our history through archival work and oral histories, and displays.

The KJCA and the NAJC Chapter work as parallel organizations and co-sponsor many of the activities in Kamloops. The KJCA was the owner of a small house on Vernon Avenue, called the "Bunka Centre". This house and lot had been donated to the KJCA by Mr. and Mrs. Shintaro Yamada. The NAJC Chapter then applied successfully to the Japanese Canadian Redress foundation for a grant to build a new Cultural Centre. With the lot that the KJCA already owned, plus a generous grant received by the NAJC Chapter from the Redress Foundation, and through the generosity of our members and fund raising activities, construction was started and our new Cultural Centre was officially opened on November 5, 1994.

The KJCA and NAJC Chapter are jointly responsible for the operation of the Cultural Centre and members are automatically members of the Cultural Centre. All meetings of the various Japanese Canadian organizations in Kamloops are held at the Centre, and there is a Seniors' Drop-In on Thursdays. On Wednesday mornings, the Seniors have Carpet Bowling.

The Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre is committed to introducing the Japanese culture to the people of Kamloops. From time to time, workshops or classes have been held in *sushi* making, *ikebana*, Japanese calligraphy, Japanese tea ceremony, *origami*, kite making, Japanese folk dancing, etc. Once a month, an *udon* lunch is held for the general public, and once a month, a *donburi* lunch is held. Elementary schools regularly come to the Centre on a field trip to learn some Japanese

phrases, learn *origami*, and often learn a Japanese folk dance or song.

The Centre is also rented out to various organizations. Regular renters include a quilters group that meet twice a month, and a *tai chi*

group that meets twice a week. Once a month, we cater to the dinner meetings of the 'Canadian Club'. In addition, we cater to a number of functions throughout the year.

Through the use of

volunteers, the Cultural Centre is open daily from Monday to Friday, between the hours of 10 am and 2 pm and the public are invited to drop in and visit. ☀

Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre, New Denver, B.C.

In 1942, about 22,000 Nikkei (people of Japanese descent), 75 % of whom were Canadian citizens, were stripped of their civil rights, labelled "enemy aliens" and forced from their coastal BC homes. The federal government ordered men to road camps. Families assembled in Vancouver's Hastings Park were placed in animal stalls awaiting removal to interior BC "relocation" camps or sugar beet farms in Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario.

The NIMC Museum chronicles this extraordinary episode of Canadian history. As well, we pay tribute to the rich legacy of the "issei" (first generation) pioneers who first arrived in Canada in 1877.

On September 22, 1988, the historic Redress Settlement was signed by former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Art Miki, past president of the National Association of Japanese Canadians. The government issued an official apology and token monetary compensation for property losses

suffered at the time.

The rebuilding of the Nikkei community, victims of racist legislation and dispersal policies that sent them to Japan and east of the Rocky Mountains and now numbering about 60,000, continues to this day. The Kyowakai ("working together peacefully") Society, the

creator of this project first met in a hall on this site in 1943. This is the only internment camp organization still in operation. The NIMC aims not only to enrich our understanding of internment history, but also to emphasize the fragile nature of civil rights for all Canadians. ☀



Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre. (Frank Kamiya photo, 1994)

Past and Upcoming Events, June through November 2000

Charcoal Pits

On June 20, three speakers contributed to a fascinating session on the Japanese Charcoal Pits of Galiano Island during the years 1890 to 1910. Because of the existing salmon canning technology of the day, charcoal was required to seal the cans properly as it was capable of the necessary high heat.

Steve Nemtin, a former resident of Galiano Island where he taught school, gave a short lecture

and showed slides of his work in exploring the remains of Japanese Charcoal pits and in restoring one of them. He compared the kilns that were used for pottery-making with those used for producing charcoal.

Mary Ohara, who was born on Galiano Island, the child of a cod fisher family recounted her meeting with Dorothy Livesay, a famous poet who wrote "Call My People Home." This was a sympathetic work dealing

with the Internment of Japanese Canadians. Ms. Livesay showed Mary some headstones carved with Japanese characters for two men-- Yasomatsu Oka and Unosuke Inoue.

Moe Yesaki, author of two books on the history of the fishery on the B.C. coast, explained that the immigrants from Wakayama prefecture in Japan were familiar with charcoal-making back in their

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native land. A number of them turned to charcoal-making in the fishing off-season when they discovered a ready market for this product. Charcoal found a use not just in salmon canning but also as a heat source for the greenhouses on Vancouver Island. Around 1910, the canning technology changed and charcoal was no longer necessary. Some of the people in the audience came from another Gulf Island not far from Galiano. Their grandfather, Isaburo Tasaka, moved to Salt Spring Island in 1895 and had produced charcoal for sale in Victoria. ❁



*A charcoal kiln on Galiano Island restored by Stephen and Eli Nemtin.
(Martha Miller photo, 2000)*

The Move to Nikkei Place

June 24 - The move into the new quarters at Nikkei Place at **6688 Southoaks Crescent, Burnaby**

