



Nikkei Images

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The Shimizu Family Story by Tsutomu (Stum) Shimizu



Shimizu Rice Mill, third from corner, at Store Street and Fisgard Street. (Shimizu Family photo, 1971)

Part 1: The Shimizu Rice Mill

For more than 25 years in the early part of the 20th century, 1625 Store Street in Victoria, B.C., was the business address of the Shimizu Rice Mill. Located on the outskirts of the city's Chinatown, it also was the home address of Kiyoshi (Papa) and Hana (*Kachan*) Shimizu and their nine children. I was the sixth oldest of those nisei children. The exact date of when the Rice Mill was established under the Shimizu proprietorship has been difficult to trace. Early records, pre-1900, indicate that 1625 Store Street was a Chinese grocery store. By 1912, it appears to have been converted into a restaurant, OK Coffee House, the proprietor, a Mr. Yoshida. My mother recollected to me that after

she arrived in Canada in 1911, she worked as a cashier in a "restaurant." (See also *Stories of My People*, by Roy Ito, page 257.) The first indication of proprietorship under the Shimizu name appeared in the 1933-34 Victoria Directory. But other records of Japanese residents in B.C. (*Canada no Hoko*) indicate that Grandfather Rinbei Shimizu, Kiyoshi's father, either worked in or owned the restaurant-food store-

Rice Mill in 1915. The Rice Mill appears to have been a pioneering effort by Grandfather.

Previously Grandfather, who had operated a *ryokan* (Inn) in Japan, had established an importing business bringing in polished rice, and tubs of *miso* and *shoyu* from Japan, which he sold to Japanese residents of Victoria. He used a bicycle for deliveries (mother has told me).

The Rice Mill at 1625 Store Street was one of two businesses occupying the L-shaped, two-and-a-half-storey tenement building, running south, approximately a hundred feet from the shoe-repair store, Sing Toy, at the corner of Fisgard and Store Streets. Running another 100 feet east from Sing Toy towards Chinatown, the building ended at an alleyway, the entrance of which led to the rear of the tenement building and an open courtyard. The restaurant-food store-Rice Mill fronting Store Street was approximately 15 to 16 feet wide and was centred by two large doors, recessed from the sidewalk (see photo of store front).

On either side of the doors

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Announcements

NNMHC Annual General Meeting

Sunday May 30, 2004
14:00 - 16:00 hours
Nikkei Place

JCNM Lecture Series

Adventures in Wildlife Photography
Roy Hamaguchi
Tuesday May 18, 2004

Canadian and American
Treatment of the Nikkei, 1890-1941
Dr. Patricia Roy
Tuesday June 22, 2004

Re-opening the Gate: Japanese
Immigration to Canada, 1945-1967
Dr. Patricia Roy
September, 2004

Powell Street Festival

July 31-August 1, 2004

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From left: Fumi, Osamu, Shizue, Tsutomu and Yon in front of entrance to the Shimizu Rice Mill at 1625 Store Street. The awning over the store front was partially unrolled. (Shimizu Family photo, 1928)

were glassed-in showcases, extending to the ceiling level of the store. A rolled canvas awning shaded the front of the store during the day. Normally, the store was entered through one door. However, both doors were opened when bulk goods were delivered, such as sacks of unpolished rice, wooden *taru* (tubs) of *shoyu* and *miso*, or boxes of canned goods. The interior of the store extended about 60 feet in a direction parallel to Fisgard. The dry goods and display area occupied 35 feet. The rice-milling area at the rear occupied the rest. The interior of the store had a relatively high ceiling, except for one area. A structure running the width of the store represented the floor of an upper area, which the family referred to as the "*chunikai*" or middle floor of the

building used for storage.

On the left side of the store as you entered from Store Street was a display case on a countertop. Imported Japanese items regularly displayed were paper pouches of Lion's tooth powder and toothbrushes with attached celluloid strips for scraping the tongue. Proprietary drug items such as *Salonpas* and small tins of ointment (Tiger Balm?) as well as packages containing different coloured cones of moxa (*mogusa*) were also displayed. The latter was used for the intense heat-producing effects, which relieved aching areas of the body. Our childhood friends told us that some parents threatened to use these hot cones for disciplinary purposes.

The right side of the store was an alcove enclosed on the east

and south walls by cupboards, which contained at various times chinaware, cotton, linen and silk articles. In the middle of this area was a pot-bellied stove which was seldom fired because the store was generally kept fairly cool. Behind the cupboard on the east side was an open area in which the unpolished sacks of rice were kept. This area had no shelves or structures of any kind, and was fenced in with 24-inch sheet metal barriers to keep rats away from the rice. This open area was also used to hold boxes of Mandarin oranges (*mikan*), which were shipped from Japan for the Christmas and New Year holidays.

The north wall of the store consisted of a long counter starting just past the display cases containing the proprietary items. At the beginning of the counter sat the cash register above which were the

shelves running the length of the north wall to the rear wall. Those shelves held all manners of familiar Japanese tinned goods such as *narazuke*, *fukujinzuke*, and condensed milk. As well, there were tins of fish and shellfish of various varieties, some not seen so frequently today, such as abalone, pilchard and anchovy. Also displayed prominently were the familiar brightly painted red and white tins of *Aji-no-moto*. Among the more unusual canned goods received from Japan was *suzume* (sparrow); yes, cooked little birds for eating. Another item kept in one of the many drawers under the counter top were the 10-12 inch sticks of dried bonito. Shaped somewhat like a large banana and tapered at both ends, this item required a shaving tool to produce the thinly sliced flakes (*katsuoboshi*) used as a base (*dashi*) for soup or other cooking.

At the back of the store on a two-tier lowboy shelf were kept the bulk stores of preserved, vinegared items in 10- and 20-gallon stone jars. Among these were *benishoga*, *umeboshi* and *rakkyo*, to name some regularly stocked items. *Miso* paste sold in small amounts was also stored in a stone jar. At New Year's, the jars would hold *konnyaku* and *mochi*. Occasionally, eggs would be stored in an isinglass solution, a silicate material used to prevent air (oxygen) from penetrating the shell and causing spoilage.

Dried salted fish was shipped in bulk. About 10 to 12 herring, for example, would be shipped, skewered through the gills on bamboo rods, which were approximately six inches in length. Medium-sized cuttlefish were also packaged in a similar fashion and

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Shimizu family. Front row from left: Hana, Hiroshi, Osamu, Yoshio, Kiyoshi and Kunio (insert). Back row: Susumu, Fumi, Tsutomu, Hide and Shizue. (Shimizu Family photo, 1934)

shipped in bulk. Smaller fish, one to three inches in length, as well as small, dried shrimp used for *dashi* were also available in bulk to be sold in convenient amounts to families.

The rear of the store housed the Rice Mill part of the Shimizu establishment. The machinery polished the natural brown rice, converting it into white rice. A three-horsepower electric motor located on the *chunikai* floor activated the pulley of the mill by an endless belt. Hundred pound sacks of brown rice were milled one sack at a time, and repackaged into the white cotton sacks, which had originally held the brown rice. Shipments of unpolished rice from Japan arrived inside an inner bag of cotton within an outer sack made of jute. A by-product of rice polishing was a fluffy grey-brownish powder called *nuka*. The bulk of this *nuka* was sold to the nearby Scott and Peden Feed and Grocery Wholesalers. Mother used smaller quantities to produce the distinctive Japanese pickles known generically as “*tsukemono*”. White radish root (*daikon*), Chinese cabbage (*nappa*), and cucumber were the usual vegetables used. These pickled items were sold regularly. They would be mixed with a slurry paste consisting of water, salt, *nuka*, and *miso*. Then the preserves would be placed in empty tubs (*taru*) that had previously contained *shoyu* or *miso*. When filled to a convenient amount, the contents were weighted with a heavy boulder, which was supported by a wooden plank that fit diagonally across the opening. During the fermentation and pickling process, the liquid draining out of the vegetables was periodically removed and the pickling medium rejuvenated with additions of fresh material. At these times the characteristic odour of the “*tsukemono*” would add to the other odours at the rear of the store, unpleasant to some and ambrosia to

others.

