

Japanese Canadian National Museum Newsletter ISSN#1203-9017 Winter 2002, Vol. 7, No. 4

# Nikkei Week 125th Anniversary Dinner Address by Lieutenant-Governor Iona Campagnolo

Consul General of Japan in Vancouver Mr. Ozawa, honoured guest, Reverend Nagano, President Hayashi of the National Nikkei Heritage Society, Mr. Fukawa President of the Japanese Canadian National Museum, Mr. Paul Kariya, Coordinator of the Fishermen's Reunion Project Committee, Honoured fellow British Columbian Women and Men of Japanese descent.

I am delighted to greet you in Nikkei Week as you celebrate and remember a number of important anniversaries. First, we join in this gala welcome for the Reverend Paul Nagano of Los Angeles on this 125th anniversary of the arrival of grandfather, Manzo Nagano in British Columbia. Young Manzo Nagano set sail on a foreign ship, landing in New Westminster in 1877, just five years after B. C. had joined Confederation. He fished on the Fraser for a few years then returned to Japan, only to journey back a second time, locating in Victoria, where he became a man of property, owning a successful business on Government Street that prospered until destroyed by fire in 1922.

The British Columbia of a Century ago was a hard and difficult place for almost everyone. With a whole vast array of humanity from all over the world seeking new lives, people were too busy surviving to be hostile to each other in those early days. They all wanted a better life for their families and worked furiously toward that goal. Although it has turned out to be a long and tortuous route, I think we can safely say now, that the better life they all sought has been more or less attained.

We know British Columbia today as a thriving community of many peoples. I think we are in a moment right now when a transition from our pioneer ethic to a global one is in full swing. The land we share has AL-WAYS been home to a surprising variety of human differences. Contrary to our customary assumptions on the matter, this province is NOT 200 years old, but is ancient beyond belief. Before the first European Explorers arrived, some 10 millennia of human history had been lived here Continued on page 2



*Lieutenant-Governor Iona Campagnolo addressing guests at the Nikkei 125 Celebration Dinner. (Roy Hamiguchi photo, 2002)* 

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## Announcements

JCNM & NNHC *Mochitsuki* National Nikkei Heritage Centre Kingsway and Sperling Ave., Bby. Dec. 29, 2002, 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. mochi, manju and lunches for sale

Shinnenkai Japanese Canadian Community New Year's Celebration National Nikkei Heritage Centre, Jan. 18, 2003, 5:00 - 8:30 p.m. \$30 adults, \$20 children, includes buffet dinner.

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JAPANESE CANADIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM 6688 Southoaks Crescent, Burnaby, B.C., V5E 4M7 Canada tel: (604) 777-8000 fax: (604) 777-7001 jcnmas@telus.net www.jcnm.ca by the First Peoples. The human family that evolved here had lived in enclosed valleys, along the many hospitable Riverbanks and in protected pockets and coves on the rugged Coast. A densely forested land bordered by a wild and unpredictable Ocean kept most people from knowing each other. There was little need to communicate because the land and waters so abundantly supplied their needs for food, shelter and clothing. Over the centuries numerous 1st Nations and Aboriginal Peoples developed a host of different languages, cultures, traditions and beliefs that were sustained until the terrible new diseases began to take their appalling toll. By 1862, the population was on the way to being a tiny fraction of what it had once been, and the great diversity of cultures with all their songs, dances, languages and arts nearly died too.

To those Aboriginal People who remained, a very cosmopolitan mix of settlers were added, including German, Portuguese, Scots, English, Hawaiian, Chinese and even U. S. citizens and starting with Mr. Manzo Nagano: the Japanese. In the earliest days there seems to have been little evidence of antagonisms between them all and a special 'Rain Language' called Chinook was developed to communicate across the complexity of languages of the time. In those earliest days there were many examples of cooperation and good fellowship across racial and ethnic lines, but as the numbers of new citizens increased, the face of racism was unmasked and visible minorities began to be excluded from the good life they sought.

One of those exclusions continues to trouble our society through succeeding generations. My father worked for Anglo-BC Packing Company at North Pacific Cannery on the Skeena River. So like some of you, I was a Skeena River kid, born into the

fishing industry and convinced it was a world that would always exist! The Cannery was structured on the Colonial model with a carefully segregated strata of white bosses, blue collar whites, Japanese men who fished and Japanese women who were prized hand-canners, and Chinese and Aboriginal workers. We all lived in careful demarcation from each other, our tiny temporary houses were calibrated to demonstrate our status, and each located in a separate enclave. We shopped at the Company store, using Company Coupons or 'Scrip' instead of money adding to a total purchase that was deducted from our annual wage at the end of the Fishing Season. My first friends were Japanese and Aboriginal, we went to school together and we worked together but at the Cannery we were discouraged from playing together, although we always found ways to do so. (I began work in the cannery at age 10 for 42 cents an hour and suspect that some of you might have too.)

Following the bombing of Pearl Harbour and the US entry into World War 11, the internment of Canadian Citizens of Japanese Heritage to the Camps began in the spring of 1942 when I was nine. The Navy and the RCMP arrived at the little Cannery in the early Spring with instructions that were followed to the letter. The resulting upheaval was forever coupled in my mind with the coincidental removal of Aboriginal children from their homes to Residential Schools. These two events have influenced my personal philosophy and actions ever since!

I witnessed the great flotillas of Japanese owned Fishing Boats, lashed together and towed down the river to disposal points, where they were purchased at cut-rates by non-Japanese Fishers so that their owners could pay for their incarceration! I remember the great Custodial buildings packed to overflowing with confiscated furnishings and precious personal possessions of Japanese neighbours and friends, who were obliged to travel to the Camps with a minimum of hand-baggage. I remember standing on the dock and later beside the train tracks, watching my childhood friends and their families depart against their will, with tears on both sides! Even now, Sixty years later there remains an unresolved apprehension among many of us who witnessed the sad exodus. It was a grand occasion this past May, when I assisted the Mayne Islanders as they dedicated a splendid Japanese Garden to the memory of the families who had been interned, and then linked it to all the other Island residents from now on.

