Issei Volunteer Soldiers of the First World War

There are still many in the Japanese Canadian community who are surprised to learn that close to 200 naturalized Canadians, all born in Japan, had volunteered and fought in the First World War, 1914-18, as part of the Canadian Expeditionary Force.

Even those who have heard or read about this often have only a vague idea of this important episode in our history. Their sacrifice was not trivial. This small immigrant group of an estimated 9,000 men, women, and children had sent 196 soldiers abroad. Fifty-four died in action. Of the 142 who survived, all save twelve were wounded in France and Flanders.

The first question that comes to mind is “Why did they go?” As with all young men who joined the war, each must have had his own reasons. But with the Japanese Canadians, there was an overarching situation unique to them. To understand this, it is necessary to imagine how the world appeared to the Japanese in Canada at the time.

In 1914, Canada was not a sovereign country. It was a “Dominion,” a self-governing colony of Great Britain and part of the global British Empire. There was no Canadian national flag, nor was there a Canadian national anthem. The national anthem meant “God Save the King” and the flag was the Union Jack. All matters of international affairs and defense were the business of the mother country. The Japanese in Canada were very aware of their relationship to three countries: Japan, the land of birth; Great Britain, in whose territory they have settled; and, Canada, where they have decided to make their lives.

Japan was then an unproven country. The small Asian nation had not only resisted colonization by Europeans, but was emerging as a modern state. The recent victory over Imperial Russia in 1905 assured its place among the military powers of the world. Japan owed much to the support of Great Britain in this rise in national status. When the latter abandoned its long-cherished policy of “splendid isolation” and chose Japan as her ally with the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902, this became a source of pride and confidence for all Japanese. The recognition of Japan as a sovereign and equal partner by the global superpower of the time was of special interest to the Japanese in Canada who chose part of the British Empire as their home. References to Great Britain and Canada as “treaty allies” appear frequently in the writings of the volunteers. Anthropological sentiment prevailed in the community.

Unfortunately, there was also a dark side. The majority of Japanese had settled in British Columbia where they faced fierce opposition in every phase of their lives by eco-

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Otakara Hakkutsu Market
Sat., March 15, 2008
10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Nikkei Place Volunteer
Appreciation Tea
Sun., April 27, 2008, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Vancouver Youth Symphony Concert
May 4 and 10, 2008

Mini Japan Expo
May 14 and May 15, 2008

Yoshida Brothers
Tsugaru Shamisen Concert
Saturday, May 24, 2008

NNMHC Auxiliary Committee
Spring Food and Plant Bazaar
Sat., May 31, 2008, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

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nomic and legal discrimination. For the community leaders, the struggle for full citizen's rights, including the right to vote, became their major preoccupation. The instrument of this struggle was the Canadian Japanese Association/Nihonjin-kai. The president of this association from 1913 to 1917 was Yasushi Yamazaki, the editor/proprietor of the Japanese language daily, CONTINENTAL DAILY NEWS/TAIRIKU NIPPO.

When Great Britain declared war on Germany on August 4, 1914, Yamazaki and the executives of the Association knew that the Japanese in Canada must participate in the war. They would fight under the Union Jack as Canadian soldiers. Doing so had the merit of serving the three countries that wove through their lives. As Japanese, they would help their mother country discharge her obligation to her ally, Great Britain; they would also serve Great Britain as loyal settlers from an allied country. Above all, they would serve Canada faithfully and loyally to demonstrate that they were worthy of full citizenship. This rather complex position of Japanese Canadians is seen in the following advertisement which appeared in Japanese language newspapers on December 21, 1915.

"The situation has greatly changed in this Great European War. Great Britain, our treaty ally, has declared war and Canada, one of her possessions, has joined the fray, and is currently involved in various military activities. The brave young men among the Japanese in Canada had wished to volunteer before, but it was not permitted by circumstances. But now, the authorities from the neighbouring military districts have met with us and are eager to pursue the matter of Japanese volunteers. The contribution of Japanese in Canada at this time of national crisis will raise the morale of treaty allies [i.e., Great Britain, Canada, and Japan], give courage to their people and, without a doubt, secure the future of Japanese in this country. Come brave souls, this organization will work with you to show the loyalty of the Japanese and blaze a glorious path for the future of our people."

Two hundred and two men responded to the call. Among them were a young boy of 18 and a married man with children who was 44 years old. This older man had been in the Sino-Japanese as well as the Russo-Japanese Wars. They had come to the recruiting office which was set up in the premises of the Canadian Japanese Association on Powell Street.

In this way, the men began their military career first in Vancouver. On December 15th, the executives of the Association hammered out a plan for the Japanese Canadian participation in the war with Lieutenant R. T. Colquhoun of the 19th Company of the Canadian Army Service Corps. They were to first form a self-sustaining militia unit of approximately 200 to 500 men with a target of reaching battalion strength of 800 to 1,000. The unit was to be funded by the Association with donations from the community. After training for two or three months, it was expected that it would receive authorization from Ottawa and become part of the Canadian Army. The men would then volunteer for overseas service and fight with the Canadian Expeditionary Force in the European front. It was hoped that they would form an all-Japanese unit.

The drill began on January 17, 1916, at Cordova Hall, 152 Cordova Street. Colquhoun, now a captain, was the commander of the militia unit and Sergeant Major A.J. Hall, the drill master. They were assisted by two interpreters. The Association committed itself to paying the salary of the drill master, the rental of the hall, the room and board of the men as well as an allowance of $8.00 per month, per man. When this project was terminated in May
11, 1916, four months later, the total cost came to $14,212.00—a considerable sum.

The training at Cordova Hall proceeded smoothly at first. The volunteers were seen in public on a number of occasions, drilling on the Powell Grounds, holding parades and marching with local military units. Firearms drill was introduced on February 7th. By all accounts, they were welcomed everywhere by the general public.

Everyone involved thought that authorization from Ottawa would come within a couple of months. However, on this point, there was a problem from the very beginning. As early as January 20th, a few days after the drilling began, the military secretary of the Ministry of Militia and Defence had written to Colquhoun that “the formation of a unit of this character has not been authorized.” It is a mystery why the militia continued to drill. One can only speculate now on the reasons. Perhaps, given the very positive response of the local military (the unit was allowed to parade with the Seaforth Highlanders and inspected by General John Hughes of the Western Canadian Army) and enthusiastic accounts in the English language newspapers, Yamazaki and the leaders of the community may have naively thought that Ottawa could be won over just by their demonstration of loyalty to the cause.

It appears that Ottawa did not take much notice at first. But as time went on, Ottawa was confronted with little embarrassing incidents. For instance, it had to clarify to the Japanese General Consul in Ottawa that there was no truth to the news report that “an all Japanese regiment” has been formed in Vancouver. It also received requests from three young men living in Japan to join the “Japanese contingent” in Vancouver.

Then, on March 10th, there was an unfortunate incident which forced Ottawa to take notice. The volunteers were involved in a widely publicized scandal. Although there are many versions of this event, it appears that it started with a Japanese businessman jeering the volunteers at the Powell Grounds. He is said to have insulted the men by saying that they were joining the militia for money since they could not find work. He even offered them jobs on the spot. This infuriated the men and a scuffle broke out.

Canadian News/Kanada Shimbun was a rival to Yamazaki’s Continental Daily News/Tairiku Nippo. It carried an editorial the next day decrying the action of the men saying that this tarnished the reputation of all Japanese. A group of volunteers went to see the editor to protest. When this did not resolve the matter, the men returned at night and vandalized the newspaper plant. After this, fearing attack on his home, Rev. Goro Kaburagi, the proprietor, asked for police protection. The news was widely reported in the English language press.

Now Ottawa could not but take notice and the reaction was swift. Major General W.E. Hodgins, the Adjutant General, sent a telegram dated March 13, 1916, to Colonel John Duff-Stewart, commander of 11th Military District, Victoria.

“Under what authority has Japanese Battalion been allowed to organize and train. What is real situation in connection therewith and what has caused recent rioting at Vancouver, Submit full report early date.”

Despite Yamazaki’s last ditch effort to save the project—he went to Ottawa on April 10th and met with men in authority there—a clear directive to disband the militia group was issued. The decision was made at the Military Council on April 19th, with Sir Robert Borden, the Prime Minister, presiding. The telegram was sent to Duff-Stewart and Yamazaki simultaneously on April 21, 1916 and stated, “Since your recent visit to Ottawa, the British Imperial Authorities have cabled that they would gladly accept the services of a Canadian Japanese Battalion, which, they would like to form part of a force just about to take the field. This is not practicable, however, because the battalion is far from being ready to embark; while to recruit, equip and train it would take too long a time. Moreover, a doubt exists whether Canadian Japanese, British subjects, could raise and keep up to strength a full battalion, a unit upwards of 1,000 strong, and the services of a smaller unit, a company for example, could not conveniently be utilized. Your patriotic offer must therefore be declined, but I am to express the personal thanks of Sir Robert Bor-
den, who recognizes and appreciates the high motives which actuated the President and Members of the Canadian Japanese Association.”

This is a surprisingly polite and courteous memo. The President of the Canadian Japanese Association is given equal status with the military commander of British Columbia. Very clear reasons are stated for the action. It is also interesting that the Prime Minister of Canada felt the need to consult both Japan and Great Britain over a matter involving a mere two hundred volunteers. Canada was not yet a sovereign nation it was to become.

Yamazaki made one more effort to salvage the situation. On his way back from Ottawa, he met with General Ernest Alexander Cruikshank, the commanding officer of the 13th Military District, Alberta. The General was offered 200 Japanese volunteers, equivalent to a company. Cruikshank agreed to integrate such a company into one of his battalions and wrote to Ottawa asking for permission. When this was denied, the last hope for an all-Japanese unit in the Canadian Expeditionary Force had to be abandoned.

On May 11, 1916, a ceremony was held at Cordova Hall to disband the militia unit. Each volunteer was given a specially minted badge from the Canadian government acknowledging his training. This marked the darkest moment, for the men who spent four months of training, and for the community which raised over $10,000 in support.

However, their fortune was to change in a matter of weeks.

As Alberta battalions were desperately short of volunteers, the Canadian Japanese Association was approached by eager recruiters. It appears that although an all-Japanese unit was not authorized by Ottawa, there was no real obstacle to enlisting as individuals.

In General Cruikshank’s words, “...there is no objection to the enlistment of odd men, but large numbers are not to be enlisted.” As a result, by late May, Japanese volunteers began enlisting in Calgary and Medicine Hat. The zeal in accepting the volunteers by the Albertans was matched by the eagerness of Capt. Colquhoun and the Association in helping the soldiers travel to Alberta. Transportation warrants were issued by the Military District No. 11 (Victoria) with the approval of the Quarter Master General. The volunteers went to Alberta as soldiers, not as civilians. But it is suggested by records that the expenses (at least some part) were borne by the Association, since the treasurer travelled to Calgary to settle accounts.

The first volunteers to go abroad were the 42 members of the 13th Battalion Mounted Rifles of Medicine Hat. They were followed by 50 of the 192nd battalion, the 56 of the 175th, and others. The TAIKU NIPPO of December 2, 1916, reported that 165 Japanese had enlisted to that date, and of these, 148 were already overseas. This is the answer to one of the puzzles surrounding the volunteers: Why did these men who were mostly from the west coast join the battalions of Alberta?