During the Depression years, a Saturday-night ritual for the Shimizu children was to gather around the kitchen or dining room table, where they used to play games. Now they had to separate kernels of rice that had spilled onto the wooden plank floor of the mill. These kernels had to be picked out of the *nuka* and other accumulated dust and debris of the week’s milling of rice. Because the picked-out rice was not saleable, it provided a meal or two for the family and was consumed without much joy or enthusiasm. No matter how thoroughly mother washed the kernels, they did not appear as pure and white as the usual offering and unpalatable thoughts of the mouse droppings, which we had separated from the sweepings could not be banished from our minds.

Delivery of orders in the early history of the Shimizu Rice Mill was by bicycle. Grandfather and father would deliver 100-pound sacks of rice or tubs of *shoyu* or *miso* on a sturdy two-wheel model built of tubular steel. The sacks or tubs were carried in a rugged large-capacity basket, which straddled the front wheel and was secured by brackets to the front axle and the handle bar. Initially sacks of rice and tubs of *miso* and *shoyu* and canned and packaged goods were delivered to 1625 Store St. The warehouses were located at the Ogden docks at the Outer Harbour of Victoria where the CPR’s Empress and Nippon Yusen Kaisha (NYK)’s “*Maru*” ships were docking at the time. By the time I was 4 or 5 years old, father had purchased a Model T Ford truck whose flat wooden deck was enclosed on three sides by 12-inch wooden planks and had a hinged wooden tailgate at the back. The truck was fitted with a wood and canvas top held up at the four corners by upright supports. The side curtains

were not permanently fixed to the wooden sides but were held in place by a series of snap fasteners that allowed easy access to the side, when required, by simply tugging at the fasteners.

The Model T had to be started by Father Kiyoshi cranking the motor by hand, while I operated the “spark” and the throttle, which caused the engine to cough and snort before finally coming to life. It was always an adventure to accompany my father on trips to the warehouse docks at the Ogden Wharves. Usually it was to load the sacks of rice and other products from Japan. But I particularly looked forward to the days in early December when Japanese Mandarin oranges would come in for Christmas and New Years. Originally in the late 1920s and early 1930s, these oranges came in wooden boxes containing about 44-48 oranges per box. Four such boxes would be bundled together with a twisted, fibrous, jute-like rope. As well as oranges, other special items such as *mochigome* (sweet rice for making *mochi*), and packages of *mochiko* (a talc-like powder) both used to make *mochi* would come in the shipment. Rectangular tins about 18 inches in height usually contained tea, but at that time of year red-and white-coloured gelatine sticks used to make *kanten* (a solid cheese-like slab with a sweet taste) would be shipped in the tins. A variety of white, red and black beans as well as 12-inch square sheets of seaweed would also be in the shipment stored at the Ogden Warehouse.

October, November and December were generally a busy period for father and mother. Local Indians would show up around 11 or 12 p.m. at the back door of the Rice Mill with sacks of “dog” salmon. Our parents, with the help of the older children, would hose down the already eviscerated salmon, sprinkle

salt on the inside and the outside of the spread-eagled fish, and stack them on shelves which were built for this purpose on the south side against the wall and to one side of the mill. The shelves were tilted slightly from back to front to allow for drainage of excess liquid into the floor drain. Although I was not aware of it at the time, this was one of the “illegal” activities in which the business indulged. (Local Indians, by law, were permitted to take migrating salmon from rivers in B.C. but only for their own consumption. It was against the law to take more and offer them for sale). *Shiobiki* salmon (the salted dog salmon) being a seasonal item, was popular with the local Japanese customers and enough was usually salted down to last into the early summer. The family would consume any unsold salted fish, which by the end of the summer would be a hard packed, dried piece of flesh requiring soaking in hot water to be edible. Younger members of the family would turn up their noses and refuse any offering, and would be satisfied with just a bowl of rice that had hot water and *shoyu* poured on top.

Natto, a fermented soybean product, was also a seasonal offering which mother undertook to produce for sale. It was made in the traditional way by stuffing the boiled beans into rice-straw caps. These caps were straw-tied on one end and fitted over the tops of the *shoyu* and *sake* bottles to protect them from breakage. The straw caps after stuffing would be tied at the open end, wrapped in woollen blankets and stored for a month or more at the back of the wood-burning stove in the kitchen. Mother would examine a bundle from time to time and determine from the “*ito*” (string) produced, whether the *natto* was ready for sale. *Natto* was distinguished by its characteristic strong odour and extreme care was exercised to make sure that the

odour of ammonia, a sign of spoilage, was not present.

Closer to Christmas and New Year the production of “*konnyaku*” was begun in the family kitchen. This was started in a large porcelain container containing warm water, the size of which today could be used to bathe a newborn child. Mother shook the *konnyaku* powder into the water and made it into a slurry by using her bare hands. When all of the powder had been added, she would instruct her helper, usually one of us children to slowly and carefully begin pouring in a solution which she had prepared beforehand, while she continued to stir the slurry with both hands. When the solution was completely added and well stirred in, the mass was set aside to

solidify. After a day or two, the now quite solid mass was sliced into six to eight ounce pieces and stored underwater in one of the stone jars. It wasn't until some of us took high-school chemistry that we realized that our mother made the solution using flakes of sodium hydroxide or caustic soda from a well-known drainage-cleaning product. Thankfully it was measured and diluted accurately since neither she nor her children received any damage to hand or skin during the years that this method was used to produce *konnyaku*.

The greatest and most time-consuming effort was required for the production of “*mochi*” (rice cake) for the New Year festivities. The rice cakes for sale and for family use

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Shizuko, Hideko, Father Kiyoshi and Susumu in front of the entrance to Shimizu Rice Mill. (Shimizu Family photo, 1919)

were made in *mochitsuki* sessions during December. (More about this annual ritual in the next part of The Shimizu Family Story.)

The period between 1915 and 1927 saw the Shimizu Rice Mill boom and become a prosperous and successful business enterprise. The Trans-Pacific terminal for the NYK “*Maru*” ships and the CPR Empress ocean liners was the docks at Victoria’s Outer Harbour. During this period the Rice Mill supplied the growing Japanese population on Vancouver Island and the mainland at Vancouver. To sell his products, father would make regular up-island journeys to Sidney, Duncan, Chemainus, Shawnigan Lake, Paldi, Ladysmith, Mayo and Nanaimo in his Ford truck. The only road north was via the Malahat which in the 1920s and the early 1930s was a tortuous one-way mountain road made quite harrowing and adventurous whenever a vehicle going north would meet one going south. It required one vehicle to back up to the nearest by-pass, cut into the mountainside. I accompanied father on one memorable occasion during the forest-fire season to one of the small lumbering towns off the main road. We motored down a road surrounded by smoldering ground fire and some trees in flames to deliver a small load of provisions to a sawmill, which seemed to be carrying on normal operations in spite of the smoke and smell of the burning forest.

Father not being as entrepreneurial and astute as Grandfather, may have failed to see and anticipate the growing

importance of Vancouver with its new terminal facilities for ships from Japan and elsewhere in the Orient. There was a rapid decline in the fortunes of the Shimizu Rice Mill when ships carrying Japanese cargo began to bypass Victoria and dock at the new terminals in Vancouver. The period from 1927 - 1940 became one of extreme hardship for mother, as father became despondent at the loss of business to Vancouver merchants. He realized that he had not kept up with the changing circumstances. Unknown to mother, the Rice Mill was in debt to Vancouver importers. Mother was forced to take employment as a domestic and also had her daughters take jobs as house-girls to supplement the family income. Her second son, Susumu, was working in a lumber camp at Royston near Cumberland and was also contributing to the family income. In 1927 she also asked her oldest son Kunio to return to Canada to help in the family welfare. At age 5, oldest brother Kunio had accompanied our grandmother and gone to live with Uncle Seiji in Japan. Education there was seen as insurance against the uncertain economic future facing Japanese Canadian children in trying to find work in the hostile anti-Oriental atmosphere in B.C. It was a common custom among the early Japanese immigrant families to send eldest sons to be educated in Japan. On New Year’s Day 1940, father suddenly passed away. Susumu returned from Royston and attempted to carry on the family business from 2547 Government St. where we had

moved after father’s death. Milling of rice had continued through 1939 while father was alive. However, with the move to a house, the mill and motor were dismantled and stored across the street at Ramsay Machinery Works. Goods remaining in the family store were transferred to the new location, and sold or consumed by the family and not replenished.