When the forced departures took place, hysteria was everywhere, there were stories of Japanese Army Colonels acting as "Spies" among us and the coastal Union Steamships were told to maintain blackouts so that "Japanese Submarines" would not torpedo them. When word came that Japanese bombers had struck Dutch Harbour, Alaska, we all moved to the mountains for a day. In such an atmosphere humiliation of the 'enemy', injustice and hate were frequently displayed and as with all such dark emotions a terrible price was paid, in lives blighted, hopes dashed and opportunities denied. Canadian Citizens of German and Italian descent were not removed to camps our Prime Minister McKenzie King said at the time so he could see no reason to treat Citizens of Japanese descent any differently, but British Columbians changed his mind. Canada treated its Citizens of Japanese heritage worse than the U.S. did: families were separated, internees were forced to pay the costs of their shabby incarceration and following the War, they were given a choice of either returning to Japan, a country most had never seen or not being allowed to return to the Pacific Coast until 1949. Not surprisingly many never returned to this province. Even when redress was finally won and an Apology accepted, none of us have forgotten, and few have forgiven ourselves for what occurred.

There were many after-effects of the internment: friendships were ended, major employers were lost, schools were closed. There were some voices of defense and support, a newspaper article of the time states that Japanese Canadians are "courteous, civil, hospitable and of excellent community spirit toward their fellow citizens". Christmas letters from internees to their neighbours often contained maps to hidden caches of sake and other elements of good cheer.

Scars remained for generations, but you have continued to be the loyal Canadians, some even joined the Canadian Armed Forces and fought for a Canada that would not even let them vote. Though now it is acknowledged that you were loyal, even when unjustly taken from your homes and penalized, you have continued to enrich the society that you share and your many strengths add positively to this multifaceted culture that are all still 'weaving together' in this precious place. I think of the writings of Ann Sunahara, of Joy Kogawa, of Ken Adachi. I am reminded of the wisdom of that magnificent civil servant, former Deputy Minister of Finance for Canada, Tommy Shoyama. B. C. has benefited greatly from the ideas and work of so many people of Japanese ancestry; people like T. Buck Suzuki and of course the remarkable Dr. David Suzuki, too. We have all learned to enjoy the best of Japanese culture in everything from fine food to those distinctive traditional Japanese gifts of reserve, minimalism, aestheticism and respect.

Our National Conscience demands that what happened to Canadian citizens of Japanese descent sixty years ago does not ever happen again. As we leave it to history, the 20th Century is beginning to come into focus; many of us believe it will be remembered as 100 years of blood and injustice. If this new 21st Century is to be remembered for something other than continued bloodletting and darkness, it is up to every citizen to work toward global human rights and balancing the existing Global Economy with a just Social and Environmental ethic and rule of law, that is capable of benefiting all people, not merely we privileged Westerners whose good fortune contrasts starkly with a world of people in need.

What can we do with what we have learned from the internment of Japanese Canadian Citizens? We can work right now to assure that Canadians of the Islamic Faith are protected from the kinds of injustice that took place six decades ago. We can reach out to them right now to secure their place in Canada as loyal Canadians. We can study and learn that Islam is NOT synonymous with terrorism and we can work to assure that our fellow citizens appreciate that loyal Moslem Canadians DO NOT represent a threat to our Nation!

A few days ago, we experienced a re-telling of last year's terror attack. We now know that the United States and our major Canadian population centers were protected by a decision that directed hundreds of possibly terrorist passenger Air Planes to Airports in our outlying areas. The peoples of Yukon, the Maritimes and Newfoundland accepted their role and rather than protesting the threat to themselves, gave hospitality and kindness in return. In thanks, a Texan expressed his gratitude on television by saying,

"You still have something in Canada that we have lost in the U. S."

That elusive quality of humanity and 'generosity of spirit' that many Canadians still have is our secret weapon and one of our greatest national treasures. We can keep faith with those who gave us our birthright, if we assure that the curse of history forgotten is NEVER visited on those generations who follow us! As the great founder of Aikido, Morihei Ueshiba taught us: 'The divine is not something high above us. It is in heaven, it is in earth, it is inside us.' As your Lieutenant Governor, I am, like you, very proud of our beautiful British Columbia, but I am keenly aware that its most important beauty rests in hearts of its people! We have learned much together. The experience of the Nikkei in Canada has helped us all to better understand a fundamental 21st Century truth, that is: if the human family is to survive and our civilization be sustained: we must honour ALL the world's descendants with the same respect that we once reserved only to our own ancestors! a

# Japanese Canadian National Museum President's Report, 2001-2002 by Stan Fukawa

Museum's Purpose (Mission): "to promote a better understanding and appreciation by all Canadians of Japanese Canadian culture" and "to promote an awareness of the contributions of Japanese Canadians to Canadian society." – the Constitution of the JCNM.

The Museum, in the 2001-2002 Year, has had a challenging year. Boards of directors, over the years, have tried to build and maintain a cooperative and mutually respectful team including staff, volunteers, members, donors, users and the Board. A capable and dedicated team can, with the aid of supporters and friends, endure the ups and downs that inevitably visit all organizations and accomplish important goals. The accomplishments of the past year bear convincing testimony to the strength of an organization, even in the face of difficulties.

### The Merger:

The Board has negotiated a merger with the National Nikkei Heritage Centre Society (NNHCS) which will maintain the name of the Japanese Canadian National Museum, and the basis of a national museum in the scope of its work. In a period when funding is a problem and the number of competing Nikkei organizations is large, it makes a great deal of sense to merge with an organization with the same purposes in its Constitution, a shared belief in the mutual benefits of a merger, and an impressive record in fundraising. It is not only in the for-profit world that rationalization holds promise. Our communications with our members on this critical decision resulted in an impressive participation rate and the approval of the merger decision by a remarkable 95.1% of the votes.

#### Nikkei Week 125:

The JCNM Board took a major leadership role with the NNHCS, in a 5-group co-sponsorship of a major historical Japanese Canadian event, Nikkei Week 125, which celebrated 125 years of Japanese settlement in Canada. Audiences inside and outside of the Japanese Canadian community -5000 of them, attended the events during the nine days and many more heard about it and read about it in the media. The CBC had daily notices and interviews and lengthy articles appeared in the Japanese language press and community newspapers.

