



Nikkei Images

National Nikkei Museum and Heritage Centre Newsletter ISSN#1203-9017 Winter 2003, Vol. 8, No. 4

Haru Moriyama's Reminiscences of Oshogatsu in Mission

by Fumi Tamagi

Toyoki and I decided that for the sake of the children we should move to a larger center where they could get a better education. We moved to a rented house in Mission City, which was located only a short distance from the Mission Elementary School. Toyoki found a job at P. Bain's No. 2 Camp at Dewdney. He came home only when he could hitch a ride. In those days everyone did not own cars as we do today. The farmers here owned trucks, but very few owned "passenger" cars. Seiji Tashiro was one of the first Mission Japanese to buy a car.

We had a family named the Hammonds as neighbours. They were a large family and our children and the Hammond children became good friends. Mrs. Hammond was a kindly German lady who introduced me to many western dishes. She taught me how to cook dumplings, fruitcake, doughnuts, buns and bread to name a few. I remember I used Royal yeast then. Although I could not speak English, my children served as interpreters and with much gesturing and laughing, Mrs. Hammond and I managed to communicate well.

Mochitsuki (rice cake pounding) is a traditional ritual that most pioneer Japanese families observed at the end of each year in preparation for the New Year's season. *Mochi-tsuki* day was a big event. Every member of the family

and often neighbours and friends helped to make the day a special occasion. Toyoki built a large outdoor cooking pit. About three boxes of washed *mochi* rice were layered on top of a huge cauldron full of boiling water to be steamed. The wooden boxes had holes drilled in them so that steam could pass through. A clean cloth was placed over the holes so that the rice did not fall through. Of course, the bottom layer was ready to be pounded first. Watching to make sure that the rice was taken off at the right moment took a lot of kibitzing. The steamed rice was placed in the homemade *usu* (pounding block), a large stump with a hollowed out part that served as a "bowl". The men took turns pounding with the *kine* (a large wooden mallet) while the women took turns adding the necessary water and turning the rice frequently. This took expertise as the pounding continued while the turner did her job without getting her hands pounded too. The rhythm of



Haru Moriyama in her retirement years. (Fumi Tamagi photo, 1982)

the pounding had to be consistent and often the bystanders chanted 2/2 expressions to add to the fun. When the rice was pounded to the right consistency - a sticky, gooey ball, it was placed on a well floured (cornstarch) table to be formed into

Continued on page 2

Contents

Haru Moriyama's Reminiscences of Oshogatsu in Mission	1
New Year Celebrations in the Thirties	4
Shogatsu Celebrations in Tokyo During the 1930s	5
The Japanese Sword Collection of Yoshimaru Abe	6
Ethnic Expectations	8
Friends of East Lillooet Reunion September 12 & 13, 2003	9
Steveston Buddhist Temple 75 th Anniversary Celebration	10
Mission Long Overdue	12
Nikkei Week 2003 Summary	14
JCNM Manager/Curator's Report	16
My Dad and the Canadian Fishing Company	17
Shining Light	18
Victoria Japanese Community at April 22, 1942	20

Announcements

Breakfast with Santa

Saturday, December 13, 2003
9:00-10:30 and 11:00-12:30
Children under 12 - \$2.50, Adults -\$4.00

Mochitsuki

Saturday, December 27, 2003
12:30 - 15:30
NNMHC

JCNM Lecture Series

January 20, 2004
Tenney Homma
"Researching Your Family History"

February 19, 2004
May Komiya
"A History of the Japanese in the United Church of Canada"

March 16, 2004
Midge Ayukawa
"Japanese Picture Brides"

Nikkei Images is published by
the National Nikkei Museum
and Heritage Centre Society

Editorial Committee:
Stanley Fukawa, Grace Hama,
Frank Kamiya, Mitsuo Yesaki,
Carl Yokota

Subscription to **Nikkei Images**
is free with your yearly
membership to NNMHCS:

Family \$25
Individual \$20
Senior/Student \$15
Senior Couple \$20
Non-profit Association \$50
Corporate \$100
\$1 per copy for non-members

NIKKEI PLACE
6688 Southoaks Crescent,
Burnaby, B.C., V5E 4M7
Canada
tel: (604) 777-7000
fax: (604) 777-7001
jcnmas@nikkeiplace.org
www.jcnm.ca

small, biscuit-shaped *mochi*. Some of the *mochi* was eaten hot and soft fresh from the *usu*, flavoured with either a mixture of sugar and soy sauce or a sweet bean paste filling. Most of the *mochi* was dried and stored for later use.

Mochi was used in the traditional New Year's breakfast. On New Year's morning, Toyoki expected every member of the family to be dressed and at the table bright and early for a formal exchange of greetings. (The traditional New Year's greeting included a thank-you for last year's help and cooperation, and a request for the same to continue during the present year. The expression *ai-kawalazu* was used. This term literally means "without a change in love".) Toyoki expected everyone to eat at least one bowl of *ozoni* (a type of soup). I usually used *katsuo* (dried bonito flakes) to make the soup. I added vegetables such as carrots, *daikon*, *gobo* (burdock), bamboo shoots, Japanese mushrooms and seaweed. The soup was flavoured with a bit of soy sauce. I added the *mochi* cakes, which absorbed the flavours and cooked to a nice soft consistency. I remember how I warned the children to eat slowly so as not to choke on the *mochi*. Most of us loved *ozoni*, but I am sure some of the children would have preferred a breakfast of porridge, toast and eggs.

Dried *mochi* kept well. Weeks later, we would enjoy *mochi* served in various ways. *Mochi* cakes were often heated in a hot oven until soft and puffy. This served with sugar and soy sauce was considered a tasty teatime treat. Sometimes hot *mochi* cakes were coated with sweetened soybean flour.

Today many people of Japanese origin prepare *mochi* in an electrical device imported from

Japan. Washed *mochi* rice is put in the bowl, automatically cooked and pounded to perfection and *mochi* comes out ready to be formed into cakes. This continuous process machine is convenient, but all the fun of *mochi*-making has been taken away. Simpler still - most people now buy *mochi* nicely wrapped in plastic.

We continued the tradition of placing a two-layered *mochi* stack in front of the family altar every New Year's. Large *mochi* cakes were made for this purpose. A mandarin orange was placed on top of this stack. This *okagami*, I am told, is partly religious, but mostly just decorative and festive.

Toyoki always placed two small evergreen trees (*kado-matsu* or literally entrance pine) one on each side of the front door. In Japan, the *kado-matsu* is usually placed at the front entrance on New Year's Day. Originally pine, bamboo and plum were used. *Sho-Chiku-Bai* or pine-bamboo-plum are symbolic of the good wishes given at a special celebration. The pine has a good root system, many branches and good foliage. Thus, the pine symbolizes a wish for a flourishing family. The bamboo is a straight, tall tree with a good root system. It does not break when blown and it propagates well. The bamboo, too, symbolizes a stable, flourishing family. The plum is a long lasting tree with dainty blossoms that has a lovely scent. The plum symbolizes longevity and all that is lovely and good.

We invited the Hammonds for New Year's. They were impressed with our *suzuri buta*. The *suzuri buta* was made on special occasions. It consists of a large tray with food arranged in an artistic manner. A small evergreen branch stuck in a holder (usually a chunk of potato or *daikon* served this



Oshogatsu table laden with many Japanese dishes in the Tamagi home. Haru's family continues her tradition of celebrating New Year's with a sumptuous dinner. (Fumi Tamagi photo, ca. 1990)

purpose) was placed in the center. This represented the forest or mountain. Five items of food were arranged all around the "mountain". Foods such as sliced *kamaboko* (fish cake), sliced *yokan* (sweet bean dessert) and shrimps were all time favourites. The shrimps were placed on the lower, outer edges of the tray as this area represented the sea. Mr. Hammond remarked that "the tray" was too beautiful to eat.

The *suzuri buta* served as the centerpiece for the table. We

also always had a whole baked fish. The baked fish was eased carefully on top of a bed of lettuce, garnished with parsley and proudly placed at the head of the table. This dish was called *kashira-tsuki* or literally "head attached". I think the Japanese fussed as much about the appearance of a dish as the taste.