Susumu attempted to redirect the business using the Shimizu Rice Mill registration and license into a trucking business. He traded in the Model T Ford truck and purchased a Studebaker car, which he converted into a van. However, after the Pearl Harbour attack of December 7, 1941 and the declaration of war against Japan, the van was confiscated as were other vehicles owned by Japanese Canadians on the B.C. coast, so my brother’s trucking-business attempt was short lived.

The Shimizu Rice Mill business “officially” ceased operation with the 1942 “evacuation” of Japanese Canadians. The Shimizu family and the rest of the Japanese community had to leave Victoria on April 22, 1942. The family was first held with many others in the temporary “assembly centre” in the Exhibition grounds at Hastings Park in Vancouver. Subsequently, the family members were sent their separate ways. Four adult brothers went to men-only camps in Northern Ontario, while mother, sister and younger brother were sent to the New Denver family detention camp in interior B.C.’s Slocan Valley. ❀

JCNM Lecture Series

Roy Hamaguchi, Adventures in Wildlife Photography -May 18, 2004

Dr. Patricia Roy, Canadian and American Treatment of the Nikkei, 1890-1941: A Comparison -June 22, 2004

Dr. Patricia Roy, Re-opening the Gate: Japanese Immigration to Canada, 1945-1967 -September, 2004

Aiko Saita, 1909 - 1954 by Kaye Kishibe



Aiko Saita with flowers from adoring fans. (Kaye Kishibe photo, 19??)

Aiko Saita was a Japanese Canadian mezzo-soprano who had an active career during the years, 1935 to 1954. She began as a professional singer when she signed an exclusive contract with the Japan Victor Company in 1935. She performed with the Fujiwara Opera Company at various times from 1940 to her death in 1954. Her favourite roles were “Carmen” and “Ameris” in Aida. In addition, she produced a number of phono-records (78 rpm, it was before the time of high fidelity recordings) and held many concerts and recitals throughout her career.

Her records, folk songs of various countries and semi-classical songs with Japanese lyrics, were popular not only in Japan but also among the Japanese living in North America. To sing to her fans across the Pacific, she conducted two concert tours, one in 1937 followed by another in 1939. For the Japanese Canadians in the West Coast, her concerts were home-comings by their favourite daughter. As someone said, “My mother took me, we all had to go.”

Aiko Saita was born on March 15, 1909, as the third daughter

of Kojiro and Koma Saita. After her father died when Aiko was four years old, her mother remarried and became a Yoshikuni. She had four sons by her second marriage. The family lived at No. 10, Number One Japanese Town of Cumberland, B.C. Aiko spent her childhood in Cumberland until she moved to Vancouver to attend high school.

Aiko continued her training at the Toronto Conservatory of Music (now the Royal Toronto Conservatory) from which she graduated in 1932 with a degree, A.T.C.M. (Associate of Toronto Conservatory of Music). While a student of the Conservatory, Aiko gave recitals in Vancouver. At one of these, Toshiko Sekiya, a well-known Japanese soprano, heard Aiko sing and was so impressed that she encouraged her to study in Italy where Sekiya herself was trained. When the Japanese Canadian community learned of this, they organized a support group, Saita Aiko Koenkai. This made it possible for her to continue her study.

Aiko sailed for Italy in 1933. Sekiya arranged to find a teacher in Milan. She was Madam M. Ripa

under whom Aiko was to train until her debut in 1935. Her debut in July, 1935, received very good reviews in the local press which commented on her “... rich volume, beautiful colour and clear diction.” It went on to say that she can be compared favourably to any mezzo-soprano of the first rank in Italy.

This led to offers to work in Italy. However, Aiko decided to sign an exclusive contract with Japan Victor Company to become one of the “red label” recording artists. Among these were Yoshie Fujiwara, a tenor, who established the first Japanese opera company in 1932.

On October 9, 1935, four days after reaching Japan, Aiko gave her first recital at the Gunjin Kaikan in Tokyo. She was immediately recognized as an important talent with a voice unique in Japan. Her voice was described as having a volume and richness of colour unusual among Japanese singers and she was praised for the accuracy of her notes, her feeling for music and intelligent musicianship. A special mention was made of her lower register which was charming with a hint of wildness, something not often found in Japan.

As the red label performer of Japan Victor Company, Aiko made a number of records. What remains now are folk songs and semi-classical songs. Under a pseudonym, Yoshie Tachibana, she also recorded a number of more popular songs called *Katei Kayo* or “Songs of Home”. These recordings were very popular in Japan where record players were becoming common. This was the time when *kyafei*[cafe] or coffee houses became popular places where young couples met and chatted to the background of modern, i.e. Western, music.

However, it was still before the time of LP's and stereophonic

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recordings. Live performance was indispensable and Aiko held many recitals and concerts. In 1937, in order to bring her live performance to her fans in Canada, she arranged a concert tour. She sailed from Japan in May for Vancouver. Her first recital was on July 7, at Nihonjin Kaikan, Vancouver. She travelled to the remote areas of British Columbia where there were Japanese immigrants, "some ... had never attended a concert before." On one night, "Encore after encore was called for and in all she sang about 100 songs."

After appearing at Hotel Vancouver on October 30, and a recital at the Empress Theatre on November 3, she wound up a successful concert tour and returned to Japan.

She followed the success of 1937 with another tour two years later. This was a larger tour taking in various parts of Canada as well as the west coast of the United States: California, Oregon and Washington State, including Los Angeles, Hollywood, San Francisco, Sacramento and Seattle. She auditioned for and was granted a licence to broadcast by NBC. She was pleased that she might be broadcasting in North America in the future. She extended her tour to include Hawaii in December and returned to Japan on January 9, 1940.

But it was the operas which kept her busy professionally. On the list of formal performances by the Fujiwara Opera in 1951, Aiko appeared in the cast of the following: Carmen, - December, 1947; January, 1949; February, 1950; December, 1951; and, Aida, - June, 1951. In addition, there were tours to major cities outside Tokyo. In 1950, for instance, the company took Carmen to nineteen cities in Japan.

It was now over ten years since she had been in Canada and

her thoughts turned to home. She told the Continental Times how she missed her brother, Dr. Harold Saita, in Vancouver and Dr. Miyake who was now living in Toronto. She also wanted to see her friends again. Her mother and half brothers had joined her in Japan in 1946 after leaving the internment camps, so she knew what had happened in Canada during the war years. Although she was suffering from the illness which was to end her life, she had recovered enough to leave Tokyo for Vancouver on September 12, 1953, to begin her Canadian tour.

For the recitals, in addition to Vancouver, Aiko sought out centres where Japanese Canadians lived after they had been dispersed from the West Coast: Toronto, London, Hamilton, and Montreal. Plans were made for her to appear in Fort William (now Thunder Bay), Winnipeg and Lethbridge. A recital in New York City was also in the plans.

On October 1, Aiko was interviewed by the Toronto Daily Star music critic, Hugh Thomson, on CBC-TV Tabloid. This interview

appeared in the Toronto Daily Star on October 2. On the next day at 8:00 p.m. a recital was held at the Ukrainian Labour Temple. This was the big recital of the tour attended by people from all around Toronto, who remember and talk about it to this day.

But the tour was cut short in December because of the recurrence of her condition. Aiko travelled by train to Vancouver where she was operated on and hospitalized until May of 1954. Those around her realized there was no chance of recovery and on May 14, Aiko flew to Haneda Airport. She was hospitalized until her death on September 21, 1954. Her funeral was held on September 24 at Misakimachi Kyokai of Kanda, Tokyo. It was a Christian service officiated by Rev. Takihiko Yamakita.

The news spread quickly through the community in Canada. One said, "Ai-chan came to Canada to say good-bye to us". This September will be the fiftieth anniversary of her death. The memory of this remarkable Nisei is still alive today among the older members of the Nikkei community.