The Lieut. Governor, the Honourable Iona Campagnolo, in her sympathetic speeches at the opening dinner and at the unveiling of the Japanese Fishermen's Memorial sculpture, gave an official recognition of the injustices suffered by many Nikkei. The families of Manzo Nagano and Tomekichi Homma came from far and wide and their participation in the speeches and historical session, and attendance at many events throughout the week, brought a sense of history.

Onsite events at Nikkei Place included the opening of Nikkei Home (Sept. 13), the Gala Dinner (Sept. 14), Family Histories and Harry Aoki's Last Powell St. Concert (Sept. 17), the Nagano – Homma Evening (Sept. 18), the Internment Reunion Dinner (Sept. 19), a Taiko Concert (Sept. 20), and the Nikkei Festival (Sept. 21-22). Off-site events were "Obaachan's Garden" in downtown Vancouver (Sept. 16), the re-naming of the New World Hotel on Powell St. as Tamura House in honour of the pre-war Nikkei banker (Sept. 18) and the Japanese Fishermen's Memorial unveiling in Steveston (Sept. 20).

## Exhibitions:

We had three exhibitions during the past year. The very professional inaugural exhibit, "Reshaping memory..." focusing on internment, opened in September, 2000. It was created by our second Executive Director, Grace Thomson, who was very successful in fundraising for it. She was aided in the exhibit by the Museum Collections Curator Susan Sirovyak,

Vancouver museum designer David Jensen, and the Miki/Kobayashi book, "Justice in Our Time." As an educational resource for visiting classes, the exhibit was teamed with an NFB video, a social studies workbook created by teachers, and a session with internment camp survivors. The importance of living people in museum offerings was attested to by the highest ratings being awarded by social studies' teachers to the survivors' talk over the other parts of the program. In November, 2001, the inaugural exhibit was sent on a 2002 tour of Nanaimo, Port Alberni and Campbell River. The year 2003 will see it going east to the Prairies and Ontario.

The second exhibition was a return visit of "Unearthed from the Silence" about the pre-war Steveston Japanese Canadian community and is a collaborative production with the Richmond Museum. JCNM staff, including the first Executive Director, Michael Wilson, played a key role in creating this exhibit which was shown earlier at our East Broadway location.

The third exhibition was Dr. Henry Shimizu's very fine "Images of Internment" consisting mainly of his paintings of life in the New Denver internment community. It arrived August 20 and stayed in the Museum gallery until Sept. 19. It missed the last three days of Nikkei Week due to a prior commitment and thereby lost an opportunity to be seen by thousands of visitors to the Nikkei Week festival on Sept. 21-22.

#### Collections:

Over the past year, our collection has been enriched by the addition of bound copies of the New Canadian, a gift from Thomas Shoyama and the estate of Mrs. Chiyo Umezuki (late widow of longtime publisher Takaichi Umezuki). Another significant gift was delivered in September, the Jitaro and Sumiko Tanaka Collection of archival materials including a typewritten diary of the war years, scrapbooks of newspaper clippings and reports written by Mr. Tanaka on significant items like the Mass Evacuation Group and the hearing on Morii's purported gangsterism and links to the Black Dragon Society. Mr. Tanaka was advisor to and representative of the Spanish Consul who was responsible for protecting the human rights of Japanese aliens. He was also, in 1926, a member of the Asahi baseball team (which were the Terminal League champions) together with two brothers and four brothers-in-law.

#### Work with Nikkei Organizations:

We have been assisting the Japanese Fishermen's Reunion Committee in honouring and preserving the history of the Japanese fishers who have contributed so much to this key B.C. industry. Our aid has been in financial management and the preparation of the photo exhibit.

The Museum annually supports the Powell St. Festival in August, including pre-selling raffle tickets. This year we had two booths: one in the Buddhist Church selling books, videos and a map of the prewar Powell Street Japanese community, and the other in the Nikkei Place tent, explaining our work. The Museum's Powell Street Walking Tour was a hit as always. Both Board and staff have been involved in this work with Nikkei organizations.

#### Work with educational institutions:

In late August, the JCNM was recognized by the organizers of the University of Victoria conference "Changing Japanese Identity in a Multicultural Canada" as a major supporter and participant in that

conference. A museum panel mainly dealing with oral history, included two Board members (Dr. Paul Kariya and Stan Fukawa), a former employee (Reiko Tagami) and a museum volunteer (Mary Kitagawa). Museum staff, Daien Ide and Kenji Morishita were at the Museum table to explain our work to Conference participants, and Kenji, a university student hired on a summer government subsidy showed his excellent Power Point presentation of photographs from the Museum collections. Reports were also presented by Grace Thomson and Jim Wolf from the JCNM involvement with the UVic Art Dept. in a two-year project on pre-war Japanese Canadian photographers.

Social studies teachers in the public school system are keenly interested in the Museum, especially in the context of the internment. Exhibit-centred programs, traveling suitcase programs, internment survivors as speakers have been and will continue to be requested.

## Newsletter and Web-site:

The Museum's newsletter, "Nikkei Images," has had a banner year with issues running more pages and stories than ever before in its history. The most recent issue covered subjects as diverse as the history of Kendo in Canada, Japanese Canadian contributions to fishing technology, memories of the internment years, the memorial to the vanished Terminal Island Japanese American fishing community, tributes to Tommy Shoyama, Toyo Takata and Tsuneharu Gonnami, and a ceremony dedicating a Japanese garden on Mayne Island. The Museum website, www.jcnm.ca, has been in operation for the past two years and its potential is enormous. Both these important arms of the Museum are the work of volunteers.