I often had a dish including cooked soybeans. Beans are called *mame*, which also means "healthy". Shrimps were used to wish everyone longevity. Shrimps

represented old age, as they seemed to be bent with age. We always enjoyed *makizushi* (rolled sushi). *Makizushi* was made by rolling flavoured rice jellyroll-style with seaweed or *nori*. I placed five different ingredients in the center. These were usually eggs, barbecued *unagi* (eel), *shitake* (Japanese mushroom), *kampyo* (type of marrow) and flaked fish, which was coloured red. Sometimes for variety I used spinach or celery. The *makizushi* was cut and arranged with cut side up. Ginger, which was coloured red, was slivered and arranged as a garnish for this dish. Five items were used in the centre of the *makizushi* as the odd numbers are considered lucky numbers. It would be considered a faux pas to use four items for example. Four was especially avoided as the word "four" in Japanese is *shi*, which is the word for "death" as well. Little superstitions like this dictated many set procedures for the Japanese housewife.

We also always had *inarizushi*, flavoured rice stuffed into *age* bags. *Age* is made from soybeans. We bought *tofu* and *age* from a family who made them as a business. Another type of rice dish consisted of rice steamed with *azuki* (red beans) and shaped like a cherry blossom or other geometric shapes with special presses. *Nishime* was another favourite dish. This consisted of a combination of various vegetables cooked with soy sauce, sliced fish cake, "knotted" seaweed, *age*, and many other things. Some of the vegetables were quite exotic. Besides carrots, green beans, *daikon* and such ordinary vegetables, I usually had things like Japanese mushrooms and bamboo shoots. *Manju* (Japanese pastry

Continued on page 4

with a bean paste center) was also steamed or baked in great quantity. We also had *mochi*. *Sashimi* or sliced raw fish (usually tuna) was considered a delicacy. This was served with grated *wasabi* (a type of horseradish), grated ginger or hot mustard and soy sauce. In later years many of our white friends developed a taste for this dish and ate with as much gusto as the Japanese. Some of my children and grandchildren, however, still feel leery about trying *sashimi*. There were many other exotic foods as well. Eating certainly was an important part of any Japanese celebration.

It was traditional for the men to go from house to house on New Year's Day to wish every

family a Happy New Year. The *suzuri buta* had to be replenished often and the *sake* heated in small bottles was served freely. All the men of the village seemed to end the day at our place. Toyoki was a good host and the life of any party. How I remember the gay times. Everyone took turns singing folk songs from his own native *ken* (province) in Japan. Others joined in with much hand clapping and interjections. Some even got up to give an impromptu display of folk dancing. Mr. Taise, who celebrated his 106th birthday this spring (1982), was one of the better dancers.

I remember some of the people from this period with nostalgia. The Hayashis lived a block or so away on the other side

of a gully. They were our neighbours again years later in Alberta. The Amemoris were our Cedar Valley neighbours and are now living in Mission City. Others included Mr. Inouye, newly married Mitsuo Amemoris, Tashiros, Yanoshitas and many more. The first Mrs. Yanoshita passed away after a long illness about this time. I remember how sad we all were.

a
This article was extracted from a longer treatise by Fumi Tamagi entitled, "Rambling Reminiscences of Haru Moriyama" in the Japanese Canadian National Museum archives. Fumi Tamagi graciously consented to NIKKEI IMAGES reprinting this article.

New Year Celebrations in the Thirties by Midge Ayukawa



Midge dressed for festivities with her younger brother, Kazuo. (Midge Ayukawa photo, 1939)

Childhood memories of New Year's celebrations—some are vivid, others need to be pried out of my subconscious. Yet, how typical they are I don't know. My family lived on the

700 block of East Georgia, Vancouver. The neighbourhood was very cosmopolitan in the thirties and the Japanese families were scattered among those of Italian, Ukrainian, English and Scandinavian roots.

Several days before the end of the year some of the Japanese men in the neighbourhood would gather at our house to pound *mochi*. My mother not only steamed the rice but she was the one who turned over and patted the rice while two men rhythmically took turns pounding. Some of the *mochi* was rolled out and later cut up, some were made into layered mounds set before the shrine, and others were filled with *azuki-an*. We loved toasted *mochi* seasoned with sugar and *shoyu*.

An annual treat was the *yokan* that seemed to take days to make. The *azuki* beans were slowly cooked, the liquid was squeezed out through a coarse cotton bag, then cooked again with *kanten* [agar-agar] and then left to set in a flat pan. To me, it was the ultimate treat! (After I had my own family, for years

I made it—until I realized that I was the only one that ate it!)

As for our New Year's food — my mother had attended *jogakko* and regularly read *shufunotomo* (a woman's magazine) and was thus very knowledgeable about *oshogatsu* food. I believe that although she continued many of her village (now part of Onomichi, Hiroshima-ken) customs such as cleaning the house thoroughly, insisting that we all bathe before mid-night, and allowing us to stay up to welcome the new year, the food she prepared was very elaborate. She cooked for days and set the dishes out in the beautiful layered boxes that she brought out only for New Year's. She left them behind when we were sent to the Slocan Valley. I often wonder where they are now.

By the time I stumbled out into the dining-room on New Year's morning, the table was already set with plates of *makizushi* and *agezushi*. The layered boxes were filled with the traditional black beans, small fishes, etc. There was *goboh*,

rolled black kelp, and *renkon* (lotus roots). For us children there were slices of Japanese bologna (Does anyone remember them? They were about two inches in diameter, pink and smooth with a tough skin you had to peel off.), *kamaboko* with red or green on the top rather than the usual brown, sliced boiled eggs, etc.

I don't recall what my older brothers wore on New Year's day nor what they did—I think they went to a movie downtown—but for me, it was the one and only day when my mother dressed me in my beautiful silk *kimono* with brocaded *obi*. I had a *nisei* girl-friend who had a similar *kimono* and we spent our day running back and forth in our *zori* between our houses which were half a block apart. We thought the sleeves of our *kimonos* were great “pockets” and

stashed goodies in it. Recently I discovered traces of a chocolate bar in one!

My father was a bit of a loner and did not like the traditional calls that men were expected to make to friends' homes. He preferred to stay home and relax. I often heard my mother urging him to go to at least —, and —, and —'s homes.

When people came to call, I found quite comical the sight of my mother's head bobbing up and down while she murmured a lot of “mumbo-jumbo” (to me). After countless bows the guests sat down, sipped warm *sake* and ate. People were quite sedate and somber at my place, but at my friend's I noticed that there was a great deal of singing, laughing, and animated talk. Why? Perhaps

because *sake* did not loosen my father's tongue; on the contrary, it made him sleepy. My mother was always SO prim and proper too!

I wonder how many *nisei* have continued celebrating New Year's the way our parents did? My husband and I for years in Ottawa held Open House and served *sake* and our own “anglised” version of Japanese New Year's food. Some of our guests came and went, while others stayed all day—lunch, supper and evening snack, until their children were ready for bed! Those who came, eyed the strange food, and just picked up a celery stick were not invited back the following year! Many grew to love *sushi* years before it became common restaurant fare! a

Shogatsu Celebrations in Tokyo During the 1930s

by Sakuya Nishimura

When my father and mother married in Tokyo about 80 years ago, both were already orphans. Therefore, my parents did not live the traditional Japanese way, but instead adopted a more western style of living. For example, we did not have *tatami* rooms in our home.

After I started elementary school, I learned from my friends of many Japanese customs so I asked my mother if we could also follow these traditions. My mother made a great effort to oblige and we began to observe these customs. Consequently, I am able to relate how ordinary people celebrated New Year's Day in Tokyo during the 1930s.

Preparations for New Year's Day began in the middle of December with a general cleaning of the house and grounds. After Christmas, *kadomatsu* were placed at the gate. Our regular gardener made the *kadomatsu* by binding pine, bamboo and plum branches into a

bouquet with a rope of rice straw. The deliveryman from the rice shop brought several large slabs of *mochi*, which my mother cut while still soft into many smaller pieces. He also brought two round *okagami mochi*. The *okagami mochi* were stacked and topped with a mandarin orange and then placed on a sheet of white paper and green leaves in the shoe cupboard at the house entrance. *Okagami mochi* are usually placed in the family altar, but our family did not have one.

For supper on New Year's Eve, we ate *toshikoshi soba* (buckwheat noodle) to ensure long lives. After supper, some people went to a shrine or temple to pray and to herald in a happy new year while others went to the seaside or top of a mountain to view the first sunrise of the new year.

On New Year's morning, we put on new clothes, sat down for breakfast and said “*Akemashite Omedeto Gozaimasu*” (Happy New

Year) and sipped *tosa* wine. *Tosa* was prepared on New Year's Eve by adding several Chinese dried herbs to *mirin*, which is a sweet beverage used as a seasoning. *Tosa* containers are tea-pot shaped china decorated in gold and black colours, usually of cranes and pines. A *tosa* set consists of the container and three cups; a small, medium and large cup with the same pattern as the container.