✿



Aiko Saita and Mrs. Miyake in Toronto. (Kaye Kishibe photo, ca. 1953)

History of the United Church of Canada with the Japanese by May Komiyama



May Komiyama. (May Komiyama photo, date unknown)

The vision of a Missionary is usually that of someone from the Western culture going out to the wild heathens on continents other than those occupied by “white” people. Hence we have to turn our minds around to the realization that it was Japanese Missionaries (albeit from the United States) that brought the Christian message to the first Japanese immigrants in B.C. As the Methodist Church was the only group that showed interest in the Japanese immigrants, the Methodist work in Vancouver was born in 1896. Some of the names of those pioneer missionaries are Rev. Kawabe, Koichi Imada and later Rev. Goro Kaburagi.

In 1906, the land at the corner of Powell Street and Jackson was bought and in 1907, the sanctuary was completed.

In the early years of the Japanese Methodist Church, all sorts of criminal activities were carried out. Prostitution was rampant, murders, stabbing and violence

occurred. Frequent calls were made by police to the pastors for help. Japanese prisoners were to be found on death row. Some husbands did not care for their families, and women fled to the church on Powell Street for protection. The church sent some of these women and children to the Oriental Home in Victoria, which was run by the Womens’ Missionary Society (W.M.S.)

Housing for the young immigrant men was a vital concern so rooms for these single men were built at the back of the church. A building beside the church on Jackson Ave. was built with a gymnasium, activity rooms and a good size kitchen. New picture brides were cared for by the W.M.S. and here they learned Western customs, cuisine, etiquette, childcare and basic English by using the Bible as their text book.

During the Spanish flu epidemic in 1918, this building was converted into a temporary hospital as Orientals were not admitted to the general public hospitals. This can be understood as they could not handle all the Caucasians that were ill and dying.

In 1925, the Methodist, Congregationalists and some Presbyterians joined to become the United Church of Canada. Some Presbyterians did not join this Union and that is why we still have Presbyterian congregations.

During all this time, the Japanese clergy worked faithfully in reaching communities wherever the immigrants settled. This work spread from the original foundations in New Westminster, Steveston and Vancouver to reach Vancouver Island, up the Fraser Valley, to the Okanagan Centre area and up north to Prince Rupert and Skeena.

Woodfibre also had an established congregation. From 1896 - 1924, five ministers served under the Methodist denomination. Incidentally, the second minister was Rev. Zentaro Ono, whose son became an ordained minister and served as the minister of the Montreal Japanese United Church in the 70’s. Rev. Yoshinobu Yoshioka was the minister at the time of the church union in 1925. He was followed by Rev. Kosaburo Shimizu who served there until the war in 1942. When he was evacuated to Kaslo, the newly ordained Rev. Takashi Komiyama was left to minister to the last remaining Japanese and to close up the church. This he did from May to September 1942 when he was ordered to evacuate to Lemon Creek. [Editor’s note: Rev. Takashi Komiyama is the late husband of Dr. May Komiyama]

The health of the Japanese community was a great concern of the church. During the depression years, medical care was out of reach for most of the people. Tuberculosis was a major concern as the number of Japanese patients with this disease was five times higher than the white population and the death rate was also higher. One out of three deaths amongst the Japanese was due to tuberculosis. In 1932, the Free Medical clinic was opened, despite tremendous difficulties due to misunderstandings and all kinds of rumours. The board (which consisted of 7 people from the Powell Street United Church) continued to persevere with the help of women’s groups within the city. By 1936 a league was formed representing sixteen groups within the city.

Free inoculations against diphtheria and smallpox were given. Lectures were held and movies were

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shown on care of children, health concerns such as tuberculosis and other related public health matters. There were two radio broadcasts, the research committee met twenty-four times and 738 hospital visits were made. In four years time, the Japanese death toll from T.B. was reduced by half and began to equal that of the white people. In 1938, they joined the Cancer Prevention Society.

The Japanese clergy were attentive to these social needs as well as spreading the Christian gospel. But we need to remember that much of their work could not have been done without the support of many dedicated lay people. An outstanding individual was Dr. Kozo Shimotakahara. Not only did he give freely of his medical services, he was a lay clergy servant. If the patient or family could not pay (no medical insurance in those days), Dr. Shimo (as he was often fondly called) never pressed them for money.

In the case of at least one family, the father was to pay him by doing the doctor's share in serving the church, because he was too busy looking after the sick to be able to work in the church. However, Dr. Shimo found time to serve on the church board and many committees, and to take Sunday services if required.

During the summer, when the minister was away, he would conduct the church service up the Fraser Valley. He took his office nurse, Miss

Yasuko Yamazaki to assist him at the medical clinic, which he also operated. On the drive up the Fraser Valley, he would give a dry run on his sermon then ask his nurse to critique it. Somehow, it was understood that if you wanted the doctor's medical attention, you had to attend church service too.

There were others that were dedicated lay workers too. Mr Bunjiro Uyeda was a silk merchant on Granville Street that gave his time, talents and financial assistance. He served on the board, very graciously offered the use of his home for meetings and entertaining visitors. He was an anonymous donor whenever there was a special need for financial support. Mrs. T. Hyodo was another dedicated worker. Despite her large family and responsibilities she was out visiting the sick in hospitals and in homes. Without her tireless efforts, the medical clinic would not have succeeded. There were many, many others who were just as dedicated and hard workers but there are too many to mention here.

I think most of you are familiar with what happened during World War II, so I will just touch upon what the church's actions were at that time. Missionaries and Caucasian clergy who were serving the Japanese communities followed the evacuees to the ghost towns.

The biggest contribution was what they did regarding the children's schooling. It is to the credit of these

leaders and the determination of the parents and students that when they did move outside of B.C., their level of education had not suffered.

With the move East, the church was ready to assist these displaced people. However, the acceptance of the Japanese people was still a problem. Even in the church, attempts were made to discriminate against them. For example, English-speaking congregations (nisei) were not to be started. They were supposed to join their local church. Non-white clergy of ethnic congregations were placed on a salary below the minimum salary. In the head office, only Caucasians were hired.

It is only in the past few decades that a few non-Caucasians have been in top positions.

It is a continual struggle to keep our presence visible. We cannot take things for granted and rest on the laurels of others. The sacrifice of the past generation was monumental, and we owe it to the future generation to leave them a legacy that they can be proud of.

Reference: A History of the Japanese Congregations in The United Church of Canada. Copyright "The Japanese Canadian Christian Churches Historical Project, 1998."

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Address given by May Komiyama, February 19, 2004 at the National Nikkei Heritage Centre.

God Sent Me to Japan by Ikuye Uchida

Nothing in my family background would have pointed to my becoming a Christian missionary. In fact my father who had come to Vancouver when he was 18 years old was drawn into Socialism and I remember he had a bookcase full of red books on Marxism and Leninism. He even had a picture of Lenin above his

shaving mirror. I was his first-born and if I was a boy he would have named me Ikuo, after Oyama Ikuo, the well-known Japanese Communist leader who had received the Lenin Peace Prize. But since I was a girl I was named Ikuye.

I was introduced to Christianity when I was invited to

attend a Sunday school for Japanese children at what was called Franklin Street Mission when I was 6 years old. My parents did not object. They taught us gospel songs and the Bible. Strangely, I was persuaded this was the truth at a very young age and never wavered. I received Jesus as my Savior at about 10 years of age and



Ikuye Uchida. (Ikuye Uchida photo, ca. 1970)

was baptized at 12 years of age along with 6 other Nisei in the baptistery of Ruth Morton Memorial Baptist Church, of which I was a member.

As was general among the Japanese immigrants of the day, my parents required me to attend Meiwa Gakuin, a Japanese language school in East Vancouver. I attended there from grades 1 to 6. Then our family moved to Ocean Falls in 1940 as Dad had gone there for work because of the depression. It was while there that we learned about Pearl Harbour and all the Japanese families were forced to leave. In Vancouver we stayed temporarily in the Meiwa Gakuin classroom from May to July.

Dad was taken away almost as soon as we landed in Vancouver and placed in the Princeton Road Camp. While there he had a compound fracture of his left leg when a huge log ran over him. He almost lost his life in Princeton, but through negotiations by his younger brother, Issaku Uchida, he was allowed to go back to Vancouver to the General Hospital and receive proper

treatment. Mother, with a babe on her back and Auntie Fudeko, went to see Dad in Princeton. While they were gone, I had charge of the rest of the family, six sisters and two brothers.