The Museum in Japan:

An international project initiated by the JCNM in celebration of the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Japanese Canadian heritage is to introduce, to Japan, the film, "Obaachan's Garden" by Linda Ohama. Tama Copithorne, the Museum Board Programs co-chair has been working tirelessly - to create the subtitles in Japanese, and in negotiations with Linda, the NFB, the Canadian Dept. Of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Toyota Canada, Canadian Embassy in Japan, the Japanese Prime Minister's Office, Canada-Japan Friendship Societies, Asahi Shimbun and many host organizations in Japan, to obtain the support required to show the film in Japan. Linda, her daughter Caitlin and Tama will be taking the film on a tour of Japan to 15 venues from Hokkaido to Kagoshima during the month of November.

In April of this year, I made a pilgrimage to Manzo Nagano's last resting place in Kuchinotsu village, Nagasaki prefecture Japan. I received a very enthusiastic reception from the Mayor of Kuchinotsu and the Governor of Nagasaki. The Mayor fell ill in the summer and was unable to attend the Nikkei Week 125 celebration. Relationships were begun with the Canada Museum in Wakayama-ken (which has material on the immigrants to Canada from Mio village) and with the Kuchinotsu Museum. Japanese scholars in immigrant studies can help us greatly.

Other Accomplishments:

Fundraising, Meeting National Advisors, Mochitsuki,

Assistance to Researchers, Continuation of Translation of Archival Materials by Volunteers, Board Planning Session, Museum Volunteers and NNHCS Volunteers Begin Working Together & Getting Acquainted.

Our Search for a Manager/Curator:

The second Executive Director in the Museum's history, Grace Thomson, submitted her resignation in January, 2002. The Board regretfully accepted it and hired her, on contract, to complete the projects that she had begun. This contract ended May 31, at the end of our fiscal year. Her dedication, work ethic and expertise contributed to the development of the Museum.

A search for the third Executive Director was advertised in June and the process did not run its course due to the change from a Part-Time position, reporting to the Museum Board, to a Full-Time position, reporting to the CEO, Nikkei Place. This change was necessitated because of the impending merger and the rationalization of roles. The new position will be called Manager/ Curator. The advertising is on the internet and will be carried in the November issues of the Greater Vancouver JCCA Bulletin and the Nikkei Voice.

Appreciation and Looking Ahead:

This is my last opportunity to speak as President of the Japanese Canadian National Museum before it becomes merged with the National Nikkei Heritage Centre Society. I would like to thank everyone who has been associated with the Museum from its inception. Each Board and

staff and corps of volunteers has had to struggle against ever-changing challenges but all of them have been very committed to the Museum, and have maintained their loyalty and dedication. Small staff size has been a constant part of the Museum, requiring staff to be flexible and resourceful, while offering a varied work schedule and experience in different aspects of the enterprise. The past year required staff to work with minimal supervision but this has been true of most of the Museum's history. Volunteers, the backbone of the Museum from its days as a subcommittee in the JCCA, have continued to support us in office work, research and translation, fundraising activities and professional services. The Board of Directors, also volunteers, have been required to spend a lot of time this year on particularly difficult issues. They have been very principled, patient and caring in the exercise of their duties. Thank you all.

The success of the museum to date has been dependent on the commitment of many people who have been motivated by an understanding of the importance of history and of the JCNM as a historypreserving institution. The impact of such events as Nikkei Week 125 and other parts of the museum program will broaden the circle of those who understand both. This bodes well for the future of the Museum and of the union with the NNHCS. Our merged society will assist in both the development of a stronger Japanese Canadian community and a stronger multicultural Canada through its continued pursuit of the organization's mission. a

## JCNM & NNHC Mochitsuki National Nikkei Heritage Centre, Kingsway and Sperling Ave., Bby. Dec. 29, 2002, 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. mochi, manju and lunches for sale

# UVic Conference "Changing Japanese Identities in Multicultural Canada" by Stan Fukawa

The Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives at the University of Victoria sponsored the above-named conference from Aug. 22 to Aug. 24, 2002 on their campus. Organizers of the event, Midge Ayukawa, Joseph Kess, and Hiroko Noro, were very pleased with the outcome. It was well attended with over 200 delegates from across Canada, the U.S. and many from Japan – with representatives of both academic and community groups well represented.

In his introduction, Joseph Kess said, "Since the 1970's Canada has chosen to incorporate the concept of multiculturalism as a defining criterion of itself as a diverse and tolerant society, and Japanese-Canadians have probably had more to do with our realizing the values of multi-culturalism than any other group in this society. Though numerically small, their accomplishments as an ethnic group are astonishing, and so we thought it was appropriate at this historic point to celebrate this in a conference that paid attention to their experiences in Canada, as well as the changes they have felt in their own perceptions of Canada and Canadian society."

A sophisticated and personal keynote address by Roy Miki of the Simon Fraser University English Department followed, setting a serious and critical tone to the Conference, perhaps appropriate to the subject matter of an ethnic group which had been transformed, as he said, from "enemy alien" to "model minority" within a few decades. In introducing Roy Miki, Midge Ayukawa paid tribute to the importance of his tightly-honed linguistic skills in the choice of words in the struggle for Japanese Canadian Redress.

It was wonderful to meet and converse with "Tommy" Shoyama at the Conference and the Conference dinner. His smile is still a winning one and his mind is clear. Midge Ayukawa paid a well-deserved tribute to him at the dinner as our "Living National Treasure."

Another highlight was the after-dinner speech by the multi-talented Terry Watada, who showed up as a stand-up comic and regaled us with self-deprecating stories about his adventures with Asian gangsters who interpreted his failure to win fame in the white media as an honorable refusal to sell out. The sessions themselves were immensely varied, covering everything from history, religion, art, language and literature relating to Nikkei, to concerns for cultural and linguistic retention, multiculturalism in Japan, negotiating and discovering identity, women's identity, youth and aging. They ranged from simple oral histories to complex-sounding political analyses.

Nikkei make up less than a quarter of one per cent of the population of Canada. And yet this conference spoke to a much larger issue—that of the immense struggle of minorities (including women) against the overwhelming power of the majority which defines reality for the whole society and often sets the priorities—not surprisingly—in a selfserving way, without realizing how self-serving and unjust it is.