The New Year's breakfast consisted of *ozoni* soup with *mochi* and a variety of foods in the *jubaco*. *Jubaco* foods were eaten for breakfast until the third day of the new year. There are many recipes for *ozoni* soup, with a different recipe for each region of Japan. For example, Tokyo people make a clear soup with chicken, dried mushrooms, *kamaboko* (fish cake), *mitsuba* (green leaves) and *mochi*, cut square and lightly baked. People in Kagawa Prefecture, Shikoku, make a white *miso* soup with *daikon*, carrots, taro,

Continued on page 6

seaweed and *mochi*, round and not baked. On the other hand, people in Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture make a clear soup *ozoni* with chicken, carrots, *daikon*, taro root, *kamaboko*, baked square-cut *mochi*, with some green leaves and salmon roe sprinkled on top.

The *jubaco* consists of four lacquer, stacking boxes. Housewives prepared a variety of dishes to fill these containers before New Year's Day so that they did not have to cook for the first few days of the new year. The first box usually contained hors d'oeuvres including *kinton* (sweet potatoes), *kamaboko*, *kuromame* (cooked black soy beans), *datemaki* (egg), etc. The second box contained Japanese salad (*namasu*) of *daikon* and carrots and the third box held roasted fish, usually *tai* (snapper). The last box contained cooked vegetables including taro, carrots, dried mushrooms, bamboo shoots, etc.

After New Year's Day breakfast, children played *karuta* (cards), *hanetsuki* (badminton), *takoage* (kites), etc. The mailman delivered greeting cards on the morning of New Year's Day. Most people sent the greeting cards to relatives, friends, customers, etc.

before December 20th to ensure delivery on New Year's Day. On New Year's night, people put a picture of a treasure ship under their pillow to ensure a wonderful dream.

On the second day of the New Year, children wrote some happy words on a large piece of paper with a new brush and *sumi* ink. This is called *kakizome*, the first writing of the year. Merchants brought new merchandise (*hatsuni*) with red banners advertising "*hatsuni*". The *kadomatsu* was removed on January 6th signifying the official end of New Year's celebrations. However, there were a lot of other events in January.

Before World War II, firefighters were mostly volunteers. They gathered in front of the firehall on January 5th and demonstrated to the populace how the firefighters raised the ladders, climbed to the top and performed acrobatic acts, such as standing with one hand on top of the ladder. This demonstration was called *Dezome Shiki*, the first ceremony of the year. On January 7th, people ate rice gruel with *mochi* and seven types of green vegetable leaves. This day is called *nana kusa*, that is seven vegetable leaves. On January 11th, people removed the

kagami mochi and crushed them to make *oshiruko*, a sweet black bean soup. January 15th was *koshogatsu* when people ate red bean gruel to ensure a good harvest that year. After World War II, this day was designated as *Seijin no Hi*, or coming of age day. Youths attaining the age of 20, dress up and go to a shrine to report they have come of age. In Japan most office workers have three days of holidays and begin work on January 4th. Certain groups have their own special celebrations. For instance, tea ceremony masters select an auspicious day in January for their *Hatsugana*, the first day of the tea ceremony.

During World War II and until the end of the 1950s, there was insufficient food, clothing and shelter for people to maintain their traditional customs. A generation grew up during the war without these traditional customs so many of these customs were lost. People living in large cities like Tokyo today prefer western life styles. Also, many people live in condominiums and townhouses and have no place to put a *kadomatsu*. Most people now seldom cook and prefer to buy prepared Japanese foods from department stores. a

The Japanese Sword Collection of Yoshimaru Abe

by Sakuya Nishimura

Yoshimaru Abe was born in 1914 in Japan and came to Canada with his brothers and sisters when he was 13 years old. The family lived on a farm in Port Hammond, British Columbia. Abe went to public school for four years and then got a job in a nearby mill, while helping his parents on their farm. He was 27 years old when World War II began. Just before the Japanese were evacuated from the coast, he married Yoshi Homma, the daughter of Tomekichi Homma. The young couple was sent to Tashme, an internment camp east

of Hope, where Abe worked as a firefighter and rescuer. He loved painting and volunteered with the camp theatre group to set up the stage props.

Abe's parents were repatriated back to Japan after the war. In 1947, Abe and his family moved to Winnipeg, where he began to work in construction. Several years later, he and three friends established a construction firm, Fuji Building Company. This company built the official residence of the Japanese Consulate in Winnipeg. Abe

also built the Japanese gardens every year for the folk festival, a well-known Winnipeg event.

Abe is one of the leaders of the Japanese community in Winnipeg. He is one of the editors of TEMBO, a magazine to which he contributes articles. Abe is also a well-known collector of Japanese swords. Someone once asked him why he collected swords and he replied, "*the sword comes to the sword lover*". Abe has fond memories of Japanese swords. He grew up in a small fishing village in



Yoshimaru Abe examining one of his swords. (Yoshimaru Abe photo, 1988)

Kyushu where his neighbours lived in a very old *samurai* house. Only an old woman and her grandson lived in this spacious residence. Abe and the grandson would take out the old swords from the warehouse and they played *samurai* with them. They imitated the *samurai* they saw in the movies.

Abe began to collect Japanese swords and though his work kept him very busy, he took every opportunity to visit antique shops and auctions. There are many Japanese swords in North America, most of which are owned by non-Japanese with little knowledge about these artifacts. They were purchased from destitute Japanese by soldiers during the occupation and brought back to North America. There are more than three thousand swords in the United States, of which two-thirds are on the west coast. Abe worries that most of these swords are not cared for properly.

There are now 21 Japanese swords in his collection including the following:

- YamashiroDaijo Fujiwara Kunikane
- Michimitsu
- Izuminokami Kanesada

- no name (large sword)
- Minonokuni Jyu Tanba Kanehisa (large sword)
- Bishu Osafune, Sukesada (large sword)
- no name (small sword)
- Kanenobu (small sword)
- Niwo (small sword)
- Shimotsuke, Munetsugu (large sword)
- Kashu, Kanehisa (large sword)
- Kanenaga (large sword)
- Minonokami, Fujiwara Jumyo (large sword)
- Motomitsu (small sword)
- Kanenami (large sword)
- Settsu, Kanekuni (small sword)
- no name (small sword)
- Kanezane (small sword)
- no name (small sword), ivory carved case, Tokugawa crest

Abe's most prized sword was purchased at an antique auction in Winnipeg. It was a lady's sword, very old, 43 cm. long with the case decorated with a golden turtle and waves. Attached to the sword was a small brocade bag with a letter. To Abe's surprise the letter traced the history and provenance of the sword. The letter was written in English by Y. Hiraiwa on May 17th, 1906 in Tokyo to T. C. Keenleyside in

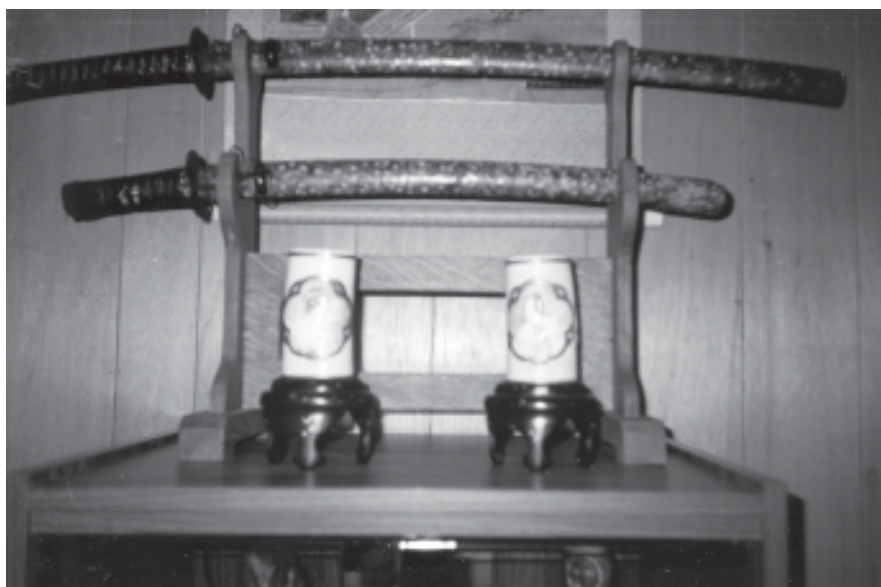
Winnipeg. It was a response to a request by Keenleyside for assistance in procuring a lady's short sword. Hiraiwa wrote that his uncle, an expert on Japanese swords, was able to locate an excellent *mamori-katana* or *kai-ken*. This guardian-or bosom-sword belonged to a female member of Marques Kuroda, a feudal lord in a southern Japanese province. When the owner died, the sword was given to the Buddhist Temple where she was buried. This sword was one of the many treasures of the temple sold years later by a priest desperately in need of money. In the course of time, the sword passed through several hands, and was stripped of its valuable ornaments and sold while the blade eventually ended up in second-hand curio shops.