During this time when I was feeling helpless, my former Sunday school teacher, Miss Margaret Ridgway came to visit us. With tears I told her of Dad's accident. She said, "Let's pray and commit it to God." I cannot remember what she prayed, but I remember clearly the assurance God gave me that He will look after Dad and the family.

After three months in Hastings Park, our family was evacuated to Rosebery, 6 miles north of New Denver. Dad was hospitalized in New Denver and eventually his injured leg had to be amputated above the knee. Life in Rosebery was very primitive, like camping: going to the creek with two buckets on a pole for water, scrubbing laundry on a scrub board and rinsing in the lake, coaxing the kitchen stove to burn raw wood delivered by the young boys, trying to read by candlelight. Oh, yes, and another daily chore was sawing logs and chopping wood.

I was supposed to be in grade 9, but the government provided only up to grade 8, so I lost one year of school and learned sewing instead. However, the following year, the various churches provided schooling from grade 9 and I attended the United Church school which was named Lakeview High, held in the United Church in New Denver. We, in Rosebery, had to walk the 6 miles to school.

My connection with Christians was maintained through Miss Olive Woodworth who came from New Denver to Rosebery with her accordion to hold Sunday school. One day I expressed to her my desire for a Christian friend and her reply

was, "Why don't you go to a Christian high school?" I didn't know there was such a school, but my desire to go began to stir within me. About the same time I began studying a bible correspondence course from Los Angeles. After doing all the morning chores, I would study the Bible. Then one day a Bible verse jumped out at me. "Delight yourself in the Lord and He shall give you the desires of your heart." Psalm 37:4. My desire was to go to this Christian high school Miss Woodworth told me about.

In the meantime that summer, August 1945, the war with Japan ended with the dropping of the atomic bomb. The RCMP came to each home and asked those 16 years and older if we wanted to go back to Japan or stay in Canada. Dad had coached us ahead saying there's no use going to Japan, so tell them we are staying in Canada. Of course we children had never been to Japan, nor did we ever wish to go. Japan was never on my horizon.

A week after Rosebery was

Continued on page 12



Takeshi and Soyo Uchida with baby Ikuye. (Ikuye Uchida photo, ca. 1928)



Rosebery girl's baseball team with Ikuye Uchida, second from left in back row. (Ikuye Uchida photo, ca. 1945)

shut down; our family was moved to New Denver. My destination was further east, Three Hills, Alberta to Prairie High School. I said good-bye to my family and to B.C. Since I was moving east, the B.C. Security Commission gave me one month's subsistence fee, my fare and lunch money. The subsistence fee paid for one month of schooling. That's all the money I had.

I really didn't know what kind of institution I had gotten into. My motive for going there was shallow indeed. All the Bible school and high school students lived in dormitories and our lives were regimented from 6:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. The Bible was the ultimate rule of law.

In late October the institute had special meetings for three days with a special outside speaker. He emphasized the need for complete consecration. At about the same time we heard that General MacArthur of the American Occupation of Japan was asking for 3,000 missionaries to come to Japan. After the speaker gave the challenge, the principal, Mr. Maxwell wanted it nailed down. He challenged us, "Are you willing to sign

a blank cheque and tell God you can write any command you wish and I will do it because I've already signed my name on the bottom?" If you have, come to the front of the auditorium to make your decision final.

I knew God was saying to me, "Are you willing to go to Japan as a missionary?" Japan was the last place I wanted to go so I compromised and said, "I'll serve you here in Canada." As I was objecting to going to Japan, the image of Jesus suffering on the cross for my sins came before me. I then realized my selfishness when Jesus had sacrificed His life for me. In tears and brokenness I said, "Yes, God I will go even to Japan", and went forward. This was the big turning point that changed the course of my life.

I now had a definite purpose in my life and my two years of high school and the following four years of Bible School were meaningful and enjoyable. A couple of months before graduation I applied to a rather new mission called the Japan Evangelical Mission whose headquarters were there in Three Hills and in Seattle. It

was a so-called Faith Mission with no ties to any particular church or organization. Each missionary had to raise his or her own support and boat fare. Fortunately I had friends, from school days and summer missionary work all over the U.S. and Canada, who supported me with donations of \$10.00 or \$20.00, and some churches that contributed \$50.00 a month.

I need to mention that my sister, Sachiye, a year younger than I, joined me at Prairie High School during my second year. She and I went through Bible School and graduated together. She joined me as a missionary in 1953, a year after I left for Japan.

I left for Japan from Seattle on the freighter, *JAVA MAIL*, in February 1952 and landed in Yokohama after a very stormy voyage. Fellow missionaries were there to greet me. How relieved I was to be able to plant my two feet on terra firma and be able to hold food down. Yokohama was not the destination. I was whisked away to the west coast of Japan called "Uranihon" or backside of Japan in contrast to the Tokyo area called "Omotenihon" or front side of Japan.

To get to our destination, Kashiwazaki city in Niigata Ken, we had to board a train at Ueno Station that went through a very long tunnel called Shimizu Tunnel, lasting about ten minutes. The sky would be clear and blue as you entered the tunnel but when you came out of it you were in a different world called, "yukiguni" or snow country.

The first several months of life in Japan were spent with a fellow missionary in a very typical Japanese home of that day—a simple wooden structure with no heat and little insulation. We slept on the floor on *futon*, but I was constantly cold. I discovered later from a Japanese lady that I needed to buy warm

underwear! She took me to a clothing store and showed me what to buy.

Language study was number one on my to do list. I hired a younger lady who made it her responsibility to teach me “*hyojun-go*”, meaning standardized Japanese. I had gone to Japanese school in Vancouver and Ocean Falls for almost eight years and had learned over 300 *kanji*, but the six years at Three Hills, two years in high school and four years in Bible School were totally bereft of any contact with Japanese. I had forgotten a lot. But to my surprise as I began reading the Japanese Bible, the Japanese characters (*kanji*) came back to me rather easily and I found to my surprise that I had not forgotten what is called “*hitsujun*” i.e., the correct order of writing the characters.

Language study was not confined to the classroom. As I walked the main streets I wanted to know what every sign on the store windows or signs on the posts said. Another source of learning was listening to the Japanese radio. At first I didn't understand political terms, but as I looked up each word, I gradually understood the news. At first I relied for news on the JAPAN TIMES, an English newspaper and on the GI radio station of the American Occupation. But later on I relied entirely on the local Japanese daily newspaper, the NIIGATA NIPPO and the local Japanese radio station for daily news.

When May came around the mission asked me to move to Ojiya, a town in the mountains along the Shinano River where fellow missionaries had held evangelistic meetings and there were new believers that needed teaching. I had been in Japan only three months and I was assigned to form a new church! Most missionaries were given a whole year to learn the language and adjust.



Prairie Bible High School graduation speakers. Ikuye Uchida, seated at extreme right. (Ikuye Uchida photo, 1952)

I lived in the upstairs room of an old Japanese house next to the dyke of the Shinano River. The windows were so worn that cold breezes whistled in. The ceiling was made up of shingles that moved about releasing dirt as the large rats ran along it at night. My cooking was done on a “*konro*”, a clay pot burning charcoal, but within a year the kerosene portables came out which I switched to. I continued to study *nihongo* through the wife of the family whose house I shared. But my study was more focused now that I needed to give Bible messages to the young congregation of about 20 people. A lot of work went into the preparation as I looked up many words in the English-Japanese Dictionary and then checked the Japanese-English Dictionary to be sure I had the right word. In the Ojiya Church we were very fortunate to have an elder who was a pre-war Christian, a newspaperman involved in local politics. He would point out any mistaken expressions to me and I was grateful.

1952 was only seven years after the end of the war and Japan was still struggling to overcome

poverty and widespread sicknesses. Because of lack of nutrition and warmth, I was surprised and saddened to find many tuberculosis patients in sanatoriums and hospitals. In Ojiya City there was a large national sanatorium on the outskirts of the city where over 300 patients were housed. In the other 2 city hospitals, two-thirds of their patients were T.B. patients. And not all T.B. patients were in hospitals. In fact many were looked after by family members at home for they were unable to pay the hospital fees.