Those in the 13th Battalion, as stated above, were the first to go. One of the leaders, Iku Kumagawa enlisted on May 19th in Calgary. The others would have done so at the same time. The following gives a glimpse into the life that awaited them.

After basic training at Sarcee Camp near Calgary, they left by train on June 22nd. They arrived in Ottawa on June 26th, where they were inspected by the Governor General, Duke of Connaught. They left Halifax on June 28th aboard the troop carrier, OLYMPIC for England.

Very strict rules were observed during the voyage across the Atlantic. Life jackets were worn at all times except when sleeping as precaution against German submarine attack. They reached Liverpool on July 5th. There, they boarded a train to the camp in Shorncliffe.

The training at Shorncliffe was stricter than anything they had experienced before in Canada. Everyone lived in tents, even the commanding officer. The day began at 5:30 a.m. and continued until 4:30 p.m. After this, each soldier was given a specific task to complete. There was no idle moment. As they trained, they heard the artillery fire from the French coast across the Straits of Dover. The men were impatient to join the fray.

They had their wish on August 24th as they sailed to France as Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry. On October 4th, they were transferred to the 52nd Battalion and participated in the Battle of the Somme. Here they experienced the first casualty. On October 9th, Teikichi Shichi, 27 years old, was hit by enemy shrapnel and died. The message was received in Vancouver on November 9th, bringing home to the community the reality of war. A solemn memorial service was held on November 19th at the Vancouver Buddhist Church.

The experiences of the men of this unit are represented by the career of Katsuji Nakashima. He began by participating in the Battle of the Somme, from October 3rd – 8th. He was then sent to the Vimy region on October 26th. In April, 1917, he was in the attack on Vimy Ridge. He was in the battle near the village of Avon on June 28th. After resting for sometime at the rear, he returned to the front and saw action at Lenz. In April, 1918, he was sent to the Vimy region again where he was involved in the Battle of Arras and Cambrai. His battalion pushed on to the region.
of Mons in Belgium where he met the end of the war. He left Belgium on February 1, 1919, and was discharged at Port Arthur, Ontario, on March 31. He returned to Vancouver in April. Not everyone was as lucky as Nakashima, who appeared not to have been seriously wounded and spent only a short time in a French hospital for illness.

If this was the picture of the war through the experience of a single soldier, how did the Japanese soldiers fight as part of the larger unit? Curiously enough, although Ottawa consistently opposed the formation of an all-Japanese unit, those who originally enlisted in the 13th Battalion of Medicine Hat (later transferred to the 52nd in France) appeared to have achieved an approximation of an all-Japanese platoon.

One of the men, Eiji Nagai, sent the following description of the organization of his platoon after writing that, "we Japanese are bearing most of the burden of the 9th platoon which has over 50 men."

This letter was written April 10, 1917. By then, the original 42 Japanese volunteers had dwindled to half; 21.

"Following are our duties and names. Third Division; 52nd Battalion; 3rd Company; 9th Platoon.


2nd Section: Machine Gun. All Japanese. Led by Corporal Shoji Tokunaga; Murata; Kanakura; Tokunaga; Nagao


Commander and several non-commissioned officers. Batmen."

They must have felt a special sense of security fighting with their Japanese comrades whom they knew from Cordova Hall. The men who joined the 192nd Battalion must have been organized in a similar fashion. They were transferred to the 10th Battalion in France and had experienced fierce fighting. The following is a letter of one of them, Nuinosuke Ooka, describing the attack on Easter Monday of the famous Battle of Vimy Ridge. "Our battalion started out from a hamlet approximately five miles behind the front lines on April 8th, at 4:30 PM. On the way, we stopped during the day to wait for night fall before entering the trench. I don’t know whether the enemy knew that an attack was coming or not, but they kept a barrage of poison gas shells and grenades. This caused us trouble for some time. However, we suffered no loses. As a result, our unit was able to enter the dahouse at the second line trenches and was able to avoid enemy shells. While we waited for the moment of attack, we had supper at 2:00 AM. We then moved to the first line trenches. We waited awhile there. At 4:00 AM we raised a toast of rum to our military fortune. Soon, at 5:00 AM, there was a monstrous earthquake of explosions. The attack was on. The soldiers in our trenches suddenly became alive. We climbed to the surface and advanced through the smoke caused by the artillery. It was like seeing men running into a raging fire. Although the enemy showed stubborn resistance, they could not withstand our army’s fierce attack. Many of them were killed. Those who could not find an escape route raised their hands crying out “comrades” and surrendered. Many prisoners were taken. Our unit suffered about five hundred dead and wounded. As for the Japanese soldiers, there were three dead and four wounded. The others were unharmed. We returned to the hamlet on 22nd, and are here taking a rest."

Three years later, 16 months after the war had ended, on Easter Monday, April 9th, 1920, the Cenotaph was unveiled in Stanley Park. This monument to the Japanese-Canadian soldiers who fought and died for Canada, was erected by the Japanese community which raised over $15,500. Here is the description in the DAILY PROVINCE; "Standing on a twelve-foot polygon base of chiseled granite, the thirty-four foot column of Haddington Island white sandstone, surmounted by an exquisitely executed marble lantern, fashioned after a Japanese model, presented an imposing and artistic appearance."

With a crowd of 2,000 people watching, the band of the Great War Veterans’ Association commenced the ceremony playing the ‘Maple Leaf Forever.’ After a prayer by Rev. W.H. Vance, Principal of Latimer Hall, the theological college, Alderman McRae, on behalf of Mayor Gale, pulled the chord re-
moving the Union Jack which draped the monument. Then, the light in the Japanese lantern on the top was lit. Three cheers were given to the King followed by 'Banzai Sansho' for the soldiers. The band played 'God Save the King' as the ceremony concluded.

All the guests were invited to a luncheon hosted by the Canadian Japanese Association at Hotel Vancouver. In the evening, there was a banquet at the Orange Hall in which the members of the Japanese community mingled with the returned soldiers.

Postscript
There is still much work to be done on the history of the volunteers. Their lives after they returned home will have to be pieced together by someone in the future. Some returned to Japan, but most picked up the threads of their old lives.

As for the struggle for the right to vote, it continued until April 1st, 1931, when it was finally granted to the volunteers by the British Columbia Legislature with the narrowest of margin: a single vote. The franchise was not extended further to any other Japanese Canadian. Nor did this exempt the veterans from internment as "enemy aliens" during the Second World War.

The light of perpetual remembrance on top of the Cenotaph was deliberately extinguished with the coming of the Second World War. It remained so until August 2, 1985, when a few veterans and their friends held a ceremony to re-light the lantern.

The Author's Notes:
The quotes from official memos and telegrams were found in the National Archives.
The other direct quotations such as the letters of the soldiers are from Kanada Dobo Hatten Taikan translated by the author.

A bound manuscript is available at $15 per copy including mailing and handling. Contact Kaye Kishibe, 184 Degrassi St., Toronto, Ontario, M4M 2K7. Tel. 416-465-8852. E-mail: kkishibe38@hotmail.com.

**Artist/Craftman Series No. 12**

**My Life as an Immigrant, Artist and Gallery Owner**

by Motoko

It has been 16 years already since I first emigrated from Japan. I was 28 years old, but it seems like just a few years ago when I first landed in Canada as an immigrant. I remember mixed feelings of uncertainty and excitement as I began my new life in an unfamiliar land. I lived in Vancouver for the first few years and then I met my husband Rex and moved to the Sunshine Coast where he lived. Pender Harbour, north of Sechelt and Gibsons on the Sunshine Coast is where I currently live as a full time artist, publisher and operator of my private gallery.

My passion for art began at a very young age. Throughout my childhood, I was happy as long as I had a white piece of paper to draw something on. Hardly anything else interested me and I kept practicing, hoping to be an artist some day. That was my childhood dream.

Although I always wanted to be an artist, my parents’ practical advice persuaded me to go to college. With my father being a physician and my brother already in medical school, I was steered towards an education in some area related to the medical field. I trained to be a dietician. I was too young to have the courage to pursue my dream, but I always knew that I would, one day.

After graduating from college, I began to work in a hospital as a dietician but my dream kept calling. I tried to convince myself that it was the practical path for my life and it was better for me but I found I could not work in a job that I did not feel any passion or love for. After three years, I left the hospital and looked for another job. My next career was in a food marketing company as a food consultant where I developed new recipes and created marketing materials. I finally felt happier. I was in a job where I was able to be slightly more creative. I worked in that field for six years, until I moved to Canada. It was not until I married Rex and moved to the Sunshine Coast that I began my journey to be an artist and I was already 30 years old by then. It was my loving husband’s unwavering support and the fact that he believed in me and wanted to support me unconditionally that allowed me to pursue my dream and put me on the right track.
Even though I had a great deal of passion for art I really didn’t know where to start. In order for me to pursue art seriously, I needed to study everything about visual art in every aspect. I needed to find out things that I could have learned at art school 10 years ago. But going to art school full time was not an option for me at that time so I decided to join the Federation of Canadian Artists (FCA). Through FCA and other organizations, I took workshops from several accomplished artists such as Joyce Kamikura, Ruth Sawatzky, Caroline Buchanan and Susan McKinnon. It was the best possible way for me to learn techniques and theories about painting as quickly as possible. After I took eight workshops from such exceptional artists, I had to self-study to find my own style. It was my goal and commitment to be able to make this work as my career. That means an artist who can support herself and make a living, not a hobby. After a period of four years of self-learning, I began to sell my art work through commercial art galleries locally and also in the Greater Vancouver area. But it wasn’t until I started to publish my own limited edition prints and operate my own private gallery that I was eventually able to start my career as a professional full time artist.

The beauty and diversity of nature and human emotions are my main subjects. My early work was as a representational artist. My desire to portray the natural beauty, which surrounds me, often ended in floral art or a local landscape painting. As my understanding of art progressed, I took a deep interest in using colour, shape, line and texture as my tools to express the essence of that beauty. Painting is my personal expression. Over time, I have become increasingly interested in non-representational, non-objective abstract art. As I grow as an artist and as a person, I am more interested in expressing deep human emotions or the energy of nature and the elements of our universe rather than what we actually see in the tangible world.

It is a very exciting feeling when I can share my emotions and deepest feelings with others through my art, not with words, but by using colours and forms, which represent how I feel. I enjoy pushing the boundaries of art forms. I try to create energy, tension and persuasion but at the same time I try to create harmony within. It is always up to each viewer to decide how they perceive my art. I believe art is something that should allow all of us to be truly creative and free. If an artist can evoke a viewer’s deep emotion through her art, it is a true privilege. My goal, always, is to be such an artist.

It was two years ago that I decided to open my own art gallery here in Pender Harbour. Many people in B.C. still think the Sunshine Coast is on the Island. It is located north west of Vancouver and it is part of the mainland but there is no highway, which connects to this area. So, one must take the B.C. ferry from Horseshoe Bay to get to the Sunshine Coast.