This *mamori-katana* belongs to the *Bisen* School, which was founded by Masamune, the acknowledged premier sword-maker of Japan. One of his noted disciples, Motomitsu, probably made this sword, which is at least 500-years old. The sword was in very poor shape when found by Hiraiwa's uncle. He polished and sharpened the blade, relacquered the sheath and replaced some of the ornaments, which were not as valuable as the originals would have been. The total cost of the sword after repairs was 16 yen or 8 dollars. The uncle thought that this sword should not be sold for less than 50 dollars.

Hiraiwa further explained *mamori-katana* were carried by ladies and not used to commit suicide when disappointed in love. Ladies usually wore these swords concealed under kimonos and used for defense when attacked or in danger of being violated. *Samurai* generally carried two large swords stuck in their sashes and only on rare occasions used *mamori-katana*.

Ancestors of the Homma family had been retainers of the Kuroda Clan. What a coincidence that a descendant of a retainer of the Kuroda Clan was able to obtain in Canada a sword owned by a Kuroda!

There are few opportunities in Canada to see Japanese swords. In 1977, the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre as its centennial project mounted an exhibition "Treasure Swords of Japan" at the Ontario Science Centre. The objectives of this exhibition were to show the techniques and craftsmanship of Japanese metal artists as well as the historical and cultural aspects of swords. Many beautiful swords from Japan were included in this exhibition. At the request of the Ontario Science Centre, one of the sponsors of this exhibition, two of Abe's swords were also exhibited. This exhibition was open from July 1st to September 5th,



Two of Yoshimaru Abe's swords. Top, unnamed long sword. Bottom, Izuminokami Kanesada, short sword. (Yoshimaru Abe photo, date unknown)

1977 and was enjoyed by many Canadians and Americans.

Yoshimaru Abe will be 90-years old next year, but he still continues to volunteer and do research on his sword collection. a

This article is based on newspaper clippings, a list of swords and a photocopy of Hiraiwa's letter furnished by Yoshimaru Abe.

Ethnic Expectations by Theodore T. Hirota

As a Canadian with a Japanese heritage and thus a member of a visible minority, I am occasionally brought up short by what it means to be such a member. In anticipation of receiving an undergraduate degree from UBC, I had applied to numerous graduate schools across Canada and in the United States. After being accepted by Toronto I left Vancouver in August 1963 for a five-year stint at the university to complete two graduate degrees.

I recall one protracted winter when Nancy needed some ointment for her lips. We went to the cosmetic counter at Eatons on College St and Nancy asked the clerk at the counter for a tube of 'Chapstick'. The clerk trying to be helpful suggested that Nancy try kitchen utensils on the next floor for chopsticks!

Nancy went to work at Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto

during the years that I attended graduate school. She returned home from work one day with an invitation to attend a bonsai display at Edwards Gardens. Possibly because much of our Japanese heritage had been discouraged during the war years or because of our exposure to John Wayne-type combat movies in the Pacific during the same period, Nancy asked the young doctor who had invited us if he was mistakenly referring to 'banzai', a Japanese war cry evoked just before a death-defying charge. Thus we were introduced to the gentle art of creative Japanese horticultural techniques by a sympathetic Jewish Canadian doctor who made light of our linguistic gaffe.

A year or so after I arrived in Windsor, Ontario to join the university's Psychology department, Nancy and I were invited to the President's house for a party in honor

of a group of Japanese students traveling across Canada. After meeting with a few students we had sat down in the lounge area with a plate of food. The dean of the law school whom I recognized, sat down next to me to chat. He asked me 'Have you been travelling long?' and my reply 'Oh, only about twenty minutes' gave him pause to question what he had heard and to reflect on a possible misinterpretation due to language difficulties. After a few seconds I apologized to the dean for being disingenuous and I told him that I lived in South Windsor and that I was a Psychology professor on campus. Whether by design or not on his part, I never made contact with the dean again at the university. At the close of the evening as we thanked the host and hostess for a wonderful party before departing, Nancy reached out with her right hand to shake the hostess's hand.

The hostess offered her left hand and Nancy sensed a right arm that was held back. Shaking her left hand, a concerned Nancy asked if a slip or a fall was responsible for the injury. The gracious hostess waved her handless arm and said not to worry, it was something she had all her life, and that even her best friend frequently forgot and looked everywhere for missing glove. Two faux pas in one evening was enough to create lasting stories of one's most embarrassing moments in life.

In the early 1970's, the province of Quebec raised tuition fees for foreign students by enough to cause an exodus to other universities. The University of Windsor received enough of these students to alter a few perceptions on campus. When I first arrived at the university, I encountered few Asian students as I walked across campus to my classes. However, after the Quebec situation, I was frequently approached by students speaking Chinese and distributing fliers to fellow students

and asking them if they wished to join the Chinese Students Society. I would politely decline the flier in English saying that I was not Chinese. Following the influx of these Chinese students, the lineups at the campus bank appeared to become noticeably longer. With cunning logic I decided that foreign students frequently required money exchanges that would tie up a teller for more than the usual time and thus I looked for a line with fewer Asians to reduce the waiting time. One day while standing in line I suddenly realized that other students and faculty were probably using the same strategy to avoid the line I was in!

One year towards the end of an introductory statistics course I was conversing with one of my female students, an attractive blue-eyed, blond. She confided in me that on the first day of class when I entered the classroom, her immediate reaction had been "Oh no, not another one." She explained that in the last term,

she had taken a science course from a faculty member with a strong Indian accent and felt she didn't need the added difficulty of a foreign accent in taking a course in statistics. However, she had been immediately relieved as soon as I had spoken.

In another statistics class, two older faculty wives, one Arab and one Indian sat in the front row with a French-speaking woman. Unlike the younger students these three were among the most enthusiastic in asking questions in class. At the end of a few weeks, the French-speaking woman stayed behind after class and confessed that she was having difficulty understanding some of the statistical concepts. When I sought to identify the source of the problem, she said that perhaps it might be my accent. However, when asked what kind of accent it was, she shook her head and said it was a mystery to her. To this day whenever I talk about statistics some say that it is all Greek to them. a

Friends of East Lillooet Reunion - September 12 & 13, 2003

by Dr. Aki Horii



Some of the participants at the Lillooet Reunion. (Aki Horii photo, 2003)

Organized by a group of former students (Terry Sakai, Miki Tanaka, Joe Hurley, Aki Horii, Kaori

(Ishikawa) Yano), the 4th combined Lillooet-East Lillooet - "Lillooet Schools and Friends of Lillooet"

reunion was held in Lillooet on September 12th and 13th, 2003. The first get-together was in Lillooet, the second in Vancouver and the third one in Whistler.

This last reunion turned out to be a very successful event and was, by far, the largest with 110 guests arriving from as far away as San Francisco, Mississauga-Ontario, Whitehorse-Yukon, Calgary and Lethbridge-Alberta, the Kootenays, Okanagan, Kamloops and Prince Rupert. The gathering was mainly students who attended Lillooet schools in the 1940's and early 1950's, but also included people in their 80's, the oldest person being age 91. It was a nostalgic trip for many, and for some like Kiyo Ohashi from Vernon, their first trip back since the

Continued on page 10

late 1940's.

Lillooet, a small town located along the Fraser River, in the Caribou, has changed a great deal over the past 50 odd years. East Lillooet, the Japanese community, was situated 4 miles across the river in arid sage brush country with no drinking water nor electricity. The Japanese Canadian students had to cycle 2 miles up the river to a suspension bridge and then 2 miles uphill to school, regardless of how cold the winter months were.

Ironically, one can now cross over to the town of Lillooet over a new bridge, almost directly from our old settlement. Also in East Lillooet, there are now lovely homes with green lawns, thanks to well water found at a depth of 200 feet. We found a few depressions in the ground where once typical tarpaper shacks stood. Shirley Inouye (Takako Koyama) from Richmond, went to the site of her former house and was amazed to find that the apricot tree which she had planted, was still thriving. A few of us located the site of our old homes by identifying a couple of pine trees still standing and being much taller.