As a missionary, I had come to Japan to share the gospel, the good news of Jesus dying for love of all peoples. It was our joy and privilege to tell them that Jesus forgives our sins and gives us hope and eternal life beyond the grave. Through our weekly visits to the National Sanatorium we came into contact with the Hattori family. Mr. Hattori, in his mid thirties, had been a tuberculosis patient for several years. He had lost hope and despaired of living. To make matters worse his oldest son, three years old, had tubercular meningitis. Then Mr. Hattori received Jesus as Savior and



Street scene of Nagaoka City after a record snowfall of 2 metres in 1967. (Ikuye Uchida photo, 1967)

he became a changed man: God gave him peace and hope. His tubercular son was in another hospital in the city being looked after by his mother, but shortly after he became a Christian Mr. Hattori joined his wife and two sons and they lived together in one small hospital room. Mr. Hattori's main concern was for his wife to become a Christian. In January he took a turn for the worse and his wife also became ill from stress. God led one of our Christian girls, who herself had T.B. of the bones, to come to the rescue and take care of the children. Soon Mrs. Hattori received Jesus as Savior and she was completely changed and physically she got better. In March Mr. Hattori suddenly passed away and we had our first Christian funeral in Ojiya. God sustained his wife, demonstrated by her radiant face. Her older son with tubercular meningitis passed away when he was six years old and the mother passed away a few years later leaving the younger son as the sole survivor.

After living less than a year in Ojiya, I was asked to move to the newly built Kashiwazaki Bible Institute (K.B.I.), to live in the dormitory with the women students and also to teach Bible and history.

The Bible Institute is situated on a lush hill overlooking the Japan Sea and on the outskirts of Kashiwazaki City near a beach, which is a rarity on the west coast. The K.B.I. is a very small Bible School with an average of about 6 students. I shared life with the students and taught them the Bible as best I could. I made two discoveries: one, that my gift from God was teaching, and two that I needed to get more training in order to teach adequately.

In all I took four years out of my missionary career to study, first at Wheaton College in Illinois to get my B. A. in history, and later at the London Bible College in England for a theology degree. I also took five correspondence high school Japanese language courses from 1970-1975 so that my level of *nihongo* would be the same as a Japanese high school graduate. To study and teach the Bible is multi-dimensional requiring many disciplines, such as learning Hebrew for the Old Testament and Greek for the New Testament. Also historical background studies such as Ancient History for the Old Testament and Greek and Roman histories for the New Testament are necessary. Over the years I taught Old Testament

Survey, Church History, the Pentateuch, Prophetic books of Isaiah, Daniel, Minor Prophets, Synoptic Gospels, Romans, and Revelation.

Although our Bible School was small it has been gratifying to see them become pastors of our churches planted in Niigata Ken, Toyama Ken, and other parts of Japan as well as in Brazil. Others have become missionaries to South East Asia. Besides teaching at the Kashiwazaki Bible Institute, in later years I was happy to teach courses on Genesis and Revelation on week nights to various church groups who came together in various centres to study. One woman was so excited about the Genesis study she turned right around to gather a group around her to teach them what she had learned.

In the years from 1966 to 1970, I moved from the Bible School into the city of Kashiwazaki. Unexpectedly, I was asked to pastor the Kashiwazaki Church, which had lost the lady pastor who left to be married. She had started a Saturday afternoon high school class which I took over. I love working with this age group and within a year this class tripled to about 25-30 weekly. I started teaching them English followed by a Bible study, but some students sat out the English and waited for the Bible study, which they preferred. In time we did away with the English and concentrated on the Bible. Many of these high school students became Christians and are now in their fifties, scattered all over Japan in various churches.

Another important aspect of my years in Japan was church planting. I spent four years in Niigata City from 1972-76 helping Pastor Hori in church planting there. Then God gave me a burden to begin a church in the town of Maki, which is 20 miles south of Niigata City. It is



New church built in Maki in 1995. (Ikuye Uchida photo, 1995)

not a city, but a town of about 27,000 and the education centre of the county (*gun*) with four high schools. Miss Furusawa, a K.B.I. graduate of 1974, came to Maki to work with me. Her home was just a few miles south of Maki and she wrote, "At the time of my conversion I strongly felt the need for a church in that area and prayed for workers to be sent there. That prayer changed to "Here am I, send me."

We had difficulty finding a meeting place but finally rented a deserted house on the main highway, which I cleaned up for a meeting place. Miss Furusawa lived there in one room. Church planting in Maki was real pioneer evangelism. I began services with two high school students who had come to our High School Bible Camp just the week before. They came out of "*giri*", obligation, so says Mrs. Irizawa who is a vital part of Maki Church now. Miss Furusawa and I went from house to house with tracts and church invitations, but though they were polite, they were wary of Christianity as a foreign religion.

We did have a special series of evangelistic services and one young high school student made

a definite decision to accept the Lord. He became a faithful follower of Jesus. There were others whom God had touched who were added to the church. In a few years we had a congregation of about fifteen. In 1984, nine years after we began the work in Maki, we bought our own property and building and renovated it for a meeting place.

In 1984, Hiroaki Sato, one of our Bible Camp converts, who had Bible training in Canada, asked to do his summer training in Maki

and the following year he became the pastor. I was glad to hand the work over to him. He married a local girl who became a Christian while in Seattle, and who was one of my Bible School students. They now have four boys and are doing great work. Ten years later in 1995 they bought a larger property with ample parking and built a new Church.

I must add that all the foreign missionaries of our mission, The Evangelical Alliance Mission, have retired and the work in Niigata Ken is carried on entirely by our Japanese pastors who number twenty-eight. Other graduates from our Bible School are scattered as Christian workers all over Japan, in Brazil and in California. Our Japanese leaders carry on an ambitious Bible Camp ministry, weekly television and radio programs. There are also sons and daughters of pastors who are missionaries under Wycliffe Bible Translators in Indonesia and another is going to Brazil soon. They are supported entirely by our Niigata Ken churches. The Bible School is also flourishing with

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Uchida missionaries. Front row from left: Akira and Hisako Uchida, Sachi and Iwao Ikenouye. Back row from left: Ikuye, Mary (Tazumi) and Anne. (Ikuye Uchida photo, 1961)

sixteen students, the largest in many years.

I am glad God sent me to Niigata Ken in Japan to reap a harvest there.

As a postscript I must mention that three younger sisters, Sachiye Ikenouye, Mary Tazumi

and Anne McVety and brother Akira all went to the same Bible School in Alberta and even though I had never persuaded any of them to do so, all became missionaries, four of us to Japan and Anne to Brazil.

I must also add that Dad

Uchida did not stay a Communist. Just about the same year that I left for Japan in 1952, he decided to accept Jesus as his Savior after reading the Bible while in the hospital. It took Mother another fifteen years before she became a Christian. ❁

Soichi Shiho, Recipient of Royal Canadian Humane Association Citation by Sakuya Nishimura and Mitsuo Yesaki



Soichi Shiho with the citation from the Royal Canadian Humane Association. (Mary Ohara photo, 2004)

On August 15, 1938 a strong wind began to blow in the Gulf of Georgia. Japanese fishermen in Steveston knew what this wind meant and they either sought shelter in the river before the tide began to ebb or they would wait offshore. No Japanese fisherman would come back against the ebb-tide surge under such conditions. People called the mouth of the Fraser River, “The Graveyard of the Sea”, during such times.

Five Caucasian fishermen, in five boats, were caught off the mouth of the Fraser River at low tide when the winds started to blow. These Caucasian fishermen lived upriver in Burnaby and did not have the

knowledge the Japanese fishermen had about the winds and tides at the river mouth. The sea was extremely rough, whipped up by the 90-mile per hour wind blowing against the ebbing tide. They tried to enter the river mouth when one of the boats was swamped at about 2 AM, one-half mile inside the lightship. On board the swamped boat were Knute Hagen and his young wife. Otto Hagen, on another boat, saw the mast light on his brother’s boat heel over in the dark.¹ The remaining four boats managed to enter the river safely and their occupants reported the accident to the authorities.