The Japanese Canadian National Museum was represented by staffers Daien Ide and Kenji Morishita who manned the Museum table and showed the photo display created by Kenji, and Panelists Paul Kariya, Mary Kitagawa, Reiko Tagami and panel moderator Stan Fukawa. a

## Early Japanese Canadian Community in Tofino by Midge Avukawa with Edward Arnet

It all began in February, 2001 with a phone call from Mary Kimoto of Ucluelet saying she had been asked by Frank Kamiya of the JCNM about a stone *usu* that Mrs. Okada had used in Clayoquot Island to make *kamaboko*. (Nikkei Images, Winter 2001, Vol.6, No.4). Mary had the *usu* in her back yard but she had promised it to the planned Ucluelet museum. She said that there was, however, another *usu* which the Nishimura family had left behind in Tofino in 1942. According to Mary, Ed Arnet, whose grandparents had been pioneer Norwegians in the Tofino area had the *usu* and he lived in the Victoria area.

It was not until early June, however, when a glance in the Victoria phone book and a phone call led to an invitation to the Arnet home in North Saanich, north of Victoria. Ed and his wife Dorothy showed me the Nishimura *usu* placed close to their front door, filled with colourful flowers. (See photo of Ed Arnet with the *usu*.) What followed has been a most rewarding cooperative venture in gathering a historical record of the Japanese families that had lived in the Tofino area since about 1917.

A number of Japanese families had rented property and houses on land owned by Ed's maternal grandfather, John Eik. By coincidence, it was on the very land adjacent to the "Eik Tree", an 800 year-old cedar tree which was getting extensive coverage in the media at the time that I was meeting with the



Edward Arnet with the Nishimura usu used as a flower pot holder. (Midge Ayukawa photo, 2002)

Arnets. The tree was slated to be cut down to make way for town-houses which were to be built on stilts to preserve the Indian midden below. (The Victoria Times-Colonist, November 21, 2001.) After a spirited protest which included a man who climbed the tree and refused to come down, a moratorium was reached when it was agreed that money would be raised by the Tofino Natural Heritage Society to build a support structure for the tree. One of the arguments for the tree's removal had been a "liability issue" due to its frailty.

In the following months, after our initial meeting, Ed, Dorothy, and Ed's cousin Marjorie Sallaway (nee Sloman) who had kept in touch with a number of Japanese Canadians, provided me with photos, correspondence with Japanese Canadian friends, and their grandfather Eik's account books. According to records that John Eik meticulously kept of his property (settlement #1 on the map, drawn by Tim de Lange Boom), some of the families that rented houses from him were Sakauye, Yoshida, Watanabe, Tosa, Kawaguchi, and Nishimura. Ed also named others such as Dabu (Tabe?), Hamanaka, and Sakaguchi who lived at West Marina near Eik Bay (#2). There were also other small pockets of Japanese in the Tofino area. In Storm Bay (#3) lived Morishita, Izumi, Mori, Nakagawa, Madokoro, and Kondo. The 1941 Tairiku listed others such as Ezaki, Katsuro, and in nearby Clayoquot (#4 Stubbs Island), Igarashi, Karatsu, Katsuro, Kimoto, and Okada families. The Nakai family lived near Grice Point (#5) at site #6. Mr. Nakai worked at the fishbuying station nearby while his wife taught at the Japanese School (#7).

Ed painstakingly drew a detailed sketch, reproduced here, of the Eik property where some of the Japanese had lived. (See sketch). The previously mentioned 800 year-old tree, and the various homes and outbuildings are clearly shown. The Japanese built a dam about 16 feet wide and 4 feet deep across the stream to catch water. They then buried a two and a half inch water pipe behind the houses, which had branches to provide each home with fresh pure water throughout the year. There were also taps for the vegetable gardens and the 12 by 14 feet greenhouse. There was also a communal Japanese bathhouse and tall poles on the property from which salted salmon were hung out to dry. (See the legend).

The *usu* that had led to our meeting had been used by Mrs. Nishimura. (There is a Nishimura Chonosuke from Wakayama-ken in the Tairiku Nipposha list, September, 1941, and in the December 1942 record of people in Bay Farm, he is listed with wife Chiyo and family.) Mr. Nishimura had asked Ed's father's friend, Ralph Trelvik, a blacksmith/mechanic who serviced Japanese fishing boats to rig up the mechanism in the summer of 1940. A car engine turned a belt-drive, which in turn drove the hammer that pounded up and down and mashed the fish. The machine was in a workshop adjacent to the house that the Nishimura family rented from John Eik.

The *kamaboko* was made from fresh cod, and then canned. Ed believed that the Nishimuras had hoped to export it but the bombing of Pearl Harbour and the subsequent expulsion had prevented the fruition of the enterprise. When the Nishimuras were sent to Hastings Park, they left behind in the shed fifteen to twenty cases each of which contained 48 cans. Ed said that in 1946 when he and his father checked the cans, the ends were bulging, and the contents were a pale yellow. They opened the cans, poked holes, and dumped them off-shore.

In the spring of 1942, the Japanese had left their fishing gear, household items, and many cords of firewood. Ed provided me with correspondence from the office of the Custodian in the Department of the



Map of the Tofino area and the location of Japanese settlements. (Tim de Lange Boom drawing, 2002)

Secretary of State, listing all the articles which had been declared by the Japanese Canadians. The Custodian asked John Eik to confirm the information. Later in the winter of 1944/45 Mr. Eik was asked to sell everything and forward the money. (Copies of these letters are now at the JCNM.)

Dorothy and Ed Arnet have industriously and enthusiastically gathered together and reproduced a number of photographs of the area, class photos, and Scout troops. These are also deposited in the JCNM as a record and resource for researchers of the Japanese community in the Tofino area pre-1942. Included in the collection is an eulogy delivered by Edward Arnet at the funeral of Tom Kimoto in April 6, 1985, in Ucluelet.