Of interest, when we drove to the old suspension bridge, which was constructed in 1913 and closed to vehicle traffic, had become a tourist attraction with a busload of Europeans walking across it. This same bridge, until 1944, was an obstacle to many students who were not allowed to cross it to attend Lillooet High School.

It is noteworthy to comment that the town of Lillooet produced two Order of Canada recipients - Ma Murray, publisher of the Bridge River Lillooet News, and Dr. Masajiro Miyazaki, who occasionally made house calls many miles away on horseback and who donated his home to the Village of Lillooet as a heritage building in 1983. Another person who recently received some publicity and recognition is Kaye Kamanishi who resides in Kamloops. He is one of the few surviving players of the pre-war Vancouver Asahi baseball team, which this summer, was inducted into the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame. Kaye, by the way, has won 11 consecutive B.C. Seniors badminton championships.

There were many interesting human stories told of families who lived on both sides of the Fraser River; of the Hurley and Jim families whose general stores provided groceries to the East side. We laughed about being "buggers" - students who climbed the mountain behind Lillooet to pick "bugs". The bugs were spruce budworms which were devastating forests in B.C. and Eastern Canada. The object of the exercise was to find the parasites on the larvae and then to release them to other provinces.

The reunion was a most memorable event with aging Lillooetans, reminiscing about their experiences as youths, growing up during the war and post war years.



Old suspension bridge built in 1913 that connected Lillooet with East Lillooet. (Kaori Yano photo, 2003)

Steveston Buddhist Temple 75th Anniversary Celebration

by Larry Ryan and Kiyo Domai

The Steveston Buddhist Temple celebrated its 75th anniversary on September 27th and 28th, 2003. This was the culmination of almost a year's worth of work and preparation by the 75th Anniversary

Committee. Thirteen senseis and the Bishop of Jodo Shinsu Buddhism of Canada took part in this celebration.

The festivities began with a dinner banquet on Saturday evening. This was the first major dinner

function organized and successfully carried out by the younger members of the *Fujinkai* and their friends. This new group worked under the capable guidance of the more experienced *Fujinkai* members. Rev. S. Ikuta



Steveston Buddhist Church 75th Anniversary Committee officials. (Steveston Buddhist Church photo, 2003)

was the keynote speaker for this event.

Young and senior members of the *Bukkyokai* provided ready assistance in the kitchen and wherever else they were needed.

The entertainment for the banquet consisted of performances by the Steveston Temple Taiko Group, Steveston Buddhist Temple Choir (first performance), *Tatsumi Ryu* Dancers accompanied by Mr. Murao performing *shigin*. Vocalist Naoki Okochi performed several songs followed by a *Fujinkai* skit. The entertainment concluded with a sing-a-long of *Haru Ga Kita* and *Sukiyaki*. His Worship, Mr. Brodie the Mayor of Richmond attended the banquet and stayed to the very end.

Generous donations to the Richmond Food Bank were gratefully accepted during the two-day

celebration.

Sunday's celebration began with an *Ochigo San* parade from the Buddhist Churches of Canada headquarters to the Steveston

Buddhist Temple. The parade was followed by a group photo in front of the temple. After the photo shoot, members and visitors from other

Continued on page 12



75th Anniversary Celebration cake. (Steveston Buddhist Church photo, 2003)

temples took part in a full service in the temple. This service was conducted by Hattori-sensei with participation by the Bishop as well as guest sensei. Rev. Grant Ikuta of Toronto Buddhist Temple, was the guest speaker for the 75th anniversary

service. The service was followed by a luncheon in the temple gymnasium, followed by the distribution of special anniversary commemorative gifts.

A major project commemorating our anniversary was the completion of the Steveston

Buddhist Temple Columbarium and Memorial Garden. a

Larry Ryan and Kiyo Domai are Vice Presidents of the Steveston Buddhist Church.

Mission Long Overdue by Dr. Jim Shiro Hasegawa



Female graduates of the Notre Dame High School posing behind banquet prepared by Sister Gemma. (Kim Koblre photo, 1946)

I left my driveway at exactly 7:15 accessing gridlocked Highway 20 to Montreal and arriving at a downtown hotel where Kim Koblre (nee Oikawa) from Port Coquitlam, B.C. and Kay Honda (nee Yamamoto) from Hamilton, Ontario were patiently waiting my arrival. We accessed Champlain Bridge onto Auto-route 10 leading to Sherbrooke, Quebec, a trip of three hours. We were on a mission to visit the Mother House of the Missionary Sisters of Notre Dame des Anges in Lennoxville, Quebec, a visit we believed was long overdue. As we drove we started reminiscing about the good old days back in the 1940s at Notre Dame High in New Denver.

FLASHBACK1942. Families were arriving every day in the New Denver Relocation Camp. Many

were put up in tents, waiting for two- or three-room houses being built. The government decreed that elementary school education would be provided, but there would be no high school education. With prohibition on travel, the only high school education would be by correspondence courses. Enter the teaching Sisters of the Notre Dame des Anges (headquartered in Quebec) and a high school named Notre Dame High became a reality in a two-storey home in downtown New Denver.

Kim, looking back almost 60 years, said we had never fully appreciated the very high standards and quality of the regimen offered by the sisters. There were four levels, grades 9, 10, 11 and 12. Curriculum included Latin and French. The

students enjoyed the regular school dances, card games, annual concerts, classes in typing and shorthand, home economics, piano, sewing and a comprehensive sports program. The quality of the education and the dedication of the sisters were second to none. We all three agreed that after the school closed, there were no formal expressions of gratitude, thanking the Sisters for having filled a void at a vital and critical time which would speak volumes in later years for the students and graduates of Notre Dame High School.

I received a letter from Kim in July 2003, informing me that Sister Raphael the remaining member of the faculty was gravely ill. Kim and Kay felt we should inform as many of the past Notre Dame students to send a



Kay Honda, Kim Koblre and Sister Madeleine (Gemma) visiting bedridden Sister Raphael. (Kim Koblre photo, 2003)

get-well card and a donation in name of Sister Raphael to the Mother House in Lennoxville, Quebec. I felt rather than by mail, where Sister would find difficulty in remembering the students (60 years later, even I had trouble matching faces with names), that a personal visit to Lennoxville would be more meaningful and much appreciated. We could then express our gratitude and personally extend our sincere thanks for their years of dedicated humanitarian efforts at a critical time in the education of the Niseis.

Kim fully endorsed the idea and she made arrangements for our visit on the 30th of September. We arrived in Lennoxville around 11:45 and were warmly greeted by the sisters, who had prepared lunch. Since only a few spoke English, we were told a Sister Madeleine who spoke English, would join us at the dinner table. During the introductions and the mention we were once in New Denver, Sister Madeleine said she too was in New Denver for a few years. At NDHS she was known as Sister Gemma, who had given classes in home economics and did the cooking and baking for all high school events. WHAT a pleasant surprise! Kim was OVERJOYED.

She was a devoted student who got her start in cooking and sewing under Sister Gemma. Sister Gemma conversing with Kim could recall some fond memories of NDHS. Sister Madeleine (91 years old) had been posted to the Orient and South America for 40 years after leaving New Denver.

Accompanied by Sister Gemma, we visited Sister Raphael in the infirmary. Sister (85 years old) sat up in her bed and welcomed us with warm hugs and a twinkle in her eyes. We agreed that almost 60

years later she was still the same Sister Raphael remembered back in the 1940s. She had learned of our coming visit weeks earlier and had anxiously and happily looked forward to this day. Sister had informed the others that her years in New Denver were the happiest moments in her long years of service. We had brought with us school memorabilia; class photos, photos of class events, concerts, the NDHS 1945 Annual, a NDHS felt pennant. Conversing with Kim, Sister Raphael could recall many of the happy memories even after 60 years.

We had agreed to keep the visit short due to Sister's condition so we warmly thanked her on behalf of all the NDHS student body. A long overdue gesture. A special THANK YOU to Kim and Kay for their time and effort; in not only locating and tracing many of the alumni, a very difficult time-consuming effort (name changes due to marriages) and traveling all the way to Montreal to visit Sister Raphael in person, a visit very much appreciated by the Mother House, especially Sisters Raphael and Gemma. Thank you Kim and Kay.

Continued on page 14



Front: Sister Martha, Sister Madeleine. Back: Kay Honda, Jim Hasegawa, Kim Koblre. (Kim Koblre photo, 2003)

It was a very moving moment, one I shall always remember and cherish.