(opposite Kingsway at Sperling) was completed. The new phone number is (604) 777-8000. It will

take a while before operations approach some semblance of normalcy. ❁

History of Powell Street and JANM Visitors

On July 18, at the Nikkei Place facility—6688 Southoaks Crescent, Burnaby (opposite Kingsway at Sperling)—the inaugural lecture at our new site —“What Powell Street Knows: the Nikkei Community before the Uprooting.” Prof. Audrey Kobayashi of Queens University gave an illustrated lecture on the history of the Vancouver Japanese community centred around Powell Street. She showed her recently updated collection of historic photos, mainly of Powell Street, and graphs and charts on the immigration

patterns from Japan. Professor Kobayashi is best known for her demographic project which traces Japanese immigrants to Canada from the earliest times. She put in historical perspective the structure of the Japanese family in the Meiji Period and its large influence on migration patterns. Many of the social and economic patterns of Japan can be seen in the lives of the migrants—such as the “picture bride” system, prefectural loyalties, the “boss-entrepreneur.”

In the audience were a visiting

party of five from the Japanese American National Museum—their Executive Director, Dr. Irene Hirano; Director of the International Nikkei Research Project, Dr. Akemi Kikumura; Senior Advisor INRP, Dr. Richard Kosaki; Mrs. Kosaki; Chief Program Advisor, Dr. James Hirabayashi. Prof. Kobayashi took them on an actual tour of Powell St. on the following day and introduced them to some of our better Chinese restaurants. Guides and drivers included Dr. Midge Ayukawa, Stan Fukawa and Grace Thomson. ❁

Powell Street Festival

August 5 and 6, the Japanese Canadian National Museum participated again this year with many other Japanese Canadian organizations in the Powell Street Festival 2000. The 24th Annual PSF did not take place in Oppenheimer Park this year but at the Vancouver Japanese Language School and

Japanese Hall - 475 Alexander Street. Earlier estimates were for a much reduced crowd but planners were surprised to face crowds estimated as high as 4000 on the first day, 3000 on the second. The Museum offered its Historic Powell Street Walking Tour on those two days and hosted some of the Peace Boat passengers

from Japan at a video session on Japanese Canadian redress and a walking tour. The Museum booth drew much larger numbers than usual because it was on the main track and not hidden away in a corner as it had been earlier. Many people were able to check out information on their

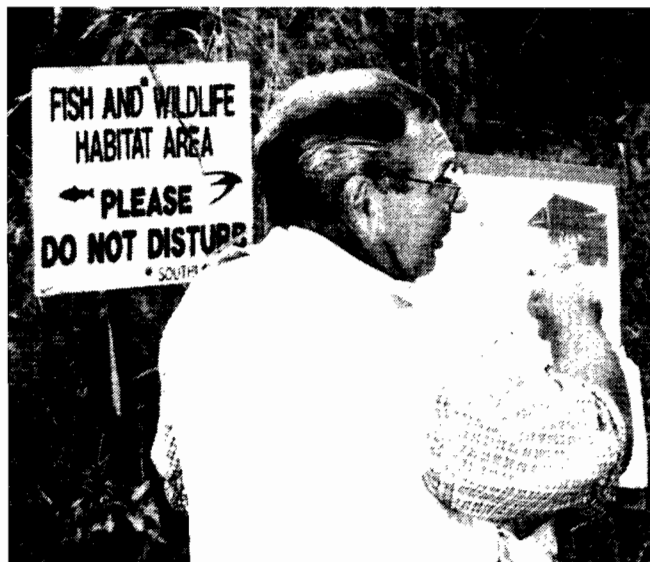
ancestors' immigration information on Prof. Audrey Kobayashi's database and membership and souvenir sales

were almost double previous years' . ❁

Celtic Cannery Walking Tour

August 20, participants met at 10 a.m. on the corner of Carrington and Celtic Streets for a guided tour by Terry Slack. He moved to Canada in the 1950's from England and has been fascinated by the history of his new surroundings. He arrived in the Deering Island area and eventually became a shipbuilder there. He has a wealth of knowledge on the history of this fairly unknown corner of Vancouver, dating back to the explorations and adventures of Simon Fraser. He is especially interested in the Japanese community that was there until the Internment and has a list of the families. Many of the participants were former residents of the area. The walk took about two hours . Participants enjoyed the ideal weather and the interesting and amusing historic commentary of Terry Slack. ❁

Terry Slack showing participants of the tour his collection of photographs of the Celtic Cannery site. (Carl Yokota photo, 2000)



September 2000 – Inaugural Exhibition Opens – Sept. 22, 2000

November 2000 – Cumberland Japanese Canadians - Nov. 16, 2000

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Midge Ayukawa, Victoria
Miyuki Nagata, Burnaby
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Dr. Gordon Hirabayashi & Ms. Susan Carnahan,
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Dan Tokawa, North Vancouver
Carol Yakura, Roberts Creek
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Tom Yamaura, Vancouver

We are grateful for support from our members. Your support is vital to our efforts. New and Renewing members for the period May 20 to July 20, 2000 are as follows:

Josh Coward, Vancouver
Kiyo Goto, New Westminster
Sayuri Katayama, Vancouver
Alfie & Rosie Kamitakahara, Burnaby
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