Although we seem to dwell on the past injustices and the discriminatory attitudes and practices of the mainstream BC populace, it was most pleasant to learn that in the Tofino area there were families like



Schematic drawing by Edward Arnet showing the Japanese settlement on John Eik's property. 1.Eik Street cedar 2.Fresh water storage area 3.Stairs to Eik house 4.Tofino village road 5.Yoshi Kawaguchi home 5a.Wood storage and work area 6.Boardwalk to fishing boat moorage 7.Fresh water stream 8.Vegetable garden 9.Greenhouse 10.Wood storage shed, also used to dry seaweed 11.25/30-feet poles to sun-dry fish 12.Watanabe home 13.Yoshida home 14.Sakauye home 15.Takeo Sakauye home, second son 16.Takeo Tosa home, bachelor 17.Nishimura home 18.Kamaboko shed 19.Shed for storing fishing gear 20. Stairway to school and Tofino village

the Jacob Arnets and John Eiks who were friendly neighbours and mentors. There is a photo of the Boy Scouts in which Japanese boys were active members. This contrasts starkly with the highly-publicized story of Chemainus, Vancouver Island, in which the late Shig Yoshida was not accepted in the local troop, became a Lone Eagle Scout by correspondence, and later led Japanese Canadian Scout troops in Chemainus and Tashme.

Ed showed me a photo he had received from his friend, Hiero Izumi, sent from Hastings Park in 1942. It had been enclosed in a letter in which he wrote that he missed Tofino. Ed said he replied, but did not hear from him again. Hiero had been "repatriated" it appears, according to a passage in Frank Moritsugu's "Teaching in Canadian Exile", p. 351. Perhaps Hiero may read this and will contact Ed. It will be a most rewarding climax to this whole cooperative endeavour. a

# A Nagaya in Vancouver by Kiyoshi Shimizu

From 1924 until 1933 when I was four to thirteen years of age, my family lived in a nagaya (literal translation - longhouse) at 1934 Triumph Street between Victoria Drive and Semlin Drive, one block south of Powell Street in the Heaps neighbourhood. Within four blocks of our building, there were three other nagaya built by Japanese entrepreneurs to provide inexpensive housing for newly arrived immigrants. For many families who lived there, these nagaya provided the kind of support for young families that housing coops try to generate for their members.

My family had moved there from a logging camp in a remote forested area of the Lower Mainland so my older sister who had just passed her sixth birthday, could attend school. Shortly after she started school, one of our twin baby brothers died. Our father went back to logging leaving his family behind, but that winter after our move, he crushed his left leg in an accident, and spent the next nine years in and out of the Vancouver General Hospital. Those years must have been extremely difficult for our parents, but I remember them as relatively stable and carefree years as we had other mothers keeping an eye on us whenever our mother had to be at the hospital or somewhere else. My sister and I were the oldest among the children, and we passed many happy and productive weekends and summers, playing "school" and organizing games, while minding the younger ones.

I can only provide details about our nagaya, but I assume that the facilities were very similar, with some minor differences. On the ground floor where our family lived there was a central corridor with four large rooms on the west side and a more open space at the back where a sink, two toilets, and an alcove where a kitchen stove and counter were located. On the east side were five rooms. Each room had a door into the corridor, and some of the rooms had interior doors connecting the rooms. The two families living on the ground floor rented three rooms each, using one room as a kitchen/eating area, and in the case of our family, one room as a bed-sitting room with a wall bed that folded up during the day, for our parents, and the third room with an adjoining door, as a bedroom for the three children. Three rooms at the back were occupied by single men who cooked on hot plates in their own rooms, except for the man occupying the rear room. He was able to use the stove in the alcove at the back. On the second floor four families occupied the nine rooms. In the back there was a more spacious area without an alcove and a veranda, where the smallest children played close to their mothers.

The facilities were pretty basic. We carried water from the sink to our kitchen, and heated water for dishwashing on the stove, using the kitchen table to do that chore. We took turns cleaning the toilets, sink area and corridor. A telephone was



Koyuki Yesaki and Oine Madakoro by Matsumoto nagaya on Fourth Avenue. (Yesaki Family photo, ca. 1935)

installed in the front unit, and all the residents in the *nagaya* shared in the cost. A *furo* (hot tub) was available in the basement and was maintained cooperatively. Water from the *furo* was used the following day for laundry by some of the families, but I can recall that our mother did her washing in the kitchen with water heated on top of the stove.

In our *nagaya* there was a fairly stable population of six families during the nine years we were there. When a vacancy occurred, another family moved in soon after. Two of the single rooms were occupied by the same man. In the third

single room, students from Japan seemed to come and go.

My parents were innovators, and my recollection is that they provided some leadership to the *nagaya* community. For instance our logger father supervised the clearing of land on the west side of the building so that all the families could grow their own vegetables. The east side was marshy, and after negotiations with two neighbouring families, a drainage ditch was constructed by the men through these properties to a brook running on the east side of the second property. A *tanomoshi* was organized by the group to provide a lump sum of money to assist one of the families in an emergency, and this way of helping each other was revived from time to time. New Year's was a special time in the *nagaya* with *mochitsuki* an annual event, and a great deal of visiting among families and their friends. Fathers were often absent for months at a time, but the mothers received support from each other. I am sure there were tensions between families but somehow they seemed to be overcome.

In 1934 the *nagaya* at 1934 Triumph Street was taken over by Mr. and Mrs. Aoki who came from Cumberland to establish "Meiwa Gakuen" in the building. I attended classes there to complete my 7th and 8th years of Japanese schooling from 1934 to 1936. a

# Proposed Project for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Steveston Judo Club by Alan Sakai

The Steveston Judo Club in its current form is celebrating its 50th anniversary year in 2003 and we plan to use the year to heighten awareness of the benefits of studying judo. We also, would like to bring to light the contributions the Japanese Canadian seniors and other judo club members have made to the Richmond community by teaching judo and by participating in such joint projects as the construction and enhancement of the Steveston Community Centre and the Steveston Martial Arts Centre. We would like to retell the story of the way in which the Japanese Canadian citizens conducted themselves after the war and internment to fully participate in the Canadian society. Moreover, we would like to show

how the club has become a multicultural organization, which has members of diverse ethnic origins. To relate this story we have planned the following events.