Just like any other part of B.C. it is a rapidly growing community. The Sunshine Coast is a wonderful place to live and I feel blessed to live here.
destination all year around. We have a beautiful coastline from Gibsons to Powell River. But amongst all of these areas, I feel Pender Harbour, where I live, is exceptionally unique and stunning, surrounded by intricate shorelines, lakes and mountains. It is often called the “Venice of the North” and that is the perfect description of this area. When I first came here, I could not believe the beauty of nature, which surrounds me. It was almost surreal to a woman’s eye, especially one who had just come from a large city like Tokyo.

When I first opened this gallery, I was very sceptical about how this all was going to work out as a business. It is a popular destination for many boaters from Washington State and Vancouver. We also have many tourists during the summer season from all over B.C. and other provinces. But it still has a remote area population of about 3,500. My gallery is not located on a busy downtown street of a large city. I took a chance. It has been 2 years since I opened my gallery and it clearly has become a destination on the Sunshine Coast visited by many locals and visitors.

One of the main reasons why I wanted to open my own gallery was because I felt quite isolated in my studio when I was selling my art only through other commercial art galleries. I didn’t have much, if any, interaction with the people who purchased my art. I had no way of knowing what made them feel the need to purchase my art. Some artists are completely fulfilled just creating their art in their own space. I personally enjoy meeting my viewers and to feel a connection and learn from their responses. When I confessed my feeling of isolation to my dear friend, she suggested that I open my own gallery space so I can interact with the viewers. She also guided me through to be a businesswoman taking control of her own destiny which in my case is to be a professional artist, publisher and a gallery owner. My dear friend also taught me we are what we believe to be. Without the unconditional support from my husband and such a dedicated friend, I would not have achieved what I have achieved so far.

Another joy of operating this gallery is that I feel I am a part of this community. We are currently under renovation to expand our gallery to two levels. By this summer, my gallery will be approximately 2,500 square feet of floor space exhibiting my work.

My goal is to create an ambiance for my viewers to be able to get away to a space where they can enjoy my art and completely relax. We have a beautiful rock garden with ocean view situated by our giant natural cliff with many arbutus trees and beautiful moss and eagles flying high above us. The gallery is surrounded by typical northwestern coast beauty. I enjoy creating my art in my studio attached to the gallery and I love sharing my vision with many people who visit my gallery. Every fall in the third weekend of September, I have a major exhibition in conjunction with our community’s biggest event, the Pender Harbour Jazz Festival. I invite my clients and the public who love jazz music to enjoy my art and also fantastic live jazz performances in our rock garden. In the fall of 2007, I had over 500 guests to this one weekend enjoying the exhibition and Sibel Thrasher’s fabulous live performance in our natural amphitheatre created by the

**Memoir by Motoko. (Motoko photo, 2007)**
cliff and rock garden.

Now, I really feel I have settled into Canada. I love this country as much as I love Japan. And I love this small community of Pender Harbour where I intend to live as long as I live. I feel this is a lifestyle my husband and I chose and can truly enjoy for the rest of our lives. I feel extremely fortunate that I have a job that I truly love and also have a place to be able to share my vision with other people through my art and to have that personal connection.

My current excitement is to have my parents come over from Japan this coming fall for my annual exhibition. I will be able to show what I have achieved since I immigrated to Canada but more importantly, I will be able to show my father how I am living my dream in a foreign country. And I know he will be happy for me because after all, my gene as an artist came from my father who is an excellent artist himself.

I feel life is a journey of continuous challenges and learning experiences. Without these challenges and experiences, we could not follow our dreams; find a sense of self worth and the true meaning of one's life. When I am feeling down or set back for whatever the reason, I am reminded and encouraged by my clients who comment that my art brings joy to their lives. It might be a small thing in the big scheme of things in life but still that's why I do what I do. I am doing something worthy to someone's life and to myself. My journey is only half way and I am looking forward to continuing my journey to be a better artist, member of the community and the country where I chose to live. We are who we believe to be.

For more information about Motoko, her art, studio and gallery, please visit www.motokoart.com or call 604-883-9472.

Norman Takeuchi Street Banners for Sale

A limited number of Norman Takeuchi street banners, which decorated the streets in Vancouver in 2007, are available for sale in the Museum shop for $25 per piece.

The Museum would like to thank the City of Vancouver and UNICEF for donating these banners.

Images:
Railway workers, Harrison Mills, B.C., 1910
Vancouver Asahi baseball team, Terminal Baseball League Championship, 1930.
Dimensions: 32 by 80 inches
Images:
Dimensions: 32 by 80 inches
Images:
Immigrant women and their children, near Cranbrook, B.C., 1911
Young girl with parasol, unidentified camp
Houses in Steveston, B.C., 1942
Dimensions: 32 by 80 inches
Family History Series No. 8

Ben Akira Iwasaki: How To Live To Be Over One Hundred
by Lynne R. Gardiner

At the age of 101, my father, Akira Iwasaki, known as “Brownie” when he was working, and Ben to his Caucasian friends, still has a sense of humour and on sunny days, quite a bit of energy. When I took him to the doctor recently for his prescription refill check-up, Dr. Appleby asked him how he was. Dad replied, “Still living!” When the doctor asked if he had pains anywhere, (we had just paid the receptionist to have the doctor sign an application for a Handicap Parking Permit), Dad replied, “Only in my wallet.” When we were leaving he muttered that he had forgotten to tell the doctor that he still gets up at 3:30 AM to do his ‘spinning’ on his stationary bike and ‘pump iron’ with his one pound weights. I’m not sure if he actually gets up that early but he catnaps a lot during the day to make up for it if he does.

I don’t think we ever thought of our father as being humorous at all when we were growing up. We hardly saw him because he left for work at about 6:30 a.m. and didn’t arrive home till almost 8:30 p.m., had his dinner, probably had a bath and went to bed. In the summer, after coming home from work, he must have worked in our garden because we had quite a large vegetable garden at our Cedar Cottage house and quite an ornamental garden at our Cambie street house, both probably designed and planted by my mother but dug by my Dad. He had every other Sunday off, and quite often after church we would go for a drive around Stanley Park. The garage wasn’t open so late on Saturday and Sunday. When we were young and complaining I just remember him being very stern and saying to us, “If you don’t like it here you can find somewhere else to live,” which scared me a lot because he sure sounded like he meant it.

Dad was born in Shidai, a little fishing village in Kaminoseki, Yamaguchi-ken, Honshu, Japan, on September 9, 1906, second son of Yuichi and Riki (Yamamura) Iwasaki. He was left in the care of his grandmother, Haru, from the age of about nine since his mother had come to Canada to join his father. His father had left Japan before Dad was born, soon after returning home from the war in Manchuria, to make some money to restore family coffers that had been depleted while he was away in Manchuria.

He had two brothers, Riichi, born July 16, 1902, and Toshio, born January 10, 1917, in Canada. Riichi died July 7, 1916, from blood poisoning after stepping on a nail while under the care of his grandmother and Toshio, who suffered from Kyphosis (severe curvature of the spine) died on March 20, 1945. His mother had tried to get help for Toshio in Canada and also when she returned to Japan but at that time there was no help or cure. Dad’s school years were difficult because he was the biggest student in the class, growing to five feet five-and-a-half inches by age 14, tall for his village, so he always had to sit at the back of the class. Eyeglasses were unheard of in his fishing village so when he was about eight and his vision became poorer, he couldn’t see anything on the board. He said his report cards were very poor.

Dad came to Canada on July 1, 1921, at the age of 14. He was meant to come with his uncle, Juichiro Iwasaki, who was returning to Canada but Dad contracted an eye infection so he was detained in Yokohama. He remembers having his first ice cream there, something he still enjoys. His uncle said that at fifty cents it was too expensive to buy two since they only cost five cents in Vancouver. Dad’s steamboat crossing took two weeks and he was sick the whole time, made nauseous by the smell of paint.

He worked on his father’s boat, shrimping for six months, but being prone to seasickness he was no fisherman. And, when he was placed at the helm on a dark, snowy night without glasses and no experience steering a boat, he drove the boat aground.

So he went to Ocean Falls with his uncle and aunt and lived in the bunkhouse provided for the Japanese there. He worked at the pulp and paper mill, moving pulp bundles outside for the first year, then was promoted inside for another year, making 25 cents an hour. He said they worked 12-hour day shifts and 14-hour night shifts. On Sundays they were paid time-and-a-half

![](Akira's portrait taken on September 23, 1923 by G. Wakamachi, Main Studio. (Iwasaki Family photo)
any future for himself in Japan; most of the others who had returned came back to Canada after a visit. He wanted to be an electrician, but couldn’t read English so couldn’t get the necessary training. He saw Japanese people being driven around in taxi cars and decided he wanted to learn about cars so he got a job apprenticing as a mechanic. He did go to an auto-mechanic school where he said he didn’t learn anything much. They also gave him a big book to read but of course he couldn’t read it. He worked long hours, from 6:00 a.m. often to midnight at Nippon Auto, under Mr. Miyakawa for almost the ten-year apprenticeship and got paid about $50 a month. He had bought a burned out Chrysler Touring car for $65, rebuilt it, then sold it to his future father-in-law, pretty well at cost. He left Nippon Auto and worked a year for Asahi Garage. At the time he was living in a rooming house run by Mrs. Kimura at Gore and Powell.

My parents’ marriage was arranged between their fathers. Dad’s father helped Mum’s father when he came to Canada and tried fishing. My mother’s father was very strong so he could help pull up the nets and traps. When Dad first met Mum, Ina Fuji Omura, he remembers that she was very dark-skinned. Her father had given up fishing because he didn’t really know how to repair nets and boats, so he bought a farm in Port Hammond and I guess she had been outside helping in the sun. Dad remembers on one of their first dates they drove to Harrison Hot Springs with my aunt and some other friends. However, it took so long, five to six hours one way in those days, that by the time they got there they had to turn around and come right back without stopping for anything, something my mother would tease him about.

Dad said my mother insisted on being engaged for three years. When they got married August 20, 1932, in Port Hammond at the Japanese school, my mother decided she was going to have a ‘dry’ wedding, which meant no alcohol and just sandwiches to keep the costs down since Dad was still only making $50 a month. She had been working as a housekeeper for a Dr. Giles in Point Grey until they got married. They had saved $100, paid for the wedding and had a wonderful honeymoon sailing on the Canadian Pacific Railway boat, the QUEEN MARY, to Hornby Island where they had booked a room in the lodge. Mum thought that upon their arrival when the owners realized they were Japanese, they put them in a cottage by themselves, but for $8, all-inclusive, it was a memorable two-week honeymoon. Their only regret was that once they returned my mother realized that they had forgotten to leave a tip.

A year later on June 12, 1933, their first son Lawrence Wataru was born. They were living in a room, sharing the bathroom at an apartment on Hastings two blocks east of Gore, but moved to Powell Street where it was less expensive. Dad had appendicitis shortly after Lawrence was born, and couldn’t work for a little

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Akira and a fellow worker posing in front of the machines he oiled in Ocean Falls. (Iwasaki Family photo, ca. 1925)
while after the operation. He was still only being paid as an apprentice and had asked his father for a loan to pay the $100 operation cost, but his father, who had remarried in 1930, said no because his new wife wanted a sewing machine. Dad’s doctor, Dr. Uchida, kindly allowed them to pay the operation off in monthly installments but Dad never forgave his father or stepmother. On September 9, 1937, their second son Cedric Eiji was born.