Soichi Shiho was fishing in

the gulf that evening and was manoeuvring to make another set, when an odd breaking wave caught his eye. He heard cries for help, and on investigating, saw a boat awash with water and a couple hanging on for their lives. Part of the net had washed overboard so Shiho could not approach the boat too closely for fear of wrapping the net in the propeller. He circled the boat again and again, looking for an opportunity to approach the swamped boat. Finally on about the tenth attempt, Shiho managed to nudge the bow up against the swamped boat and the couple were able to clamber onto his boat. He then returned to Steveston and disembarked the shipwrecked couple, whom their companions had reported missing and presumed drowned. Assuming the abandoned boat was still floating, Isamu Matsuzaki set out with his large and high-powered collector boat to search for it. He found the boat and towed it back to Steveston.²

The Royal Canadian Humane Association heard of Soichi Shiho’s courageous rescue and nominated him for an honorary testimonial. An official of the Royal Canadian Humane Association presented this certificate to Soichi Shiho at the annual year-end meeting of the Steveston Fishermen’s Benevolent Society at the Japanese Language School. About 500 fishermen attended this meeting together with the officials of the Royal Canadian Humane Association



Royal Canadian Humane Association citation. (Mary Ohara photo, 2004)

and the Heads of the Provincial Police from throughout the Dominion.² ❀

¹ THE VANCOUVER DAILY PROVINCE, 16-08-1938, p. 1

² Soichi Shiho, per. com.

Nikkei Week 2004 by Stan Fukawa

The third annual Nikkei Week will be unveiled in September of this year with several events already confirmed and a few more still in the discussion stage. As in past years, these will take place at the National Nikkei Museum and Heritage Centre in Burnaby.

This year is the fiftieth anniversary of the passing of the most successful singer to come from the Japanese Canadian community. (The story of Aiko Saita appears in other pages of this issue of Nikkei Images.) Two recorded concerts of her varied repertoire will be presented

on Sep. 16 by Mr. Kaye Kishibe – at 2 p.m. and at 7 p.m. The afternoon program is intended for Japanese speakers and the evening program for English speakers.

Mr. Kishibe, a huge fan of the singer, will be bringing CD versions of the original 78 rpm records, which have been “cleaned up” to eliminate the scratches and pops. He will also have a few 78s to give a flavour of what pre-war music-lovers heard. He also has a display of photos and newspaper clippings in both English and Japanese which show how Aiko Saita

was received in her prime.

Kiyo Goto will be providing the audio services and Harry Aoki, whom Miss Saita babysat during their Cumberland years, will talk about his knowledge of her career.

On Sep. 17, Katari Taiko will be presenting a 25th Anniversary Reunion Concert. The Reunion refers to the return of former Katari Taiko drummers who have been invited back to participate with their former colleagues. Some of the alumni have become professional taiko drummers, others have started taiko groups in other communities and still others have just left drumming.

Taiko is a very important part of the resurgence of the Japanese Canadian community that took place after the centennial celebrations marking that significant period of Nikkei presence in Canada.

The Dinner, set for Sep. 18, will have its usual theme of celebrating the presence in and contributions of Nikkei to Canadian society, with a focus this year on post-war immigrants and *Kika Nisei* (returnees to Canada from Japan – many of whom were exiled after the war). As Tom Tagami, who has served on the committee since its inception says, “There ought to be one day each year when I can dress up and celebrate the fact of being who I am – a Nikkei in Canada.”

Discussions are under way for the involvement of several post-war immigrant groups who will be identified later. Additional events, such as a forum on facilities and the future of the Nikkei community, are in the early planning stage. The next Nikkei Images will carry this news.

The members of the Nikkei Week 2004 Committee are: Stan Fukawa, Yoshi Hashimoto, Mits Hayashi, Frank Kamiya, Sato Kobayashi, Avalon Tagami and Tom Tagami. ❀

From The Museum -

A Report by the Manager/Curator, Summer 2004.

The Constitution of the National Nikkei Museum and Heritage Centre which owns and operates the Japanese Canadian National Museum describes the Society's purpose as promoting "a better understanding and appreciation by all Canadians of Japanese Canadian culture" and "awareness by all Canadians of the contributions of Japanese Canadians to Canadian society". The last several months have produced many examples of how the Museum is working to further this mandate. These examples include:

- Community Outreach. The JCNM has arranged to take part in the first annual Maritime Festival hosted by Britannia Heritage Shipyard in Steveston on August 21 & 22. In keeping with a long-standing tradition the Museum will have a booth at the Powell Street Festival. In addition to this the JCNM is providing Japanese Canadian content for Burnaby Village Museum's Multicultural Festival during the B.C. Day Weekend, July 31-August 2. These are the latest products of the Museum's accelerated effort to participate in community events.
- Lecture Series. The JCNM's popular Lecture Series continues with two more engagements scheduled prior to a summer break:
 - May 18 Roy Hamaguchi presents "Adventures in Wildlife Photography" featuring a focus on the wildlife of the Canadian high Arctic.
 - June 22 Dr. Patricia Roy speaks on "Canadian and American Treatment of the Nikkei, 1890-1941", a detailed comparison between the two countries. Both presentations are at 7 PM at the National Nikkei Museum & Heritage Centre.
- Exhibits. Work continues on "Leveling the Playing

Field: Legacy of the Asahi Baseball Team", a major travelling exhibit scheduled to open at the JCNM in January 2005. Another exhibit "Japanese Canadian Studio Photographers 1900-1942" will open at the Royal B.C. Museum in November 2004. This exhibit of 80 photographs includes the work of Japanese Canadian Photographic studios in Cumberland, New Westminster, and Vancouver. A catalogue of photos and essays is being published in concert with the exhibit. This work is the culmination of a partnership with the Community University Research Alliance at the University of Victoria. CURA has provided tremendous financial support to all aspects of this project. Support has also come from the Leon & Thea Koerner Foundation, the Historica Foundation, the National Association of Japanese Canadians and the Federal Government's Museum Assistance Program.

- Recent Acquisitions. The Acquisitions Committee of the JCNM met in March and again in May to review a large number of artifacts and archival materials recently offered for donation to the Museum. The Committee is tasked with deciding which items to accept in accordance with the Museum's collecting mandate. Special thanks are due to this dedicated group of volunteers: Roy Hamaguchi, Minnie Hattori, Kaye Inouye, Sakuya Nishimura, John Shintani, Susan Michi Sirovyak and Mickey Tanaka.

Without the support of all the Museum's volunteers the Japanese Canadian National Museum could not possibly do as effective a job of fulfilling its noble purpose. ❀

JCNM Lecture Series

Nikkei Centre: June 22, 2004

Canadian and American Treatment of the Nikkei, 1890-1941: A Comparison by Dr. Patricia Roy

For many people leaving Japan for "Amerika" the 49th parallel was only a line on a map. On both sides of the border, they experienced discrimination. Because Canada was bound by British foreign policy until the 1920s, "imperial considerations," that is, Japan's objections, led Ottawa to disallow some British Columbia attempts to restrict the employment of Japanese. No such alliance bound the United States and its constitution gave the states more powers than the British North America Act gave to the provinces. Yet, despite constitutional differences, discrimination affected employment, immigration, and citizenship rights in similar

ways in both nations.

On both sides of the border, racial prejudice, economic rivalries, and fears of an influx of Japanese largely explain hostility to the Nikkei. On paper, Canadian Issei had more rights than their American counterparts but in fact had few advantages apart from the right to own land and (most of the time) to fish commercially, and in a limited way to have fellow Japanese join them. They retained those rights because of Britain's desire to retain friendly relations with her long-time ally. For the Nisei, the situation was almost reversed. Because they were Canadians, not Japanese Nationals, Anglo-Japanese

friendship offered them little protection and they had no more rights than their parents. American Nisei were full-fledged citizens because the American constitution bestowed citizenship on all who were born in the country. Once they reached their majorities, American Nisei could vote yet, custom restricted their employment opportunities. In sum, although constitutional and

diplomatic considerations caused variations in the legal status of the Nikkei on both sides of the 49th parallel, prejudices and economic jealousies knew no boundary and in their daily lives, it did not matter a great deal to the Issei or their descendants in which part of "Amerika" they settled.

Nikkei Centre: September, 2004

Re-opening the Gate: Japanese Immigration to Canada, 1945-1967 by Dr. Patricia Roy

On 1 May 1947, Prime Minister Mackenzie King outlined his government's postwar policy of encouraging the immigration of as many immigrants as could "advantageously be absorbed in our national economy." He also repeated his statement of 4 August 1944 that no immigration from Japan would be permitted after the war. Over the next twenty years the Japanese community in Canada used its political skills to lobby, at times in collaboration with Chinese Canadians, for relaxation and eventually the elimination of discriminatory treatment that made them "second class citizens."