Firstly, we would like to highlight the accomplishments and the contributions the Judo Club members have made to the community. We plan to host an open house for the community at large where we will be recognizing the original sensei of the club with special plaques to be hung in the Martial Arts Centre and to review the history of the club with a photo gallery. Only three of the original 10 sensei are still with us at this time. This will be done in February at our annual senior tournament.



Steveston Martial Arts Centre. (Steveston Judo Club photo, 1972)

We also plan to have a reunion of all current and former members and friends of the club. In conjunction with this event we would like to restore an original calligraphy written by Professor Kano, which was done in 1938. Professor Kano was on his way back to Japan from an International Olympic Committee meeting in Cairo, Egypt. He visited Vancouver and wrote two large calligraphies on canvas for the Vancouver Judo Club and the Steveston Judo Club. On his way back to Japan on the HIKAWA MARU, Professor Kano passed away. During the war years Mr. T. Doi kept this writing and when the Club was restarted in 1953 he brought it out to be displayed. It currently hangs in our Judo Club. It has some water spots and other damage and needs to be restored. We would like to restore this print and rededicate it and our commitment to continuing the study and teaching of Judo at the reunion.

The third major project we have is to make a video history of the Steveston Judo Club from 1927 to the present. This would cover not only the history of the Club, but will also highlight the contributions Japanese Canadians have made to the multicultural society of Canada. We feel that the history of the Japanese Canadian people in Canada needs to be preserved for this and future generations. We have consulted with various agencies and companies, including Ken Kuramoto of Coyote Films Ltd. The cost would depend on the quality and length of the video. We would like to produce one that would be of television broadcast quality. We will be approaching other agencies to assist with the funding of this project. This would be presented at a number of venues but specifically at the final year-end banquet celebrating the end of the 50th year anniversary. a

# A Perfect Gift For The Holidays at the Museum Shop by Grace Thomson

**Re-shaping Memory, Owning History: Through the Lens of Japanese Canadian Redress**, by the Japanese Canadian National Museum, 84 pages, \$15.00

The catalogue documents the inaugural exhibition through reproductions of photographic images from both public and private collections which participated in the exhibition, including those from the Japanese Canadian National Museum's own archives. Essays, by Midge Ayukawa, Roy Miki, and Yuko Shibata, provide significant insights into the exhibition's thesis. The exhibition is about a history in the making since the achievement of redress on September 22, 1988. It discusses the circumstances and conditions of the internment of Japanese Canadians during World War II. Installation photos and various quotes/voices from history are integrated with the text. The catalogue is in English, with essays translated into French and Japanese.

<image><section-header>

Cover of the catalogue of the inaugural exhibition.

# Roy Miki Wins 2002 Governor General's Award for Poetry

Roy Miki has won the 2002 Governor General's Award for Poetry for his book, *SURRENDER*. This book is published by The Mercury Press and distributed by Fraser Direct (ISBN 1-55128-095-7).

Adrienne Clarkson, Gov-

ernor General of Canada, presented the awards at a ceremony at Rideau Hall on Tuesday, November 19, at 4 p.m. Each laureate received a cheque for \$15,000 and a specially crafted copy of the winning book bound by master bookbinder, Pierre Ouvrard. The Governor General also presented certificates to the publishers of the winning books, and The Canada Council provided each publisher with a \$3,000 grant to support promotional activities for the winning book. a

# Shinnenkai

Japanese Canadian Community New Year's Celebration National Nikkei Heritage Centre, January 18, 2003, 5:00 - 8:30 p.m. \$30 for adults, \$20 for children, includes buffet dinner

# How Long Was Amerika's Five Years by Larry Maekawa

When I was studying in Japan, I stayed with my grandparents. Grandfather was a man of few words, but Grandmother was a chatty person. She used to tell me all the stories that happened in the village. She was in her mid-seventies and was a great cook, but to my disappointment they were vegetarians. No one in the village ate meat in those days.

One day Grandmother asked me "Is it true that people in Amerika eat cows and pigs, and did you eat them too?"

"Yes, I did, Grandma."

*"Oh, my dear!"* she cried and held her breath.

Although they treated me like a prince, eating meat was strictly forbidden. As I look back it is hard, to imagine that I spent my adolescent years without eating meat – perhaps this is why I am enjoying a healthy life now.

Then came the tearful day to bid them farewell to them. I was leaving for Canada. Grandmother was eighty and Grandfather was eighty-four. They stood at the gate with lonely looks on their faces.

I bowed to them and said, "I'll be back in five years. Please take care and keep well until then."

"My dear son," said Grandmother, with tears rolling down her cheeks, "Amerika's five years is very long, you know. When your Dad first left for Amerika, he was eighteen years old and told me the very same thing. I'll be back in five years. It was ten years later when he returned. He got married and went back to Amerika with your Mother. Again he said, I'll be back in five



Larry Maekawa (left) and siblings before leaving for Japan. (Maekawa Family photo, 1929)

years. This time it took him seventeen years to come back! Amerika's five years seems so long."

"Grandma, I will do my best to send Mom and Dad home as soon as possible," I promised her and then we parted. How they must have counted the fruitless days for their loved ones to return. In those days Japan seemed so far away from Canada. It took eight days for CPR Empress ships to cross from Vancouver to Yokohama, and twelve days for Japanese NYK Line Maru ships. Mail took one month to reach its destination. They had no long distance telephone. How the Japanese pioneers and their families in Japan must have worried about each other in those inconvenient days.

Upon returning from Japan, I mentioned to Mother and Father how patiently their parents were waiting for them. Father sighed and said, "I am well aware of my duty and responsibility to return home and to take care of my aging parents. But things do not always turn out, as I want. You are too young and inexperienced to be left alone here. I must stay with you for a few more years."