In 1939, Dad opened a garage in partnership with George Inouye at Main and Alexander called Vancouver Auto Supply. He was able to raise close to the $1,000 he needed from a life insurance policy he held. Business was very good so Dad and Mum were soon able to buy a house on Trinity Street.

When the war broke out in 1941, Dad was sent to Sicamous to work in the Solsqua road camp. He said they mostly sat around doing nothing. I remember when I had bought a turtle for my son for $12, Dad was amazed because he said there were thousands of them up in Sicamous, free for the picking. My mother and family were moved to the family farm in Port Hammond where they were permitted to stay in order to pick the strawberry crop. She was pregnant with Margaret Harumi, their first daughter, who was born May 10, 1942 in Grace Hospital. From letters we kept, I know my mother was hoping my father would be able to return for Margaret’s birth because the future was so uncertain at the time and she wasn’t sure when they would be able to be together. After Margaret was born, Dad was allowed to join the family and while he was working on a nursery greenhouse where he was employed, a barrel of hot tar fell on him and burned his upper body severely. He was in the Royal Columbia Hospital for three weeks with Mum visiting him every day from Port Hammond by bus. Canada had treated them very poorly and Dad had written to his uncle that he hoped the Japanese would send some planes. He was under surveillance for awhile by the R.C.M.P.

neighbours in Vancouver and Port Hammond and Dad did take his mechanics tools with him.

After the strawberries were harvested the family was moved to a horse stall in the PNE grounds for about a month before they were moved to the internment camp in New Denver. My uncle had been sent up with the men who built the camp so he reserved a waterfront location, lot one hundred, for our family barrack. My aunt and grandmother had also gone ahead and were living in a tent. Meals were prepared and eaten communally for the first few months which my mother really enjoyed and of course they also had a communal bathhouse which I have a fleeting memory of. I, Lynne Reiko, was born August 10, 1943, and Cheryl Kiyoko, was born December 17, 1945.

Dad cut wood for about a month and was hired to work in the garage, providing his own tools, for 25 cents an hour. When he heard that carpenters were making 35 cents an hour he wanted wage parity, and when it wasn’t forthcoming, he quit. After awhile the same supervisor hired Dad to fix government trucks and equipment in the mines, not knowing that Japanese Canadians could not work for the government at that time, so he was hired by Tier’s Garage and the mechanic from Tiers took the job with the government. Ced remembers Dad would ride a bike to work.

Once the war was over in the summer of 1945, and most people
had gone East or back to Japan, the Commission began closing down the camp. Now that Dad was employed 'outside' we rented the former Bank Manager's house that Mr. Tier now owned in town. All of us remember the house as a grand mansion with football-field size grounds, but it looked rather smaller and humble when we visited it later, but compared to the internment camp shacks it was quite grandiose. Lawrence, Ced and Margaret were the first Japanese Canadians to attend the school in town. We had very kind, friendly neighbours in town, Ernie and Shorty de Rosa. Their daughter Mary, who played with Marg and I, still lives in the family house with her husband Wally Fulco.

Dad remembers harrowing drives to the Sandon Power Plant to fix the motor in winter when the snow fell 10 to 12 feet. One Christmas he was called out to fix a bus that had broken down at Cape Horn, a dangerous, narrow one-lane curve on the road edging the water, beneath an overhanging cliff. He asked my mother to come along with him and later wished he hadn't because he had to replace the rotor on the bus with the rotor he had in his truck, then be driven on a very frightening trip by an obviously drunk bus driver to Slocan and back to get another rotor for the truck. On their way back to New Denver they met the lone passenger in Silverton. He had been abandoned by the bus driver who had stopped at the pub and hadn't come out, so they took the passenger back with them.

After the war was over my Uncle Shogo who had built the internment camp 'house' had gone to Toronto with his new wife; his mother and my aunt had determined it would be too difficult for Dad to start over again in Toronto with a family of seven. Dad had made a few trips to Vancouver with George Inouye to see what the situation would be like beforehand. One trip he drove to Nakusp to take the ferry to Oyama to pick up George but he was dumped by the captain for a Caucasian fellow despite protestations by him and the ticket agent. So instead he drove down through the United States, got stuck in mud and was helped by a Native American who wanted nothing in return for helping him. He then proceeded back to Canada through Osoyoos to get to Oyama, then he and George drove to Kamloops and down the Fraser Canyon to Vancouver.

When Japanese Canadians were permitted to come back to the West Coast, we moved back to Vancouver and lived on Victoria Drive in Cedar Cottage and were greeted by welcoming neighbours. Lawrence had taken a job as a houseboy in the Kerrisdale area in the Fall of 1948 so he was already down in Vancouver trying to finish high school at Magee. Mum and Dad had driven down to the coast at Easter and left us under the care of an old family friend, the mysterious Mr. Ayabe, (he was mysterious to us because he never said anything and I think he used to boil eggs the whole week), while they looked for a house. The Trinity Street house was now too expensive for them to buy back. My parents bought the least expensive home they could find for $3,000 on Victoria Drive, because Dad wanted to have money to start another service station. Dad opened B.C. Motors, a Chevron station, again in partnership with George Inouye, a year later. He had been working for Home Oil and when the proprietor asked if he wanted to become a partner, my father accepted, but was then told that Home Oil didn't allow 'Oriental' owners. It's a little joke in our house because my husband's father worked for Home Oil rising to Operations Manager and Dad joked maybe it was Jimmy my late father-in-law, who had denied him, though I don't think Jim was in that position of authority at that time, at least I hope not.

In 1955, we moved to Cambie Street with some encouragement from Lawrence. Dad and Mum transformed the front and backyard with all sorts of plants, shrubs and trees and a fish pond in the back. We three girls and our parents did go for camping trips for a few summers to Vaseaux Lake and Peachland in the Okanagan, staying overnight in Manning Park. Lawrence and Ced spent some summers picking fruit in the Okanagan. Once we got into swimming competitively we spent the summers doing the summer swim meet route to Tacoma, Spokane and Kelowna. He was very proud of Margaret's successes in swimming.
competitions and Lawrence’s accomplishments in hairstyling.

Dad’s service station was expropriated in 1971 so the city could re-align Powell Street so he was officially retired at age 65, which was probably a good thing. Otherwise he would probably have worked more years and missed the years of retirement he had with my mother. They had bought a waterfront property on Mayne Island in 1966 and once the garage was expropriated they had a house framed, wired and roofed for them, and then they moved over and finished the interior. Unfortunately Dad had no experience as a carpenter and a lot of the house shows it. He had made an ingenious system of pipes, hoses, tanks and ponds to re-use wash water and collect rainwater off the roof for watering.

They had nine happy years there together; gardening, trying to keep the deer out of the garden, collecting seaweed, finding the odd pine mushroom and meeting a group of neighbours who had also retired to the island. The soil was very poor there so whenever the Highways department or some other government agency was digging dirt, Dad would ask for it. He really kept busy collecting manure from the horses that were on the island too. My parents also did some traveling to Hawaii, Japan and Mexico.

Dad had taken up painting before he retired after my mother had given him a set of oil paints. He started painting more seriously once retired, especially in the winters when he didn’t have much work to do outdoors. He won many prizes at the Mayne Island Fall Fair, including the Art Aggregate trophy quite a few times. He donated and sold his paintings there and at a few galleries on Mayne. We continued to encourage him to enter a few paintings every year because the sales spurred him to do more. He has often said to me that he was lucky to have his painting because he has something to do, and we are lucky that he still has good eyesight in his right eye. His frugal nature came out when early on, he said he liked painting swans because he didn’t need to use much paint.

His most time-consuming hobby though, was collecting and for my niece’s wedding on the island. My husband marveled that my Dad had managed to do it by himself at the age my husband is now. My husband had my two brothers-in-law helping him and they were bushed using lumber from the store, not logs hauled up from the beach. My daughter remembers asking my father to flex his biceps because she said they looked like Popeye’s, and that was when he was in his seventies.

Mum died in November 1979, and Dad found the winters very lonely there. He said sadly that “My boss is gone.” My mother was the social one of the two and their friends were mostly her friends, though his neighbours continued to be very kind and helpful. He had gone to California with Margaret and her husband Juergen, to my brother Ced’s home and Lawrence had taken him to Hawaii in the winters during that time. He was very depressed and would have massive allergic reactions to all sorts of things which worried all of us, so he moved into Seton Villa, a Seniors’ Co-operative, for the winters from about 1984 to 1995. He swam every day in the pool there and said he used to use the staircase most of the time to get to his apartment. Marg and Juergen took him to Japan and Germany during this time. In the summers on Mayne he was busy gardening and doing house repairs, and fixing his own meals so he would paint in the winters when he was at Seton Villa. While there he was befriended by Mary Ohara and Mieko H. Amano and encouraged with his artwork. Mieko Amano had shows of

Akira Iwasaki celebrating his 100th birthday at Nikkei Home with family. From left: Cheryl, Cedric, Lynne and Margaret. (Iwasaki Family photo, 2006)
his artwork in her beauty salon and included him in a show in the New Westminster Library Art Gallery. One of his watercolours was also accepted at a show in the Vancouver City Hall and another at Robson Square.

In my mother’s memory, Dad donated a sum of money to the JCCA, for an athletic scholarship for someone of Japanese descent. This was first awarded to Lori Fung in 1984 and then to a wrestler I believe. It was a difficult scholarship for the JCCA volunteers to administer so after it lay dormant for a few years, they returned the unused balance to Dad. By the time Sakura-so was built, the balance had more than doubled so he donated it toward building an activity room there for the residents, in her memory.

In 1986 he still had an amazing amount of energy for an 80-year-old. That summer he changed the water tank, fixed the roof, painted the house and continued to cut wood and garden, plus cook his own meals and do his wash.

His right knee became very arthritic so he was about to have a knee replacement operation in 1996 at the age of 90. He had a minor car accident coming back to his apartment from the doctor’s office. When I went over to help him report it, I discovered to my horror that his license had expired in 1991. Dad was usually very good about official matters and would refer things he didn’t understand to me but the agent at the Motor Vehicle Branch said they don’t always send a notice to remind you of a renewal. He had to be retested. When he got his license back in the 1930s all you did was pay $1 and show the hand signals, so I thought he needed some refresher lessons.

Just getting his learner’s license turned out to be a nightmare because now you have to take the test on a computer, and one of the language choices was, of course, not Japanese and though Dad can read English, I wasn’t sure how competent he was. I also wondered how I was going to teach him at his age to use a computer. Fortunately when I took him into the North Vancouver office the agent was a young man of East Indian descent who said he had the same problem with his mother so he gave the test to my father orally. I enrolled him at the age of 90 in Young Driver’s of Canada for five lessons. He passed his test and was able to drive till he was 95.

Dad never talked very much, especially when my mother was alive, so we didn’t even know he can be quite funny, though he always liked to kid his grandchildren. He was just busy in the background following my mother’s instructions, cutting wood, painting or trying to outwit the river otters who frolicked in their garden pool and ate the fish, or he was pulling out every scrap of wood, rope, Styrofoam and miscellaneous junk that floated up on his beach. The Christmas we had the Save-On-Foods Store poisoned turkey scare, I had bought a turkey there just before they announced the threat and wasn’t about to go back down to return it so I cooked the turkey anyway and told Dad he could be first to serve himself from the buffet, forgetting about the poison scare. At the time he remarked with resignation, “I guess it doesn’t matter because I’m old,” which we all thought was pretty funny.