Former NDHS students who have not yet been contacted, who feel they would like to be

remembered, kindly contact either Ms. Kim Kobrle, 1251 Nugget St. Port Coquitlam, B.C. V3C 5C1 or Ms. Kay Honda, 205 Columbia Dr., Hamilton, ON. L9C 3Y8. a

Jim Shiro Hasegawa attended grade 9 and 10 at NDHS during 1945 and 1946.

Nikkei Week 2003 Summary by Stan Fukawa



David Yamaura, Naomi Kamiya, Minnie Hattori and Bev Yamaura admiring ice sculpture. (Stan Fukawa photo, 2003)

The goal of Nikkei Week is to highlight the Nikkei community and its place in Canadian society so that a community which was almost destroyed by government action can be rebuilt. Community-building requires the coming together of the community in enjoyable activities within an atmosphere which raises our consciousness of common roots and a proud and honourable history. Nikkei Week 2003 successfully presented a program which addressed those issues and which involved thousands of Nikkei directly.

Sept. 13: Celebration Dinner: Consul General Toshiro Ozawa spoke eloquently on the history of diplomatic relations between Canada and Japan, 2003 being the 75th anniversary of the opening of the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo. Dan Nomura, V-P of Sales for the Canadian Fishing Co. presented an excellent set of images

showing the history of the salmon fishery and salmon canning, including the important role that was played by Japanese Canadians. He was both informative and entertaining.

The almost exclusively Japanese food was delicious and in abundant supply. Sushi chefs made sushi to order in the buffet line and may have been the main reason that it took longer than anticipated to feed everyone.

The Silent Auction was very successful with buyers being pleased, some with their bargain purchases, others with their reasonably-priced purchases for a good cause.

Entertainment: The ice-carving by "Cool Creations" was a dramatic tribute to the salmon. The Japanese Flamenco dancers were a surprise to the many who did not associate Spanish Gypsy dance with Nikkei but they were delighted. And

Michael Ouchi, the balloon man provided a glimpse into the skills required to be a children's entertainer in his good-humoured performances at the tables and on stage.

Sept. 14. Bus tour to Steveston:

The guided tours of the Gulf of Georgia Historic Cannery and the Britannia Shipyard and Murakami House were much enjoyed by the 30 people who took this afternoon tour. The group split into two groups with most of the people preferring the Japanese language tour, in which Mits Hayashi was very busy interpreting the guides' commentaries. In keeping with tradition, a group photo was taken beside the memorial to Nikkei fishermen.

Sept. 15. Tour of Canadian Fishing Co.:

The bus to the working cannery had to be cancelled because there were not enough tickets sold. In its place was an excellent informal tour of the Canadian Fishing Co. cannery for 6 people who drove on their own to the downtown cannery.

Sept. 16. *Ijusha* and Japanese Canadians:

About 30 people, with *Ijusha* in the minority, attended this session where 8 people presented their views, usually in both English and Japanese, on the ups and downs of relations between post-war immigrant Japanese and the descendents of earlier immigrant Japanese. The final recommendation seemed to be that we should arrange occasions for the two groups to get together socially. [Tatsuo Kage has a hand-out which summarizes the 8 presentations].

Sept. 17. Thank you tea for Nikkei Place Donors:

Some three dozen people had tea and manju at a reception to express thanks to past donors. Speakers included Ruth Coles, Bob Nimi and Mits Hayashi. Financial Advisor Mr. Kikuchi explained the best ways to contribute to the Nikkei Place Foundation.

Sept. 18. New Resources:

Many educational leaders attended this session at 3 pm which launched two resource books for Social Studies 5 and Social Studies 11 in the provincial curriculum. The Minister of Education was unable to attend but sent Patty Sahota, the MLA in the local riding to send greetings in her place. As well, there were Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, school board chairs from the participating school districts of Richmond, Burnaby and Coquitlam. The President of the BC Teachers Federation represented the teachers of BC and Dr. Midge Ayukawa, represented the Nikkei community. The resource books were the result of three years of work by two teams of educators led by Masako Fukawa. Each secondary school will receive a copy of the Grade 11 resource book; each elementary school, a copy of the Grade 5 resource book. The books will be available to the public through the Japanese Canadian National Museum. See the website www.japanesecanadianhistory.net for additional information and teaching aids.

Steve Turnbull introduced two travelling Museum suitcases containing artifacts and documents suitable for Grades 5 and 11. Coquitlam teacher Bruce Kiloh described a history and culture field trip at the NNMHC for the 250 Grade 11 students from his school. These students will all write an essay on whether or not the Canadian



Nikkei fishermen's crew barbecuing salmon at the Nikkei Week festival. From left; Henry Tanaka, Neil Matsuo, Jim Tanaka, Diane Matsuo and Irene Tanaka. (Stan Fukawa photo, 2003)

government was justified in interning Japanese Canadians during and after WW II. (We discussed a possible prize for the best essays.)

The session was well attended, with over 50 people in attendance. Sushi was served in the lobby.

Sept. 18. Japanese Canadian History Panel:

Four panelists spoke at 7 pm on a varied range of topics to a packed room of very interested people. Tenney Homma spoke about her personal experiences in researching the history of her grandfather, Tomekichi Homma, explaining how little the family knew about the many important contributions that he had made to the community. Dr. May Komiyama spoke of the history of the work of the United Church and one of its predecessors, the Methodist Church, within the Japanese community. This important work seemed not to have been acknowledged, especially the contributions during the internment years.

Midge Ayukawa talked of the

life of Yasutaro Yamaga, a pioneer immigrant from Hiroshima who was a leader in the cooperative movement among Japanese farmers in the Haney area before the war and who contributed a great deal to the building of the Nipponia Home after the war. The last speaker was Mitsuo (Moe) Yesaki who talked about the many Japanese settlements around the Fraser River salmon fishery and the events which affected their rise and fall. After he concluded, the group adjourned to the Ellipse Lobby to look at the maps and photos that Moe had on display, and to have some tea and cookies. There were many expressions of gratitude and requests for more of these sessions. Mits Hayashi counted about 75 in the audience.

Sept. 19. The Me & We Concert:
The Friday night percussion concert consisted of four very talented groups of performers. The evening began with a First Nations group, Tzo'kam, singing and drumming traditional songs, followed by an Afro-Cuban jazz group with drums and

Continued on page 16

saxophone. Vishwa, a south Asian sitar, tabla and violin ensemble played Indian, Celtic and modern music, and the night ended with Katari Taiko, the host group, playing traditional Taiko and a performance piece about a lion.

Audience members commented on the pleasing variety and excellent musicianship, making for a second successful concert in as many years. We have hopefully established a tradition.

Sept. 20. The Festival:

Overall, Mits Hayashi estimated 2500 visitors. It was a good crowd which

ebbed and flowed and the feeling was good. Children's booths in the Ellipse Lobby provided craft activities, face-painting and skill-games. The stage entertainers were good and presented a varied program—ranging from physical culture and martial arts demonstrations to musical and dance groups and karaoke. Exhibitors on the second floor included Shitatsu, Bonsai, Ikebana, Tea Ceremony. Fourteen crafters shared the large hall with the audiences for the stage

performances.

Food vendors ranged from the one selling Japanese packaged foods, to the Farmers' Market to the Auxiliary lunches, Nagasaki Express sushi, *Ebi-ten tempura*, Nikkei fishermen's wild salmon BBQ, Waffle-on-a-stick, Terrazu Coffee and *Tako-Yaki*. The food was a big hit, especially the Farmer's Market which sold out early again this year and provided many Japanese vegetables including *daikon*, *kabocha* and *gobo*. a

JCNM Manager/Curator's Report by Steve Turnbull

In what is obviously becoming the norm, the Japanese Canadian National Museum has had another very busy period since my report to you in the previous issue of NIKKEI IMAGES. What follows is a small sample of what has been happening in the past few months.

The Japanese Canadian National Museum officially launched its new education programs, **Journeys** and **Taiken**, at a special ceremony held Thursday, September 18 during Nikkei Week celebrations at the National Nikkei Museum and Heritage Centre. **Journeys** is a travelling "kit" of artifacts, photos, and lesson materials available to teachers throughout B.C. Teachers may book the kits by calling the museum at 604-777-7000. **Journeys** focuses on the Internment period and related human rights issues. It is available in two versions suitable for Intermediate or Secondary Grade levels. **Taiken** is the new tour program designed for schools visiting the NNMHC. It includes a visit to the museum, an experience in making traditional Japanese crafts, an optional Japanese lunch, and a presentation from an internment camp survivor.

The highlight of the September 18 event was the debut

of two new resource books on the Internment and Redress. These were produced for the B.C. Ministry of Education by teams of educators from Burnaby, Coquitlam and Richmond school districts. The teams were lead by Masako Fukawa, who as JCNM Education Co-ordinator developed the **Journeys** and **Taiken** programs to complement the new books.