In the spring of 1939 Father retired from fishing and I took over his trolling license. Within a year, I became a fully qualified troller. Father was satisfied with my progress and started preparing to return to Japan. It was 1941 - five years after I parted with my Grandparents. I was delighted at being able to keep my promise to them. Unfortunately, the Pacific War in December 1941 put an end to our anticipations, and Grandmother's long awaited golden dream of a family reunion was destined never to be fulfilled. And my Grandmother's voice, "How long was Amerika's five years," still echoes in my ears. a

# 2002 A.D. - 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Interment

Memories of East Lillooet by Larry Maekawa



WHO CARES fishing herring in 1942. (Asari Family photo, 1942)

Canada was already at war with Germany in 1941. However the economy was booming and it was a good year for fishermen. Many Japanese fishermen were placing orders for new fishing boats. Sadajiro Asari was contracted to build a forty-foot seiner for his Finnish friend, Ted Davidson, of Sointula near Alert Bay. In the midst of the construction, the Japanese navy suddenly attacked Pearl Harbour. Immediately, all fishing vessels owned by Japanese Canadians were impounded by the Canadian Navy. All Japanese boat builders closed their boat shops with unfinished boats. But Asari was building a boat for a Caucasian fisherman and was able to get permission to complete the boat. The Asari Boat Works was on Sea Island, where over sixty Japanese families lived. It was a harmonious and lively community since early 1900.

Meanwhile, mass evacuations of all persons of Japanese origin were being enforced by the Mounted Police. In the beginning they detained the evacuees from the coast in the livestock buildings at Hastings Park. From here, men of military age were forced to go and work on the road camps in Northern Ontario. Leaving their families behind in that horrible Hastings Park was a painful separation. Young men started to disobey government orders, and the R.C.M.P. were running into difficulties in rounding up the men.

At the time, there was a chronic labour shortage in the Prairies. The government took advantage of this situation and started sending Japanese families to the sugar beet farms. On the other hand, the government was also sponsoring self-supporting communities in the interior of B.C. Sadajiro Asari chose East Lillooet as his family's destination. But because of his contract to build Ted Davidson's boat, he and his family stayed behind. He hired two helpers to hasten the completion of the boat, but they were ordered by the government to leave immediately for the Alberta sugar beet farms. Their departure delayed the completion of the boat, leaving Asari to work ten to twelve hours a day.

After the Japanese were evacuated from Sea Island, the Asari family was left in the midst of a ghost town. Besides being lonely, their anxieties and fears for the future were unbearable. Finally the boat was launched in early May, and named "WHO CARES". With the completion of the boat, the Asaris had to pack in a hurry. They were only allowed to take the necessities. As they did not know if they would be separated, they packed a bag for each member of the family. In mid May, they finally set off for East Lillooet via the ferry to Squamish, then the P.G.E. Railway to Lillooet. Upon their arrival, they found 62 houses had already been built by the first evacuees, who had arrived in early May, mainly from Vancouver, Haney and Ucluelet.

East Lillooet was an uninhabited piece of land on the east side of the Fraser River, opposite the town of Lillooet. To their surprise all they could see was a tract of land covered with sage bush. The houses were

Some of the tarpaper shacks of the self-supporting Japanese community of East Lillooet. (Asari Family photo, ca. 1943)



roughly built with 2 by 4 stud frames and outside shells of clapboard, covered with tarpaper. The interiors of the houses were partitioned according to each families' needs.

There was no drinking water, so families had to haul water by buckets from the muddy Fraser. Drinking water is one of the most important necessities of life. Why did the government ever allow the evacuees to move to such a place where there was no drinking water? Asari and a few others noticed a flume built along the sage bush field. They assumed there must be a pump somewhere around, so they searched along the bank of the river until they found the pump. Asari with his experience repairing the engine in his packer boat, took the pump apart and had it working. The men then built a wooden reservoir tank, and filled it with sand and gravel to filter the muddy water. At last people were able to get clear water, but they still had to boil it before drinking.

The East Lillooet community also did not have electricity. At night, the only light available was from kerosene lamps.

After the community got pumped water from the river, the men cleared a portion of the land and started farming to generate income. Lillooet with its hot climate and rich soil was ideal for growing vegetables. They dug cellars under their homes and learned how to preserve produce from the experienced farmers of Haney. Somehow they worked through the hot summer weather, with temperatures well over 100° F.

With winter approaching and warnings that temperatures would dip below  $30^{\circ}$  F., everyone started to cut firewood in a hurry. As expected, they went through the severest winter they had ever experienced.

The following summer, they cleared away sage bush, irrigated the



Asaris operated the Mayhome Rooms as a bed and breakfast hostel after the war. (Asari Family photo, ca. 1947)

land and started growing tomatoes. Fortunately, the sandy soil was ideally suited for tomatoes. With everyone working together, they grew the best tomatoes in the area. A packinghouse and a cannery were built to process the production from the flourishing tomato farms. The Japanese farmers supplied tomatoes to these factories until the end of the war.

They built a school and a community center. Young adults with the most education were selected to teach the younger children. The Canadian government did not put in a penny to assist in the education program.

In 1947, Asari was hired by the Chinese owner to restore his deteriorating Parks General Store. He later renovated Jim's General Store, which was also owned by a Chinese. In November of that year, Asari bought Mayhome Rooms, which was located in the heart of the town. The house was built by an English immigrant in the Gold Rush era. It had been kept in good condition and furnished with old English furniture. Mrs. Asari started a bed and breakfast business with this building which did well. He modified Mayhome's spacious living room into a doctor's office. As Lillooet was the entrance into the Caribou District, people traveling to and from Vancouver, stopped in this town.

Asari was also involved in the expansion of the town courthouse and in building a new school. He worked with a contractor to convert another large private home into a hospital. Thus, the town of Lillooet was thriving once again.

As I look back on these chaotic evacuation days, the first recollection that comes to mind is the suffering and hardship experienced by our elders. They were met with anti-Japanese fanatics as soon as they landed in Canada and fell prey to racist politicians. They struggled through the "Dirty Thirties". During World War II, they were uprooted from their homes and lost all their possessions. But they bravely withstood all these difficulties. We are deeply indebted to our elders for their perseverance and courage in planting our roots firmly in this land of freedom and peace. a

Memberships are a vital part of the Museum, and we welcome your interest and support. New and renewing members for the period May 4, 2002 - August 6, 2002. Mr. & Mrs. Ed Arnet, Sidney BC Mr. Hiro Nakashima, Toronto ON Dr. Joji & Sachi Yamanaka, Delta, BC Ms. L.A. 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