Many would-be "immigrants" were in fact Canadians. Almost 1700 Japanese-Canadians were "stranded" in Japan when the war broke out and a number of Nisei had accompanied their parents to Japan before the war or as wartime or postwar "repatriates." The federal government had some sympathy for strandeers with families in Canada but not for those who had never had Canadian citizenship or who had lost it through the repatriation scheme. The files of the Japanese Canadian Citizens Association have many sad stories of separated families.

In addition to humanitarian concerns, the JCCA and its supporters complained that Canada's immigration policies meant that they were second-class citizens. "That we are unable to call to Canada even immediate family members if they be nationals of Japan, remains the final obstacle to our full and unqualified recognition as bona fide Canadian citizens. And so long as this blot of statutory discrimination remains on the books, we are not Canadians in the truest constitutional sense of the word," wrote Toyo Tabata in *The New Canadian*.¹

The JCCA lobbied ministers of immigration and members of Parliament and presented briefs to parliamentary committees. The number of "immigrants" slowly increased; in 1954, 91 were admitted mainly on compassionate grounds.² As normal trade and diplomatic relations resumed between Canada and Japan, Canada gradually eased its policy; the JCCA found declining interest among its members but continued to seek the

repeal of racial qualifications from immigration laws. It got support from the Japanese ambassador in Ottawa and worked with Chinese Canadians who also wanted changes in immigration laws including provision for the admission of fiancés.

Evidence that British Columbians were no longer hostile to the Japanese and prospects of growing trade with Japan, apparently encouraged the Diefenbaker government to approve a few more cases of family reunification. More significantly, in 1962, it revised its general immigration policy to admit individuals on the basis of their skills without respect to their "race, colour, national origin or the country from which he comes." A month later, the government announced that Japanese people could enter as unsponsored immigrants on the same basis as immigrants from elsewhere if they had necessary skills. Ironically, because of Japan's rising standard of living and acute shortage of skilled workers, there was relatively little interest in emigration. Finally, in 1967, Canada's Centennial year, the Lester B. Pearson government lifted the last formal barrier to equality by removing geographic and racial restrictions from the sponsorship system and introduced the "points system" by which most potential immigrants were judged. Immigration Minister Jean Marchand denied that trade had anything to do with his plan to abolish discrimination against Japanese immigrants yet it is difficult to believe that the government did not consider trade and diplomatic considerations in making such a policy. Nevertheless, persistence in campaigning for equality in immigration paid off. Discriminatory franchise laws before the war meant they had had limited experience in Canadian electoral politics but Japanese Canadians learned quickly and patiently used those skills to secure support in their quest for full equality with other Canadian citizens.

(Endnotes)

¹ *The New Canadian*, 8 March 1952.

² Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* 24 March 1955, 2331.

Governor General Announces Order of Canada Awards

According to the official government announcement...

Henry J. Shimizu, C.M., Edmonton, Alta.



Dr. Henry Shimizu. (Henry Shimizu photo, 2003)

In 1949, Henry Shimizu was granted full citizenship rights and became one of the first Japanese Canadians to study medicine in Canada. Specializing in plastic surgery, he served with distinction for three decades as a teacher and researcher at the University of Alberta and was president of the University of Alberta Hospital's medical staff where he co-founded a burn-

treatment centre. Over the years, he has supported many organizations through his voluntary service, including the Japanese Canadian Redress Foundation, where he served as Chair.

During his career, he served also as the Secretary-Treasurer, Vice President and President of the Canadian Society of Plastic Surgeons, as well as President of the Canadian Craniofacial Society.

Dr. Shimizu was active in the Edmonton arts community, as Director, with the Alberta Heritage Council, the Alberta Cultural Heritage Council, the Alberta Cultural Heritage Foundation, the Edmonton Ballet Company, and Director and President of the Edmonton Art Gallery.

Among other Nikkei organizations that Dr. Shimizu has served are the Edmonton Japanese Community - as President, the Japanese Canadian National

Museum (JCNM) and the National Nikkei Museum and Heritage Centre (NNMHC). He was appointed to the Board of the JCNM by the National Association of Japanese Canadians in 2001 and was elected at the 2003 founding AGM of the NNMHC, at which the JCNM merged with the National Nikkei Heritage Centre Society.

During the Nikkei Week 125 festivities, Dr. Shimizu's paintings were displayed in the JCNM gallery. They showed life in the internment camp at New Denver and told the story of one wartime Japanese Canadian community in a personal and poignant way.

His previous honours include the Queen Elizabeth Jubilee Medal, the Alberta Achievement Award and the NAJC President's Award.

Nikkei Images sends its congratulations to Dr. and Mrs. Shimizu for the well-deserved recognition for a life of service. ❁

New and renewing National Nikkei Museum and Heritage Centre Members from February 6, 2004 to April 27, 2004

Mrs. Kay Akada	Mr. & Mrs. Ken & Mich Kochi	Mr. & Mrs. Shinichi & Shirley Omatsu
Ms. Mieko Amano	Mr. & Mrs. Joe & Elsie Komori	Mrs. Yoshie Omura-Kamite
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Arnet	Mr. & Mrs. Ernest & Delphine Lowe	Ms. Patricia Roy
Ms. Anne Briggs	Ms. Betty Lui	Mr. & Mrs. Philip Saito
Mr. Guy Champoux & Ms. Reiko Okubo	Mrs. Gwen E. Macdonald	Mr. & Mrs. Terry & Marge Sakai
Mr. & Mrs. Maurice & Tama Copithorne	Ms. Mika Maniwa	Mr. Ken Sakamoto
Mr. Hamish Cumming & Ms. Emiko Ando	Mr. & Mrs. Shizuo & Celia Matsuba	Mr. & Mrs. Tats & Kim Sakauye
Mr. & Mrs. Mike & Margaret Ebbesen	Mrs. Shizuko Matsumura	Mr. & Mrs. Bunji & Marilyn Sakiyama
Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth & Nobu Ellis	Mrs. Dorothy Y. Matsune	Mr. Yuki Shimomura
Mrs. Therese Enderle	Mr. & Mrs. Bill & Pat McEwan	Ms. Evelyn Suzuki
Ms. Yoshiko Godo & Terry Lighthead	Mr. & Mrs. Ken and Marianne Minato	Ms. Hitomi Suzuta
Mrs. Fumiko Hanazawa	Ms. Florence Mitani	Mrs. Etsuko Takata
Ms. Judy Hanazawa	Ms. Nancy K. Morishita	Mr. & Mrs. Henry & Patricia Tanaka
Dr. & Mrs. Akira & Hamako Horii	Mr. & Mrs. Michael & Aiko Murakami	Mr. & Mrs. Joe & Jean Tatebe
Ms. Daien Ide & Mr. Hiroshi Mizoguchi	Mr. & Mrs. Dan & Rury Nakagawa	Mr. & Mrs. Tom & Margaret Taylor
Ms. Judy Inouye	Mr. Hiro Nakashima	Ms. Midori Uyeyama & Colin Soo
Ms. Shirley Inouye	Mr. Henry Grant Naruse	Mrs. Kimiye Uyeyama
Ms. Wakako Ishikawa	Mr. & Mrs. Takashi & Keiko Negoro	Mr. & Mrs. Shigeru & Midori Wakabayashi
Mr. & Mrs. Don & Kumiko Iwanaka	Mr. & Mrs. Robert & Jane Nimi	Dr. & Mrs. Joji & Sachi Yamanaka
Mr. & Mrs. Koichi Kaminishi	Ms. Rosalind Nishi	Ms. Hideko Yamashita
Mr. & Mrs. Alfie & Rosie Kamitakahara	Mr. & Mrs. Shoji & Eve Nishihata	Ms. Cathy Yasui & Mr. Randy Preston
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Kariya	Ms. Toshi Oikawa	Mr. & Mrs. Fukashi & Chiyo Yasui
Ms. Tomoko Kato	Mrs. Jean Okazaki	Mr. & Mrs. Stanley & Aileen Yokota
Mr. Norifumi Kawahara	Miss Karla L. Olson	