He has always been very disciplined about following instructions to exercise and he’s always been inventive. After his knee operation he came to stay with us and did his exercises dutifully. He even made himself some equipment to mobilize his knee and strap it down flat with some boards, pulleys and ropes we had about. His knee replacement operation in 1996 gave him a new lease on life and he was able to spend summers at Mayne Island till he was 96, though he was not able to drive that last summer. Kind neighbours and the taxi service helped. Margaret and Juergen had moved from Edmonton to Victoria so Dad spent the next five winters being pampered by them. He always begrudged the fact that he had to pay full fare, including the parking space, when he wasn’t at Seton Villa in the summers although at the beginning they didn’t charge him for the meals he missed.

When Nikkei Home was built he decided to move there because he was tired of cooking his own meals in the summer and didn’t like to have to rely on others for transportation. He is very happy there, enjoys being able to have Japanese food, especially udon, and the attention that so many of the ladies bestow on him there. He still exercises, walks, follows sports on television, and paints, ‘killing time’ so he says.

His oldest son, Lawrence passed away in December of 2003.
of heart failure, and lately Dad has complained that he has lived too long. We have a ‘mini-crisis’ every few weeks now where he says he has a lot of pain in his legs, is very tired and can’t walk, though he has managed to go down for his meals. It is usually very warm in his apartment and he sometimes lets himself get dehydrated, thinking that by sipping one glass of water and a little juice all day he is drinking enough liquid. The pain seems to be managed by pills for arthritis which the doctor told him to take more frequently if necessary. Two summers ago when he had fallen and said he couldn’t walk anymore, I was worried he would have to leave Nikkei Home because they were having to take him to his meals in a wheelchair. I was going to take him to a physiotherapist when the community physiotherapist came and restored his confidence and got him back walking after a few sessions.

When he turned 100, I looked for a physiotherapist and noticed a massage advertised by therapists at this same clinic. I decided to take him for a massage every other week as a gift from the family. At the age of 101, he doesn’t really want for anything except pounds of candy which he stores in his oven. I remember he used to have massages when he was working. For awhile he only wanted to go out to see the doctor, but now he looks forward to his massage sessions. I recently took him to the lab for the usual tests where the receptionist, a young girl, looking at his age was very impressed, said he was the oldest person to be treated, the other elderly person being a young 93-year old woman. She wanted to have her picture taken with Dad, to which he replied with a grin, she could kiss him pointing to his cheek. She thought that was hilarious and told the technician that Dad was over 100, still had all his mental faculties

Travis Murao: A Profile in Courage by Kim Kobrel

Today, when we meet Travis, an affable young man with a winning smile, it is hard to imagine that eight years ago he had to reach down to the deepest recess of his being to come up with the will and determination to bridge the gap from being completely paralyzed to becoming a world-class athlete with Olympic aspirations. This is Travis Murao’s odyssey after a broken neck: from despair and despondency, to realization and reconciliation, and then to unlimited possibilities.

Travis was an all-around student, full of energy and taking many academic courses including Mr. Dick’s leadership class, and participating in many extracurricular activities. He studied Japanese on his own by watching Japanese TV shows and then had the opportunity to attend high school while visiting Japan as an exchange student. Travis was in top physical form from participating in many sports such as judo, basketball, and hockey. His mother would complain that she had trouble finding pants to fit his sturdy and muscular legs, which according to her were “like tree stumps.”

One school day in January 2000, Travis and his fellow students went on a skiing and snowboarding trip to Blackcomb Resort. With one misstep, things went terribly wrong. As he lay motionless in a helicopter speeding to the hospital, speaking with difficulty and feeling a tremendous weight on his chest, he was faced with the question, “Am I going to die?”

His parents, Naomi and Phil, received that critical call from a doctor at the Whistler Blackcomb clinic. Travis had suffered a severe spinal injury damaging the cervical cord L6 to L7. At that moment, Travis’ parents resolved that there would be no recriminations or finger pointing: no “what ifs.” Naomi’s brothers, Gordon and Warren, joined them at the hospital and said, “We did not want you to be alone.” Warren also said, “This is a new day, a new beginning, no looking back.” The family proved pivotal in providing emotional, mental and physical support for Travis in the following months.

After a long wait, Travis emerged from surgery around 4:00 a.m. wearing a cervical collar around his neck to ensure stability. His spine had been re-aligned and his spine in that region fused. He was quite groggy so it was suggested that Naomi and Phil go home and get some rest.

The next morning around 10:00 a.m., they returned to the hospital and found Travis to be quite
lucid and happy to be alive. His classmates were already there, feeling absolutely devastated. In jerky and halting speech, Travis tried telling jokes to put them at ease. There was a flurry of care around Travis with continuous monitoring of vital signs, frequent suctioning to keep his airway clear and hourly changing of body position to avoid pressure areas.

The neuro-physiatrist spelled out his prognosis, “Presently, Travis is in spinal shock. In time, some movements may come back but the majority of motor skills in hands and legs are lost. But never say never (to Travis). Right now, things may seem hopeless but typically within two years, there will be quality of life. He will be able to drive, father children, if that is what he wants.”

Naomi had planned to stay that night but Travis said, “No!” He wanted to be alone. He needed time for quiet and contemplation. For now, Travis saw a rough road ahead with complete dependence on others. The nurses mentioned that the first few nights after surgery were rough as the reality and gravity of his plight became clearer. Naomi felt that despair and depression, though those initial reactions were short-lived.

When Travis’ friends and family were visiting, he tried to project his former positive persona. He asked Naomi to find his ‘lucky toque.’ She asked him how it could be considered lucky with what had happened. His answer was, “I survived, didn’t I?” He made the same request to his pal, Brock, to look for the ‘lucky toque.’

The often-short-staffed nurses, worked tirelessly. Keeping his airway clear was so vital that family members stepped in and helped whenever they could. For example, they helped by applying pressure with short-thrusts just below the breastbone to loosen the mucus so the nurses could suction. The family took particular note of a conscientious nurse from Kamloops who was about to take her first coffee break of the day but hurried back when she saw Travis having difficulty breathing. She then said, “I will not take breaks until Travis is more stable, he is my responsibility.”

Travis was aware of a golf ball-sized bump on the side of his head. On the day of injury, prior to surgery, the doctors tried unsuccessfully to insert skull tongs or pins for traction to align and stabilize the spine. The pin dislodged causing a hematoma (lump caused by heavy bruising) to develop at the site. Travis decided to let his hair grow until the lump receded, and he also chose not to shave during this time. This may have helped him feel less depersonalized and maintain a sense of individuality.

After a level of stability was achieved, it was time for transfer to G.F. Strong Hospital, one of the foremost rehabilitation centres in the country. In spite of feeling nauseous, he wanted to move on saying, “Let’s go!” This move meant he could step up in the rehabilitation process, but what happened next was far from Travis’ expectations of the new hospital. Due to miscommunication, G.F. Strong staff thought his admission time was later and to make matters worse, his transfer occurred between staff shifts change, adding to the problem. Feeling wretched as he waited unattended, Travis said, “I hate this place!” After some time, a nurse showed up and helped him to his bed. Through lab test results, she established that he had a urinary tract infection, which explained his nausea.

An army of therapists, including Dr. Hahn, a physiatrist, and many other staff members promptly started treatment. Phil would later say, “They had a therapist for everything, even a sex therapist and vo-
cational counselor.” The staff made it plain to Travis that their mandate was to get him out of the hospital as soon as possible, that he would have to “pull his weight” here. The teacher who came to assist Travis with his studies told him, “See them all? We come in a distant last. You and I will have to try hard to make time for studies.”

An intensive regimen soon followed including measures to prevent skin breakdowns, bladder infections and pneumonia, and which had to be done consistently, fastidiously and around the clock. Anything less had consequences which would impede progress. Activities of daily living (ADL) such as bathing, eating, toileting, and dressing all had to be relearned. The innovative occupational therapists personalized tools and equipment to assist Travis. Weakened due to loss of weight and appetite didn’t keep this well-motivated young man from his exercises. Each weekday, Travis had a full program with the physiotherapist to strengthen his shoulders, upper arms and torso, often to the point of pain and exhaustion. Annoyances and frustrations would be channeled into fierce, extra workouts in the gym where he would flip his body to aid his ability to turn.

Travis’ life in the next while could be likened to a solo boat ride across the ocean. He would use the doctors and therapists as his GPS system and in spite of physical setbacks; he journeyed on to reach the other shore.

Feeding utensils had to be adapted and adjusted for Travis’ use. In time, he devised a way of lacing his fingers under and over forks and spoons to use them. Naomi, too, had to be innovative especially in preparing food to whet his appetite. She would cook fried rice to his liking and added extra spice to foods such as tacos. Travis had to make up for the fifty pounds he had lost since his accident.

Travis was fortunate to have the benefit of mentors like Rick Hansen who told him, “You may be disabled but you are not handicapped.

came to visit and he and Travis would spend quiet times together.

Meeting, Duncan Campbell (hospital recreational therapist and also a quad), who is the founder of quad rugby, opened many doors for Travis. Playing this game brought a whole new dimension to Travis’ life.

The teacher and Travis decided to concentrate on math and physics, as time did not allow for much else. Phil decided to take early retirement from teaching to assist Travis in catching up to his classmates and helping him to pass on to Grade 12.

Travis always pushed himself to the limit and beyond. He asked his physiotherapist, Martha, if he could try walking using leg braces. He was told quads could never do this. Travis would not be dissuaded and managed to walk forward and then back between parallel bars with the braces. The physiotherapist clapped her hands and said to everyone around, “Did you see what Travis did?”

Hospital staff members were very accommodating, allowing Mr. Dick’s leadership class to be held on Travis’ ward. He attained another first by gaining permission to attend regular classes at his former school one day a week, mostly to stay “in the loop” with his classmates.

By now, Travis had established his morning ADL to an efficient one to one-and-a-half hours. G.F. Strong staff had met their mandate and Travis had indeed “pulled his weight.” It was time now to face the world and say good-bye to the hospital. By the end of July 2000, he was as independent as could be expected and was considered one of G.F. Strong’s successes.
Travis fell in step with his classmates, assisted by Phil. High school graduation was an enormous accomplishment considering his long absence. On graduation day, he refused to wear a shirt and tie for this occasion saying, “I’m going to be wearing a gown anyway!” Buttoning shirts and knotting a tie does require finger dexterity. He won a few coveted awards and had several standing ovations. His graduation photos clearly show his T-shirt and khaki pants under his gown.

A week before grad night, two fellow grads (ladies) showed up at the front door “dressed to the teeth.” That night’s grad event was a boat cruise and they refused to leave without him. He did relent and went in his ‘hoodie’ and jeans. Enough cannot be said of Travis’ loyal and steadfast friends. Often their presence energized the room for Travis and his roommate, Steven, another quad. Brock wanted to learn and understand every aspect of Travis’ care, “because he might need our help sometime” (Brock did find Travis’ lucky toque). Travis still has good times with them but instead of those deep down belly laughs, his mother says they are more like shallow cackles.

His parents, both UBC graduates (Phil a high school math teacher and Naomi a Literacy Helper K-7) encouraged Travis from day one with insight and sensitivity. They can be tremendous role models for others in similar situations.