Volunteers are urgently needed for the new school program **Taiken**. If you can donate a few hours a week to help introduce young people to Japanese Canadian history and culture please call NNMHC Volunteer Co-ordinator Elizabeth Nunoda at 604-777-7000 ext. 102.

The Museum hosted the first in what promises to be a long and successful series of presentations on the Canadian Nikkei. NNMHC member Moe Yesaki, a recognized authority on the Nikkei fishing industry gave his presentation, "*Beyond Sockeye: Why and How the Fraser River Japanese Fishermen Expanded Their Economic Activities Beyond Just Fishing Sockeye Salmon*", to an appreciative and enthusiastic audience on October 21. He was joined by local teacher Steve Nemtin who spoke on the subject of charcoal

making in the Gulf Islands.

Historian and author David Sulz presented, "*Oikawa Jinsaburo and the Fraser River Colonies*", on November 15. Mr. Sulz provided a detailed look at Oikawa, who in 1906 smuggled 82 immigrants aboard the schooner **SUIAN MARU** for fishing colonies he was establishing on Lion and Don Islands in the lower reaches of the Fraser River.

Several other presentations are scheduled for the New Year (titles are subject to change):

"*Researching Your Family History*", with Tenney Homma and a panel of geneology experts, January 20, 2004

"*A History of the Japanese in the United Church of Canada*", with May Komiyama, February 19, 2004

"*Japanese Picture Brides*" by Dr. Midge Ayukawa, March 16, 2004

"*Nikkei Farmers in Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows*", with local historian Anne Dore, April 21, 2004

Mr. Sulz spoke at 2 pm. All other presentations will be at 7 pm. All these lectures will be at the NNMHC.

The Museum has been playing a small role in efforts to save

the childhood home of famed Canadian author Joy Kogawa. The author lived in the house on West 64th Avenue in Vancouver's Marpole neighbourhood prior to the internment. The house is a prominent feature of her award-winning book *Obasan*. It is currently for sale and is at substantial risk. Currently, a determined community group of people from the neighbourhood, Canadian literary circles and many others are seeking support to save the house, which is one of national significance. If you think you can be of assistance please contact me and I will put you in touch with the leaders of this effort. You can also help by urging the City of Vancouver to do everything in its power to save the house. Please write to:

The Mayor and Council,
City of Vancouver
C/o Office of the City Clerk
453 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C.
V5Y 1V4

Coincidentally, the museum has recently been offered a large number of artifacts from Joy

Kogawa. These include items directly related to Joy's father, Canon Gordon Nakayama, and some connected to *Obasan*.

Museum Archivist Timothy Savage has been working since last Spring on a project that is funded by the Community Memories Program of the Canadian Heritage Inventory Network (CHIN). This project has the aim of expanding upon and digitizing the JCNM exhibit "Our Mother's Patterns" to be established as an online exhibit in CHIN's Virtual Museum of Canada web site. The project is on budget and on track for completion in mid-December. Efforts to date have concentrated on the purchases of necessary equipment (a scanner, digital camera and software), interviewing community members about the history of dressmaking and sewing in the Japanese Canadian community, and collecting photos, artifacts and stories. We are expecting that the exhibit will be launched early in the New Year.

Two other JCNM projects

are also making progress. Planning for the exhibit, "*Leveling The Playing Field; The Legacy of the Asahi Baseball Team*", is well underway with former JCNM Executive Director Grace Eiko Thomson as Guest Curator for the exhibit. Target for completion and opening of the exhibit is September, 2004.

The project entitled Japanese Canadian Studio Photographers has completed its research phase and is moving toward the completion of a catalogue and an exhibit. The project began in Spring of 2001 as a collaboration between JCNM and the Community University Research Alliance(CURA). In September CURA announced that it was making available \$12,000 in new funds to assist with completion. The project is scheduled to conclude at the end of October, 2004.

There are many other things happening at the Museum. If you wish to know more feel free to contact me at 604-777-7000 ext. 112. a

My Dad and the Canadian Fishing Company

by Roger Kamikura



Jack Kamikura and Art Swan. (Roger Kamikura photo, date unknown)

When I think of my life as a Canadian of Japanese descent, my thoughts take me to the experiences I had growing up at an internment camp (Slocan), then moving to Grand Forks, Westbank and finally returning to Vancouver in 1950. In retrospect, a memorable part of my early life in Vancouver takes me to the days at Canadian Fishing Company (Canfisco), located at the foot of Gore Avenue in Vancouver, B.C.

In order to get a proper perspective of what Canfisco meant to the Japanese, I would like to take you back to the days of pre-World War II. By the 1930's, as the Great Depression came to an end, the world was buoyed with anticipation and

prosperity. During this era, an astute businessman, Charles Sooey contracted with Canfisco to manage the canning component of the business. Mr. Sooey, in turn contracted with my grandfather (Jukichi Kamikura) to find and supply able Japanese workers for the canning department. It was customary to divide work force by race at the time, as I imagine that Chinese and other races were also hired to do other components of the company's tasks. The arrangement worked well for all parties. While the company and Mr. Sooey had a reliable person who knew the hard-working Japanese community (mainly situated near the cannery in

Continued on page 18

the Powell Street area), workers had advantages as well. In the era of open racial discrimination, Japanese workers were able to work as a team as well as being able to understand and speak their common Japanese language, which most workers were comfortable with. Both men and women were hired and the work consisted of actually placing the salmon into the cans, sealing the cans, getting the cans ready for cooking and finally packing the cans into boxes ready for shipping. My father also worked at the cannery at this time under the watchful eyes of his father. Of course, World War II interrupted these operations as the Japanese people were suddenly moved to internment camps in B.C. and further east.

By 1950, some of the dislocated Japanese people had gradually started to return to the west coast (Vancouver and the surrounding areas), my family among them. By this time, at Canfisco, Charles Soeey was succeeded by Dick Cumyow. Our family having just returned to the coast from the B.C. interior had to find work. My parents managed to purchase a dry cleaning business which my mother managed. My father had the good fortune to be hired by Mr. Cumyow to employ and oversee Japanese workers for the cannery. Initially, these workers were strictly hired for the canning aspect of the company's business. Later however, seeing the efficiency with which the Japanese did their

jobs, the Canadian Fishing Co., asked my father to hire Japanese for further tasks. These expanded jobs included unloading incoming fish boats, grading the various species of salmon, and moving the fish for the canning process.

The additional work meant more than doubling the Japanese work force. Fish was plenty those days and there were ample workers eager to earn their good dollars through regular pay, overtime and double time as endless amount of fish came in to the cannery during the peak season. However, due to the seasonal nature of the work, it was difficult to find additional workers on a full-time basis. But, because the work was of seasonal nature and paid well, it opened the door for many students. The jobs enabled many university students to continue their studies and pursue their chosen professions independently. Even to this day, my association with some of the Nikkei Museum members go back to the cannery days who were hired by my dad. Its past president, Frank Kamiya being one of them. He often talks about the cannery days and how he was able to pay for his UBC tuitions for his architectural studies.

I was one of the students hired by my dad who had a high standard for all Japanese he hired, especially me. He was a tough and demanding foreman, particularly on me so as not to show any favouritism to his own son. We often worked

overtime and on Sundays. Often I would go home, eat, clean up and go straight to bed only to get up early in the morning to go back to the cannery. Money was good and I, along with all the Japanese workers endured hard times knowing that the season was short. Like all the students who worked at the cannery, the money I earned paid for my studies at UBC. Also, it paid for toll bridges as I dated my present wife who lived in Richmond at the time.

I will never forget the competition that arose when two boats came to the cannery at the same time for unloading. There would be two Japanese crews to unload the boats and they would compete with each other to see which crew would unload their boat first. Although this meant less money being earned, it was something which went on frequently. The other workers at the plant did not appear to understand this competitive nature of the Japanese. Though tough as a foreman, my dad had high regards for hard working Japanese, and kept his job until his retirement in 1975. My years with Canadian Fishing Co. was a notable time for me as Japanese were paid well and were able to slowly get back into society and co-exist with others. I will never forget that juncture in my life. When former student workers at the cannery speak of being hired by my dad, and talk of their cannery days, I think it was memorable times for them as well. Hats off to my Dad.
a

Shining Light by Carl Yokota

As youngsters, our next-door neighbour who was a WWII veteran would occasionally take us on Sunday drives through Stanley Park. On a couple of instances, I recall having visited the Japanese Canadian War Memorial nestled in a quiet area of the Park, near the present Petting Zoo and Miniature Railway. Little did I

realize, at the time, the significance of the Memorial.