A companion dog, Connor, was tried for Travis. Each time Connor fetched an article, Travis found it “ucky” because Connor was one of those slobbery dogs. Travis would try to get to an item before Connor got to it. Later he told his parents that he really didn’t need Connor’s help. Connor bonded well with Phil, and is now his dog.

Travis spent two years at UBC enrolled in the Arts Program majoring in Literature. He used scribes provided by the Disability Resource Centre (DRC). Scribes are students enrolled in the same classes and picked by Travis. Later, he was offered a scholarship to the University of Arizona, known for accommodating the disabled. As an exchange student, he participated in and enhanced their quad rugby team.

Travis has accomplished much, and is always busy. Phil proudly says that Travis drove all the way from Tucson to Los Angeles.

Duncan Campbell was instrumental in Travis receiving his World Class Athlete designation. Travis has flown extensively to different countries as a quad rugby player and has played on teams for B.C., Canada and the University of Arizona. Each flight is well orchestrated with the team and their coach always pre-boarding and taking aisle seats. Their wheelchairs (two each) and their luggage take priority on all flights. On occasion, especially when flying on smaller planes, other passengers have had their luggage placed on later flights. The team usually travels with support staff such as therapists, a dietician/nutritionist and other helpers. Their daily routine is followed religiously, including the monitoring of what they eat in restaurants.

Presently, Travis is in Australia training hard in hopes of being selected to play in the Paralympics in Beijing this summer. He has far exceeded expectations. Who knows what the future will hold for this inspirational young man.

Heritage on the Rocks: Nori-Tori on the West Coast by Ann-Lee Switzer

For the last six years, members of the Victoria Nikkei Cultural Society (VNCS) have been gathering nori off the rocks of the British Columbia Coast in early February. This hardy band of sea-weeders are reviving an ancient tradition—and helping themselves to nature’s delicious bounty. Starting with about a dozen curious pioneers the first year, the group has gradually expanded as word got around. Last year we were even joined by a few pickers from the Mainland.

Nori Goes Waaaaay Back

Nori is the generic term for seaweed, although technically it refers to a specific algae (spp.), the one that wraps our sushi. Nori has been cultivated in Japan for almost 400 years, but the harvest of wild seaweed goes back to pre-history. The Manyōshū, an 8th century collection of poems, has 90 references to seaweed. Images of young girls gathering seaweed have been favourite subjects in paintings and in Noh theatre for centuries. Washed by both cold and warm currents, Japan is blessed with almost 1,200 kinds of seaweed, many of which are cultivated. Commercial production in Japan itself has declined in recent years, due to rising labour costs, and now much nori is imported from China, South Korea and elsewhere in Asia.

Nori () was first grown commercially in Tokyo Bay in the 1650s. Twigs or bamboo branches were stuck into the mud or silt in small bays at the correct tidal height in the autumn, at the time spores would be floating in the seawater. Spores would congregate on the branches, grow from autumn to winter, and presto, a nori crop. The nori was picked by hand and chopped with knives into a slurry which was dried on bamboo mats in the bright winter.
sun. One side would take on the pattern of the mat, the other side would be shiny. (How else would we know how to roll the *sushi*)? The familiar 18x21 cm format for *nori* sheets was set at that time and has been thus ever since.

Recent discoveries and technological advances have enhanced the industry considerably. Artificial seeding, low-temperature net storage, floating beds and the selection of special cultured strains have all greatly increased productivity. Over time, the process has become much less labour intensive. A crew of eight could set out 1,500 sheets per day in the 1960s. Now one or two operators can do that much in an hour using modern machinery.

Japanese came to the British Columbia Coast starting in the late 1870s, both as sojourners and as sailors. Those who stayed to fish surely noticed the familiar, fragrant seaweeds they found along our rocky coast. Nearer to our own time, *nori*-gathering helped re-create a homey feeling for *issei* far from their native shores, which they passed on to their children. Sus Tabata, the Victoria Nikkei Cultural Society’s ‘*nori* mentor’, recalls: “As a child I can remember coming to the eastern shores of the Gulf Islands to pick *nori*. We would come on a relatives’ or friends’ small gillnet boat. It took several hours to get to these islands. We would get dreadfully seasick in a crowded fish boat. However we got our sea legs back again. It was very pleasant to experience a totally different environment. In contrast to ‘urban’ Steveston, the forested islands were not only beautiful but had that characteristic island aroma emanating from the evergreens. Running around there was an experience that we children really liked and pleasant memories remained permanently fixed within our minds.”

Stum Shimizu, recalling his Victoria childhood in the 1930s. (Nikkei Images 2004, Vol. 9, No. 3), “The north pavement towards the west end of Fisgard Street [in Chinatown]...was used in the summer to dry the seaweed that had been collected from the rocks and beaches.” Somehow, with the loss of the local Japanese community in 1942, and the post-war modern food conveniences, the *nori*-gathering tradition slipped away.

**Reviving a Tradition**

By the late 1980s a new Nikkei community had arisen in Victoria. In 1993 the Victoria Nikkei Cultural Society was created “to promote the awareness of Japanese culture for the benefit of its members and the greater community.” In that spirit, Sus Tabata offered to lead a *nori*-tori expedition. Before retiring, Mr. Tabata had been an oceanographer working for the federal Institute of Ocean Sciences in Sidney, and so was no stranger to the sea, its behaviour and contents. He had made a study of seaweed. Thinking about his childhood *nori*-gathering trips, he concluded that it was high time to revive the practice. Thus on a cold and rainy February day in 2002, a small band of the Society’s members met at a wind-swept rocky beach far away from Victoria’s hustle and bustle. At the beginning of February? What could we be thinking? Sus explained that the *nori*, technically known as *torta*, is an annual plant that starts its growth cycle in frigid November/December, and by now would be large enough, but still tender. can still be picked in March and April; they are larger but
are less tender and not as tasty. Nori is an intertidal seaweed and so must be harvested at tides low enough to access the seaweed beds (unless you want to pick underwater!). If the tide is 3 metres or less around mid-day, it is a good day for picking nori. Soon we were moving along the beach like so many fat crabs in all our protective layers, buckets and plastic bags following our lumbering steps. We soon noticed the beds of thin and crinkly 4-to-6 cm blades covering some of the rocks at the water’s edge. Spread out over the seaside boulders, they give an almost black appearance, but on closer examination they are dark purple-red. When dry, they form a flat dull mat on the rocks, making them easier to gather, when conditions are right. Sus showed us how to look for the young leaves that are still partly green with maroon-red colouration around the edges; at maturity they will turn all reddish-purple. The smaller ones take longer to pick but are tenderer.

We quickly noticed that this little seaweed sticks stubbornly to the rock, so we experimented with different tools to pry it loose. Paint scrapers tended to bring along bits of shell and pebbles. Bare fingers were OK for the cold-tolerant brave. I was more comfortable with garden clippers, hands protected with rubberized garden gloves. Kitchen scissors would have been better. I made a mental note to bring along my kneepads and some scissors next time. Keeping our footing was another challenge along the seaweed-slippery rocks. Luckily, I wore my gumboots (and two pairs of socks!) that have ridges on the soles. Some-

thing with cleats would perhaps do better, but the word is: abumai!

After a couple of hours in the wind and rain, our buckets and bags getting heavy, and just when we thought we were frozen stiff, Sus extended us the hospitality of his warm cabin down the road. Without hesitating, we stowed the bags and buckets in our vehicles, jumped in and drove for shelter. Once inside, out came the bentos and other comestibles as we warmed up with a cup of ocha. The chattering of teeth was soon replaced by laughter, stories and good fellowship. We exchanged notes on methods and what not to do, and wondered about next time. Let’s see, dress in layers (top on the rocks. The children of course shamed the grownups with their fast picking and agility. Last year two men came across from Vancouver to film us, and afterwards kindly sent us copies of their DVD. We were having a good time, with something to show for our efforts; something for ourselves, our friends, and knowledge to pass on to future generations.

What to Do with the Bounty

Now that we had caught our nori, what to do? Obviously we had to clean and dry it, but how? Mothers and fathers of invention that we were, we had to improvise. For example, we learned that if you keep it too long, nori has a strong peculiar stench, which becomes very unneighbourly if you live in an apartment! So, it is important to process within a day or two. The following is the general procedure we came up with: Wash your nori well to remove unwanted creatures and grit (but ensure that most of the sand does not go down the drain!). Drain well in a colander or similar device. Someone found that spinning it in a net bag in the clothes dryer was effective. For drying, spread the washed nori on some kind of rack that allows air to circulate underneath. This can be a cake rack or a homemade frame with chicken wire. A fan on low setting helps greatly. The basement is a great place to dry nori, but if the weather cooperates, and if you have a yard, fresh air and sunshine do a great job.

When completely dry, place nori in a plastic bag, push out air and tie or seal tight. Stored in a cool place, nori can keep at least a year, but will gradually lose flavour. A
vacuum packer could seal flavour in for longer. Keep until ready to use. A package of nori makes a great gift, lightweight for air travel, and some VNCS members report that it really impresses the folks in Japan.

Special though it is, hand-harvested nori cannot be used in the state it is to roll maki-zushi. The commercial cultivation is able to harvest the plants in a tiny early state, when they are very tender. In addition, the nori is chopped up into small pieces. In order to stand up to the tides, the algae cells are embedded in a rubbery mixture of starches and proteins. Our gathered nori, being larger, needs to be tenderized before consumption. To use, heat oven to 325°F. Take out the dried nori, break into pieces, and spread in a cake pan. Heat for 5 to 7 minutes until very crisp. Dump into a bowl, crumble and use to sprinkle on rice or store in a small jar to use as needed.

Nori Around the World and at Home

Seaweed has been consumed world-wide for aeons. And of all the marine algae, is the most commonly used by humans where it is found, which is just about everywhere. Before any Japanese, or Europeans for that matter, stepped ashore, _perforata_ was collected by aboriginals along the coast from what is now Alaska down to Washington State. It was dried and stored in cedar boxes. Seaweed was a valuable trade item between the Haida of Queen Charlottes and the tribes of the B.C. Interior.

In Europe and other sea algae are used in national dishes of Ireland, Wales and Great Britain. Nori is called _laver_ in Wales and it is often mixed with oatmeal and fried like pancakes. Migrants from the old country took their habit of eating dulse, a relative of nori, to the Maritimes, where it has been consumed up to the present day. In China, Korea and Japan the use of reached a degree of sophistication such as applied in Europe to wine or cheese.

The Way of Nori

Nori is so full of essential nutrients, you could probably survive on a pure nori diet. The protein content is 30-50% of its dry weight. The high number of amino acids gives it the same protein value as whole eggs, and it's low in calories, too. Nutrients include vitamins A, B, C, niacin, calcium, phosphorous and iodine, with virtually no fat. But who wants to eat 33 sheets of nori to get half your daily requirements? Just for the record, the average consumption of nori in Japan is about 100 sheets per person per year.

Seaweed even in moderate quantities has been shown to lower cholesterol and certain forms of cancer and combat ulcers. The iodine in particular is essential for the functioning of the thyroid gland and hormone production. Nori's ability to concentrate the elements of the sea makes it one of the healthiest foods on our planet. Any way you slice it, nori is good for you.

But not all nori is created equal. Wouldn't you know it, there are people that judge nori for a living, just as they do with wine and tea. Nori judges look for a lustrous, dark black colour tinged with green, superior flavour, 'softness in the mouth,' and sweetness. The colour is due to the phyto-pigments; nori actually has both red and green, but the red disappears with heat. Colour is supposedly superior when it is grown in the open ocean and on poles. The shinier the plant, the more rapidly it is grown. Flavour and odour are due to nucleic acids, various complex sugars and aromatic organic compounds; odour also affects taste. The precise balance among these compounds is influenced by weather and the conditions of cultivation. Nori picked early in the season is more tender. Not surprisingly, what is regarded as high-quality nori will have 4-5% fibre whereas a low-quality product shows 7% fibre content or more. Yes, there is a difference between ordinary sheets of nori found in the store and the Silver and Gold labels! We all agreed, the B.C.-gathered nori, would be ranked as Gold by any expert worth his salt.

Even More Kinds of Seaweed

Kelp, is not the only food-quality seaweed found in this area. In fact, in a pinch, you could eat any algae from the sea, but many are hard to chew and digest and not very tasty. Kelp, a brown seaweed, is very tasty, useful and nutritious like its cousin nori. In Japan, kelp is known as _kombu_ and is derived from _Laminaria_ grown in acres of offshore beds. _Kombu_ is widely used today as a sea vegetable in soups and stews. Kelp as a substrate for herring roe yields a highly
prized product, kazunoko, popular at New Year’s time.

Unfortunately, kelp is found in deeper waters than nori, so a boat is needed unless the tide is really low. On the other hand it can be harvested year-round, and its large size makes it easier to pick. If the blades are cut carefully and properly, it is as renewable as grass. Kelp is a brown algae of the Laminariales order. Lamina means blade, which describes the shape of the seaweed fronds. Kelp generally grows lower in the tidal areas than Porphyra, either in lower intertidal zone or below the tide line. Kelp range from modest size, a little larger than nori, to gigantic. It anchors tightly with its holdfast, allowing its stipe and blades to swing with the tides and waves. Some species have an ingenous gas-filled bubble in their stems that acts as a float. The largest kelp may measure more than 40 M (130 ft.). Several genera are found off our coasts: Macrocystis, Laminaria, Nereocystis.

You too can harvest and make your own kombu or pickles. Because kelp grows lower down than porphyra, you may need a rowboat, kayak or canoe, or be willing to do some deep wading or swimming. Occasionally kelp may be washed ashore in a storm, and you may use it as long as it looks and smells fresh. Harvesting the fronds is as easy as cutting the giant blades at water level. The bullwhip kelp Nereocystis luetkeana grows in beds near the shoreline in many bays around Victoria and nearby rocky beaches.

This Rock’s for You

Nori-tori is not just about getting yourself some free natural sea condiments, although that is certainly a bonus. After all, it’s hard work, crawling over the slippery rocks in the cold wind. It seems to take ages to fill the bucket with those little rubbery blades of nori. But then you look around at everyone else; someone calls out “Hey, look at this!” or you discover a faster way of getting the leaves off. Your friends are here, you’re not doing this for a living (luckily) and you realize this is a great way to bring people together. To ensure an expedition of this nature gets repeat visits, a little planning makes the whole thing more enjoyable. After spending a few hours with the whole group in the bracing wind, the group can gather at a nearby house or a local café. Food and fellowship: what better way to renew our heritage?

Recipes

Crumbled nori is tasty in itself. If you want something more, here are two of the recipes VNCS members have come up with over the years.

Tsukudani - Place dried and crumbled nori in a blender or food processor with shoyu and mirin to blend. Transfer to a bowl and add sesame seeds and a little sesame oil. Spread out on a cookie sheet and toast, stirring up occasionally until the mixture dries out, being careful not to burn. Allow to cool, before crumbling and storing in a jar. Burnt or not, it’s delicious sprinkled on a bowl of freshly steamed rice.

Kelp Pickles - Trim, thoroughly rinse and chop enough kelp blades to measure 2 cups. In a pot place 3/4 cup shoyu, 1/2 cup sugar and 1/3 cup sake, stir well and bring to a boil. Drop in the kelp, bring back to a boil, lower heat and cook five minutes. Seal in pre-heated jars.

Ann-Lee Switzer has been a member of VNCS since 2001. She edited Gathering Our Heritage, a book about the nori-tori, available from the Nikkei Museum gift shop. For more information about the VNCS, see their website: http://www.vncs.ca.

Lemon Creek Reunion - Toronto 2007

by Leslie Komori

I asked my mother, Kay Komori (Kikuye Mochizuki) and her friends Mary Ohara and Ann Kitagawa (Hifumi Ikuta) the reason they went to the Lemon Creek Reunion this summer in Toronto. They wanted to connect these names from childhood to present day faces and recall those friendships. Mary believed the difficulty of that time of their lives forged strong and memorable connections that differ from other friendships from other points in her life. She takes every opportunity to connect with those childhood friends from camp.

I asked all three women to describe their journey from their pre-war homes to Lemon Creek. Ann lived in North Vancouver. She remembers the orders to pack up and leave. Her family chose to move to Powell Street to avoid living in Hastings Park. She attended Seymour School in East Vancouver.

Ann’s father found himself

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out beyond the 7:30 p.m. curfew established as wartime restrictions. Police arrested him and detained him initially in the Immigration Building. The government sent him to the prisoner of war camp in Petawawa. With her father in Petawawa, her family had no choice other than to go to a government camp. After finishing the school year, her family moved to Hastings Park.

Mary's family lived on Galiano Island. Like all the families living in the coastal regions, the government forced their removal earlier than families in the Greater Vancouver area. Mary's family moved from Galiano to Hastings Park in February and stayed there until September.

Mary recalls balancing atop apple boxes above a water trough which stood in for a toilet. She also contracted the mumps while at Hastings Park. She and other children were placed in a "dungeon", an underground feed storage stall with no windows or doors. She recalls baby-sitting other children placed in medical isolation who would scream and cry.

Kay's family owned and worked a berry and chicken farm in Haney in the Fraser Valley. They were allowed to stay until August so they could harvest the berry crop. They then moved in with another family in Whonnock. Commission officers found the family there and ordered her father to move to the Kootenays to construct houses in the camps. The rest of the family moved into Hastings Park in September. They were lucky, only staying about two or three weeks. Kay recalls the horrible food in Hastings Park. Used to fresh eggs, she was horrified by the powdered egg that was served for breakfast. She also recalls that salt-peter was added to food, in hopes to reduce the sex drive of the residents, as men, and women and children, were placed in separated facilities.

All three women moved up to the Kootenays in the fall of 1942. Ann and Kay lived in temporary housing shelters (tents and bunkhouses) before moving into their houses in Lemon Creek. Mary's father was sick so they moved directly into their house in the camp.

All three women were relieved to arrive in Lemon Creek after their stay in Hastings Park. They all had houses, even though some people had to share houses. They had space to play with other children. Their families could acquire and make some decent food. For all three women, the relocation journey included abandoning their homes and possessions, living for a time in the squalid conditions of Hastings Park and in Lemon Creek, and finally "repatriation" to Japan. In Japan, all three women encountered discrimination as Nisei and experienced the poverty and desperation of a war defeated country. Lemon Creek ironically represented the best stop in that complete journey.

Lemon Creek Harmonica Band on stage during the reunion. (Mary Ohara photo, 2007)

Lemon Creek of course posed challenges for all the families. The houses, built of green wood and tarpaper, were freezing cold during the winter. Ice would form on the wall. Even the straw ticking of the mattress would freeze during the night as the single heat source for the house, the wood burning stove, would extinguish during the night.

Mary's father was the first resident to die in Lemon Creek in December of 1942. The government provided a pine casket for the body but would not take responsibility for the cremation or burial. So the residents of Lemon Creek, mainly elderly men, women and children, cremated the body. A number of seniors needed to carry the body up a hill in cold and icy weather. Some other residents cut down logs for the funeral pyre. They assembled the logs in a bed, laid the casket, and then piled more logs in triangular shaped frame. Trimnings, paper and gasoline were circled around the pyre. Mary's mother lit the fire. Mary vividly remembers as the casket went up in flames, an indelible memory that she saw when she returned to Lemon Creek years later on a pilgrimage trip.

After the cremation, her mother looked for a container in which to place the ashes. Her father liked to smoke so her mother chose a green Ogden tobacco can as the urn. They took some chopsticks up the hill and picked up small bones. A man directed her, pointing out the head and the heart. They took bits of each part of the body and scattered the remaining ashes in the forest. Her mother ripped up a pillowcase and used it as a furusashi to wrap the tobacco can and its contents.

Despite experiencing this traumatic event, Mary believes that her mother never communicated negative thoughts about life in Lemon Creek and her mother's strength protected Mary from the full brunt of the difficulty of camp life. Also, camp
presented a unique situation because the internment experience may have equalized race and class differences within the camp. The government took most material possessions from the internees. Most everybody in the camp, except for administrators and teachers, were Japanese. Mary really saw the camp community as a community of equals, which would differ from other living experiences in her life.

Surprisingly, all three women have good memories of camp life. Ann describes the experience as a lark. Anderson Hill overlooked the camp on the south side of the perimeter. People would walk up the hill to get a bird’s eye view of the community. In winter, people would sleigh or ski down the hill. People would fashion their own skis or sleds. They would take pieces of wood, soak them in hot water, stand on them and bend the slats into the appropriate shape.

Boys would fight for the best peephole outside the bathhouse, especially when well-endowed young women would be taking a bath. Woodsheds and bathhouses were also good places for boys to sneak a smoke.

Mary recalls being a tomboy, playing softball and football with the boys. Kay remembers cooking classes for her mother and shibai for the whole community. People grew beautiful gardens and contests would find the most beautiful chrysanthemum in camp. Ann recalls going to see movies. Harmonica bands would entertain and everyone would go out to see inter-camp baseball tournaments.

The Commission rationed food but the residents creatively adapted to the shortages. Every household would make their own shoyu and miso. Mary recalls that she would go to bed with a hot-water bottle and fermented rice (koji), the starter for miso and shoyu, at her feet. Kay recalls that her mother would use the koji to make homemade sake or alternatively would make dandelion wine. Her father’s drinking buddies would visit their house and they would start to sing old Japanese songs. Ann recalls that Doukhobor farmers would bring in fresh fruits and vegetables. Kay remembers that she would sometimes walk to their farms in Perry Siding. Despite the restrictions, Kay remembers occasional sweet sales at one of the three stores in camp. She remembers these sweets as a special treat.

Lemon Creek was the first camp to get a proper school. Residents signed a petition and lobbied the commission to provide schooling for their children. At first, they did not know how to distribute the children into different grades. Evacuation interrupted the children’s education for different periods of time. Initially they were placed according to age. Then standardized tests were administered and then children were divided based on test scores. Kay remembers Ann as a very smart student who skipped a grade. Ann describes herself as a bookworm. Elementary school teachers were older Nisei recruited from the camp. The United Church provided high school teachers, who came mostly from Ontario.