The Japanese Canadian War Memorial was erected on April 2, 1920 to honour the 190 Japanese Canadian men who from 1914 to 1918 stepped up to serve their country during WWI and the 54 individuals who made the ultimate

sacrifice in defense of our freedom. There are plaques for each of these groups of valiant men. A third plaque listing the names of two WWII casualties and one Korean War casualty was later added. The Memorial's granite base supports a column of white sandstone, topped with a Japanese pagoda-style, marble



Japanese Canadian War Memorial, Stanley Park. (Carl Yokota photo, 2003)

lantern. The light inside the marble lantern was extinguished by the then “powers-to-be” after the fateful attack by the Japanese on Pearl Harbour in 1941. The lantern stayed unlit up until August 2, 1985 when a formal re-lighting ceremony took place.

Recently, while visiting Stanley Park, I decided to drop by the Japanese Canadian War Memorial. As I strolled up the walkway from the main parking lot, past the towering trees, I noticed that very few of the park visitors in front of me, stopped at the Memorial, opting instead to skirt around it and head on down towards Lumbermen’s Arch. Perhaps, just as in my youth over forty years ago, they didn’t realize the importance of the Memorial and the hardships endured by those young soldiers who fought for Canada during WWI, WWII, and the Korean War.

With sunny skies and late autumn leaves falling to the ground, a crowd approaching 300 people or more came out to attend the November 11, 2003 Stanley Park Remembrance Day services at the Japanese Canadian War Memorial.

Accompanied by four members of the Vancouver Police Mounted Squad, a lone playing piper slowly approached the Memorial signaling the commencement of the program. With master of ceremonies, Roy Kawamoto and aided by Don Yamane, both retired veterans, the service began with the singing of O Canada and the introduction of guest dignitaries. Prayers were offered by Reverend John Shozawa, followed by a bugler playing the “Last Post” and then two minutes of silence. A piper’s

lament and a bugler’s reveille came next, then an emotional, heartfelt reading of John McCrae’s “In Flanders Fields”. A recital of remembrance (“We Will Remember Them”) was given by another veteran, Bob Kato. Numerous wreaths were placed on the Memorial including those from Legion Number 9, Consulate General of Japan, National Association of Japanese Canadians, JCCA, S-20 and Nisei Veterans Association, City of

Continued on page 20



Master of ceremonies Roy Kawamoto and Don Yamane at the Remembrance Day Ceremony in Stanley Park. (Carl Yokota photo, 2003)



A few of the spectators at the Remembrance Day Ceremony in Stanley Park. (Carl Yokota photo, 2003)

Vancouver, Vancouver Parks Board, Vancouver Police Department, various church societies and three private family offerings.

A visiting group of 56 junior high school students from Yokohama, Japan took part in the ceremonies by having two of their classmates place

1000, colorful paper cranes around the Memorial. With the singing of God Save the Queen, there was applause to conclude the ceremonies. As the crowd dispersed, many stayed behind to quietly view the many wreaths laid on the Memorial. Others slowly made their way to the Vancouver Rowing

Club where a reception was held. At the reception, refreshments were served, photo and military artifacts were on display and old memories and friendships rekindled, especially by those men who fought so courageously to ensure the Light continues to shine brightly. a

Victoria Japanese Community at April 22, 1942 by Toshio Uyede

The Japanese community at the time of forced removal from Victoria was less than 300 individuals. One newspaper reported that 273 individuals boarded the *PRINCESS JOAN* on April 22, 1942 for transport to Hastings Park. If we assume that a family unit consisted of six persons, this would give a total of 45 families. It was a very small community in comparison to the population of Victoria, which was around 60,000. The Japanese were scattered throughout the city, although most of the families lived in or near the downtown core. How did the Issei in these families earn their living? In general, probably because of the language barrier, the men were entrepreneurs and the women homemakers or domestics.

The Japanese of Victoria were primarily engaged in three

occupations: dry cleaning, farming and fishing. Families involved in the dry cleaning business were Hayashi (Yokohama Cleaners), Henmi (Central Cleaners), Ioi (Douglas Cleaners), Kusumoto (Nippon Cleaners), Onishi (Junction Cleaners), H. Takahashi (My Valet Cleaners), K. Takahashi (Togo Cleaners), and Watanabe (Tokyo Cleaners). Families farmed in the outlying areas of Cordova Bay and Saanich and included Ito, Kakuno Brothers, Mizuno, Morishita, Nagai, Nishimoto, Ono and Tanaka. Japanese fishermen included Hasegawa, Kawasoe, Kondo, Koyama, A. Nishimoto, C. Nishimoto, K. Uyede and U. Uyede. Takahashi was engaged in whaling.

The remaining Japanese were involved in various

miscellaneous entrepreneurial occupations. Nagai, Nakasone, and Kuwata were barbers. Hirahara, Koyama, Nagao, and Yoneda were boat builders. Kakuno and Tamaki were cooks. Mr. and Mrs. Ishiguro, Mrs. Kawahara, Mrs. Koyama, Mrs. Kusumi and Mrs. Shimizu were domestics. Okamoto was a gardener and Koyama a tailor. Ishida was a hotel proprietor, whereas Fukushima, Hashimoto, Morita, Saito and Uyeda worked in hotels. H. and K. Takata operated a tea garden.

The total disappearance of the Japanese community from Victoria probably had very little economic impact, perhaps some minor inconvenience in the short term. However, not one member of this community returned to live in Victoria. a

New and renewing National Nikkei Museum & Heritage Centre Members from August 14, 2003 to November 12, 2003.

Mrs. Kay Akada
Ms. Mieko Amano
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Arnet
Ms. Anne Briggs
Mr. Guy Champoux & Ms. Reiko Okubo
Mr. & Mrs. Maurice Copithorne
Mr. Hamish Cumming & Ms. Emiko Ando
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Ebbesen
Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Ellis
Mrs. Therese Enderle
Ms. Yoshiko Godo & Terry Lightheart
Mrs. Fumiko Hanazawa
Ms. Judy Hanazawa
Dr. & Mrs. Akira Horii
Ms. Daien Ide & Mr. Hiroshi Mizoguchi
Ms. Judy Inouye
Ms. Shirley Inouye
Ms. Wakako Ishikawa
Mr. & Mrs. Don Iwanaka
Mr. & Mrs. Koichi Kaminishi
Mr. & Mrs. Alfie Kamitakahara
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Kariya
Ms. Tomoko Kato
Mr. Norifumi Kawahara

Mr. & Mrs. Ken Kochi
Mr. & Mrs. Joe Komori
Mr. & Mrs. Ernest Lowe
Ms. Betty Lui
Mrs. Gwen E. Macdonald
Ms. Mika Maniwa
Mr. & Mrs. Shizuo Matsuba
Mrs. Shizuko Matsumura
Mrs. Dorothy Y. Matsune
Mr. & Mrs. Bill McEwan
Mr. & Mrs. Ken Minato
Ms. Florence Mitani
Ms. Nancy K. Morishita
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Murakami
Mr. & Mrs. Dan Nakagawa
Mr. Hiro Nakashima
Mr. Henry Grant Naruse
Mr. & Mrs. Takashi Negoro
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Nimi
Ms. Rosalind Nishi
Mr. & Mrs. Shoji Nishihata
Ms. Toshi Oikawa
Mrs. Jean Okazaki
Miss Karla L. Olson

Mr. & Mrs. Shinichi Omatsu
Mrs. Yoshie Omura-Kamite
Ms. Patricia Roy
Mr. & Mrs. Philip Saito
Mr. & Mrs. Terry Sakai
Mr. Ken Sakamoto
Mr. & Mrs. Tats Sakauye
Mr. & Mrs. Bunji Sakiyama
Mr. Yuki Shimomura
Ms. Evelyn Suzuki
Ms. Hitomi Suzuta
Mrs. Etsuko Takata
Mr. & Mrs. Henry Tanaka
Mr. & Mrs. Joe Tatebe
Mr. & Mrs. Tom Taylor
Ms. Midori Uyeyama & Colin Soo
Mrs. Kimiye Uyeyama
Mr. & Mrs. Shigeru Wakabayashi
Dr. & Mrs. Joji & Sachi Yamanaka
Ms. Hideko Yamashita
Ms. Cathy Yasui & Mr. Randy Preston
Mr. & Mrs. Fukashi Yasui
Mr. & Mrs. Stanley Yokota