Three of those teachers came to the reunion in Toronto. Ann was pleased to see them as vital and well. Mary thanked the teachers for their work in Lemon Creek, for being so nice to the students and parents at a time when other people outside of the Japanese Canadian community did not appear to care about the internment situation. Kay was excited to see her teachers. She was also excited to see a neighbour from Haney and a neighbour from Lemon Creek. She had seen neither friend since camp days.

The reunion included a luncheon at a Chinese buffet and a concert presented at the Momiji Senior’s Facility. The concert included many karaoke singers, odori dancers and the Lemon Creek Harmonica band. The old Japanese music harkened back to the many performances in Lemon Creek. Enka, sometimes thought of as the Japanese blues, stirred a sense of sadness and loneliness.

All three women noticed that all their friends have aged. They needed to look carefully at name tags to identify people as they had changed. However, upon engaging in conversation, they would go back in time, 50-60 years, to the time that they were teenagers. They didn’t talk about their present life but shared memories from camp. In attending the reunion, they could feel young
again, like teenagers.

I had the good fortune to connect some of those nicknames to faces. Flying Jenny really looked like she could still run quickly. Porky had a round face, but did not really look like his namesake. From a class picture for the forties, Tarzan looked like a big strapping teenage boy. I was happy to connect nicknames to people. I was also happy to see my mother and her friends connect with their childhood buddies. They conveyed much excitement and joy in their conversations. I also heard some great camp stories which are always a treat and privilege to hear. They said this reunion would be the last reunion. But on the plane trip home, the three women discussed the possibility of organizing another reunion in Vancouver in a few years.

I am looking forward to seeing more Tarzans, Porkys and Flying Jennies. I thank my mom and her friends for letting me tag along.

Leslie Komori is a Sansei living in Vancouver. She is interested in hearing other stories from Lemon Creek. You can reach her at hachan@u.washington.edu.

Nikkei Fishermen Biographies and Photos Volume Launched

by Stan Fukawa

The Nikkei Fishermen’s Project began in 2001 with a Reunion Dinner at the Steveston Buddhist Temple annex, bringing together many retired senior Japanese-Canadian fishermen to celebrate their contributions to the fisheries industry of British Columbia. There were so many of them that the younger fishermen – actually middle-aged – had to be bumped to attend a second dinner.

In 2002, the Nikkei Fishermen’s Memorial Statue was unveiled by Lieutenant-Governor, Iona Campagnolo and other dignitaries on the shore overlooking the mouth of the Fraser at Steveston. It was re-dedicated in 2004 by H.I.H. Princess Takamado of Japan.

After over four years of hard work, the third objective, to publish a directory of fishermen’s biographies, was realized. The book was launched at the National Nikkei Museum and Heritage Centre (NNMHC) in Burnaby on Dec. 1, 2007 and at the Steveston Buddhist Temple annex on Dec. 7.

Steveston event was attended by the Consul General of Japan, Seiichi Otsuka and Richmond Mayor Malcolm Brodie. Representing the NNMHC which has been supporting the project since the beginning were Board Members Sian Tasaka at the Nikkei Centre, and Craig Natsuhara in Steveston. They both spoke of being descended from fishermen. Editor of the book, Masako Fukawa explained its features—the maps (some with Japanese names), diagrams of fishing gear and species, glossary of Mio-dialect terms, and fishing lineage information.

Despite the snowfall and the reduced turn-out, the book sold briskly. By mid-January it was clear that the 1,000 volumes that the Book Committee had purchased for direct sale by them to the local community would not be sufficient to meet demand. Additional copies have been ordered from Harbour Publishing. The Museum Shop at the National Nikkei Museum and Heritage Centre had some copies at the time of writing.

Entitled, “Nikkei Fishermen on the BC Coast: their Biographies and Photographs,” it is a handsome book with graphic design by John Greenaway and cover design by Mike Nomura. Readers across Canada can order the book online through the http://www.chapters.indigo.ca website. Bookstores in the Greater Vancouver area have them stocked in the “Local Interest” section.

The book contains over 3600 names of fishermen and 767 individual biographies submitted by fishermen themselves or by their
family members or friends. There are photographs of fishermen and their boats, and Japanese names for locations. The book took over three years to compile. A companion volume of the history of Nikkei fishermen will be available in about a year.

Nikkei Place Update - February 2008 by Cathy Makihara

Major Needs in 2008

The need for 2008 is strongest in several areas from a list of many: Five needs are:

• Youth being supported in their studies through the Museum’s education program that focuses on our community’s history and heritage.

• The creation of a Learning Centre which will provide schools with an exhibit touching on internment, video centre and a computer kiosk for researching.

• Creating more community programs for seniors in a safe, affordable and supportive environment.

• Many groups need meeting spaces for their classes, workshops.

• Celebrate Japanese Canadian history and heritage through the development of exhibits and public education programs, and supporting researchers and individuals with their inquiries.

Helping in 2008

Every dime and dollar helps the community, helps our community outreach and be of a service to the general population, and make a difference to society.

This year, to acknowledge the generosity of donors who were able to purchase a leaf, there will be a leaf placement ceremony (date to be announced) for donations received after May 2007. Donations are welcomed up to the event and beyond as the campaign continues throughout 2008.

If you would like to donate, please contact 604-777-7000 (Cathy Makihara ext 105 for Japanese or Ronnie Bouvier ext 104 for English).

Another Type of Support - Volunteer Appreciation

The National Nikkei Museum and Heritage Centre has been valiantly attempting to create a comprehensive list of all volunteers who served in 2007. Our goal - to document your support, to celebrate it, and to acknowledge your support through our newsletter and appreciation event.

How can you help?

Our office has a list of 212 volunteers. Are there more of you? Is our information up to date? Have we recorded your hours of service?

If it's not too much trouble we would like to ask you to fill out the form below and we know that not everyone gets a copy of the Bulletin, so we’ll put our form on http://www.nikkeiplacelce.org and mail a form to you if we don’t hear back from you before March 15, 2008.

Volunteers, please mark your calendar for the annual Volunteer Appreciation Event on Sunday, April 27, 2008. Details to be announced but please, please, mark your calendar.

A Long Term Gift Option - Nikkei Place Foundation

The Nikkei Place Foundation was incorporated in 2001 as a non-profit charitable organization with the purpose of furthering National Nikkei Museum and Heritage Centre's (NNMHC), and Nikkei Seniors Health Care and Housing Society's (NSHCHS) development and growth. The donations go to an endowment, which is invested for the growth and development of NNMHC and NSHCHS. Donations to the Foundation remain in an interest-bearing account, and the interest generated on such gifts is allotted for

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programs by the Foundation. For more information: Nikkei Place Foundation, 100-6688 Southoaks Crescent, Burnaby, BC V5E 4M7, 604-777-7000 (Charitable #: 866135056RR0001)

**Wish List**

The National Nikkei Museum and Heritage Centre, Nikkei Seniors Health Care and Housing Society and Tonari Gumi in partnership, would like to ask for donations of old jewelry for fund-raising purposes. We will be more than happy to receive anything that you are not using or is just sitting in your drawers. Please phone or drop off at National Nikkei Heritage Centre (604-777-7000), Tonari Gumi (604-687-2172) or contact Lurana, Kikko (604-736-3182) ✿

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**Volunteer Update for 2007 for the National Nikkei Museum and Heritage Centre**

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<th>(Please Circle) Miss./Ms./Mrs./Mr.</th>
<th>First Name:</th>
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In 2007, approximately how many hours did you volunteer?

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<th>List the programs and type of work.</th>
<th>List the events and type of work.</th>
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In the future, would you be prepared to maintain your own personal card to record your hours of service?

Yes  No

Please return to: NNMHC, 100-6688 Southoaks Crescent, Burnaby, BC, V5E 4M7 or fax 604-777-7001. Attention: Volunteer Records

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**List of new and renewing members of the National Nikkei Museum & Heritage Centre from November 1, 2007 to January 31, 2008.**

- Mrs. Kikue Akitaya
- Ms. Makiko Asano
- Ms. Grace T. Asao
- Mr. & Mrs. Lorne Blackman
- Ms. Sara Buechner & Ms. Kayoko Segawa
- Ms. Stephanie Calvert & Mr. Stephen Epp
- Mr. & Mrs. William Chang
- Mrs. Yumiko Cybucki
- Mr. & Mrs. Michael Davis
- Mr. David Edgington
- Mr. & Mrs. Steve Enomoto
- Daniel K. Fujimoto
- Mr. & Mrs. Ted Fujimoto
- C. Y. Fujimoto
- Mrs. Kumiye May Gardiner
- Mr. & Mrs. Michael Gojisic
- Mr. Kiyo Goto
- Mrs. Susan Gratton
- Mr. & Mrs. Bill Hamade
- Mr. Ted Hamaguchi
- Ms. Aiko Hamakawa
- Mr. & Mrs. Hiro Hasebe
- Mr. Ken Hasebe & Mrs. Erika Hasebe-Ludt
- Dr. & Mrs. James Hasegawa
- Mr. & Mrs. Roy Honda
- Mr. & Mrs. Mikio Hori
- Mr. & Mrs. Akira Hori
- Mr. & Mrs. Kazumasa & Shigeko Hoshino
- Mr. & Mrs. Hajime & Fusako Inouye
- Mr. & Mrs. Jim Ishihara
- Mrs. Mieko Iwaki
- Mr. & Mrs. Don Iwanaka
- Mrs. Tomoko Jowett
- Mr. & Mrs. Frank Kamiya
- Mr. & Mrs. Paul Kariya
- Mrs. Yoshi Katagiri
- Mr. & Mrs. John Katsuno
- Mr. & Mrs. Tosh Kitagawa
- Akiko Knobloch
- Lorna Koyanagi
- Mrs. Chiyoko Kubo
- Mrs. Chizuko Kurahara
- Mr. & Mrs. Ron MacQueen
- Mr. & Mrs. Bud Madokoro
- Ms. Joan Miki
- Mr. & Mrs. Richard Minato
- Mr. & Mrs. Tom Miyama
- Mr. & Mrs. Reiji Miyawaki
- Mr. & Mrs. Dan Nakagawa
- Mr. & Mrs. Jim Nishihara
- Mrs. Mieko Iwaki
- Mr. & Mrs. Shoji Nishihata
- Mr. Isamu Nishihata
- Mrs. Mary Nishi-Lince
- Mr. & Mrs. Harry Nishimura
- Mrs. Mary Nishi-Lince
- Dr. & Mrs. Nori Nishio
- Mrs. Yutaka Ed Ogawa
- Ms. Lorene Oikawa
- Dr. Mona Oikawa
- Mr. Rudolph F. Penitsch
- Mr. & Mrs. Curtiss Roos
- Mr. Ken Sakamoto
- Mr. & Mrs. Bunji Sakiyama
- Mrs. Yutaka Ed Ogawa
- Mr. & Mrs. Kenji Shibata
- Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Shikaze
- Mrs. Emiko Amy Shikaze
- Mr. & Mrs. Ben Shikaze
- Mrs. Hitomi Suzuta
- Mr. & Mrs. Sho Takahashi
- Mr. Mike Takahashi
- Mrs. Karina Talyila
- Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Tazumi
- Mrs. Kay Terai
- Mr. & Mrs. Toshi Tosha
- Mr. & Mrs. David Yamaura
- Mr. & Mrs. Fukashi Yasui

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