

 **Nikkei**  
national museum  
& cultural centre

# NIKKEI IMAGES



Berry picking at Magna Bay, BC, c.1947  
Takahashi family collection  
NNM 2012.15.1.2.139



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# THE STRENGTH OF *NIKKEI* WOMEN

BERRY PICKING AT MAGNA BAY, BC  
C.1947  
TAKAHASHI FAMILY COLLECTION  
NNM 2012.15.1.2.139

**O**ur current issue celebrates the strength of Japanese Canadian women. Since the earliest days of immigration, women have been expected to help support the family. They worked in canneries, took in sewing, ran shops, helped on the farm, did cleaning and also maintained their children, housework and cooking. It sounds exhausting!

This photograph shows Yoko Takahashi at age 15 working in the berry farms at Magna Bay, on Shuswap Lake. During the war years, the Takahashi family first went to Tashme, and in 1945 moved to Rosebery and New Denver. Because work in the Slocan Valley was scarce, many community members travelled to the berry and fruit farms for several weeks of intense labour in the harvesting season.

The museum collections include thousands of photographs of women at work that assist us to understand the many diverse roles women embraced within the Japanese Canadian community.

## TELLING EVERYONE'S STORIES IN THE MUSEUM

By Beth Carter

Did you know that women make up the majority of staff in museums across North America? The Nikkei National Museum is a good example of this – all five regular staff members are women. But is this a problem? Does this create a bias in the exhibits, programs and stories that we tell?

I don't think so – but I would be very interested to see more young *Nikkei*, both men and women, take an interest in preserving history and culture within the community. Rather than worry about a gender divide, it may be more important for *Nikkei* to take ownership over researching, defining and representing their own history. I recently attended a fascinating workshop put on at Simon Fraser University examining how *Nikkei* history, art and culture is being examined and studied by Japanese Canadian community members. It became clear that research was essential to the significant initiatives and gains during the Redress movement, and is just as important to individuals in their quest to understand their own identity.

The Nikkei National Museum was built out of a dream from the community to preserve primary source materials that are rapidly disappearing. We invite community members to donate their collections so they can be preserved for future generations. Our goal is to make this important information, including audio tapes, archival records, historic artifacts and historic photographs, available to community members and the general public. Check our online database at [www.nikkeimuseum.org](http://www.nikkeimuseum.org) or give us a call. This is your museum – we hope you will get involved!

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# THE DIARY OF KAZUE OYE (NEE SHIYOJI)

translated by Stan Fukawa

**T**ranslator's Forward: Mrs. Kazue Oye, who turned 100 years of age on Nov. 19, 2012, is a remarkable person. Although born in Steveston, she was educated mainly in Japanese, and was schooled in English only after Japanese children were allowed to attend Lord Byng School. She then attended secondary school in Japan, which explains why she is culturally much more Japanese than Canadian and why she wrote her autobiography in Japanese. Her parents were surprisingly permissive, especially when one considers how much more strict most Japanese parents were with girls than with boys in those days. She attained the status of teacher which was not common as a woman. Her memory for dates is legendary as can be seen in her date-specificity and she still writes pages of Buddhist sutras daily as a means of maintaining her memory of Japanese characters. She has had, all her life, a burning determination to maintain her mastery of the Japanese language and to share it with her students. Sadly, Mrs. Oye passed away peacefully on January 17, 2013.

- Stanley Fukawa, Translator Certified by STIBC

**I was born on Nov. 19, 1912**, in a cannery house belonging to the Gulf of Georgia Cannery. I was the firstborn of my father, Yakichi Shiyoji and mother Koito and was named Kazue. I was born prematurely, weighing only four pounds. There was not enough mother's milk so I was raised on cow's milk. A man named Jack O'Neil had cows at about where the corner of Chatham St. and Second Ave. is today. My mother went morning and evening to buy milk in order to get the freshest milk possible because she was worried that it would affect my tummy if the milk was not fresh. Every day she prayed and did whatever might make the tiniest difference. On cold days she wrapped me up in silk floss (*mawata*).

At the New Year, at *mochi-tsuki* time, I went to the *mochi* cakes which had been arranged at the shrine and merrily tossed them around like toys. My parents did not scold me for my naughtiness but were happy that I had become so healthy. I was born tiny and my parents constantly worried about my health for the first six months but after that I was healthy and didn't catch colds.



When I was four-and-a-half or five, one Sunday, I was taken by Mrs. Narae Odamura (née Sakai) to the Japanese United Church for the first time. I was asked by the minister what my name was. I remember that my father's friend Kinjiro Tsuji answered, absent-mindedly and because I looked like my dad "this is Kazue Yaki" from my father's first name, Yakichi. So I said I was Kazue Yaki although I was a bit confused. When I got home, my mother asked me why I had done that.

It happened more than 95 years ago but I can still remember being confused about whether I was Kazue Yaki or Kazue Shiyoji and what my mother said.

**September 1919:** My parents intended for me to begin in kindergarten in September and then in April of the following year to start school. They wanted to put me in kindergarten but I told them, "I'm going to go to elementary school; I'm not going to go to kindergarten!" When my mother explained my determination to the principal, he agreed to let me give it a try. I could have jumped for joy.

My wish was granted and from the next day, I entered the Fishermen's Benevolent Association Japanese Language School. I knew the 50 symbols of the Japanese *kana* alphabet so that I had no problems with reading but I had some problems with arithmetic about which I was completely ignorant. I envied the children who could do arithmetic. I became used to school and studied hard.

The following spring, at the year-end ceremony, I received an award for being the third best student. I remember being praised and being given congratulatory gifts. I think I received almost all of the Diligence Awards. It probably helped that I was healthy and did not miss any school. I enjoyed going to school so much that I studied eagerly every day. At that time, the language of instruction at the school was mainly Japanese and a Caucasian teacher named Mrs. Harris came to teach us English. Most of the Japanese were living in cannery houses and did not pay taxes and so we were not allowed to attend the nearby Lord Byng School. Later, the Japanese community donated toward the construction of a new school and so Japanese children were allowed to attend the Lord Byng School in 1925. I was in Grade 5 at the time.

**On April 1, 1928** I graduated from the Steveston Japanese Language School Supplementary Education Program Year 2. As the top graduating student, I read the valedictory address. At Lord Byng, I was in Grade 8.

At that time, there was no middle school in Steveston for me to go further in my Japanese education. (Two years later, a Middle School program to follow the six-year elementary program was created.)

I was not ready to give up on studying Japanese. I was determined to go to Japan and continue my studies. At that time, my mother was cooking at one of Mr.



**PHOTO ON PAGE4**

Kazue Shiyoji at age 10 with younger brother Noboru, 1922

**PHOTO ON THE LEFT**

Kazue during her school outing in 1930

..... Continued on next page

Ode's fish-processing camps and I was staying with my Uncle and Aunt Hashimoto. On the night of the graduation ceremony, my aunt phoned my mother and told her about my determination. The next day, my mother asked someone to take over her job as the cook and came home right away. At the camp, they found a replacement male cook, and prepared a boat to deliver my mother.

I told mother that if she paid for the boat fare, I would go to study in Japan by myself. She would not let me do that and in the end, decided to take me to Japan. On April 8, we left Vancouver, arriving in Victoria and on the 9th, we departed Victoria on the PRESIDENT McKINLEY for Japan.

Because of my selfish request, I had inconvenienced of course the people at the camp and the many people around me. My mother stayed with me until the end of August. She stayed until she was sure that I was completely comfortable in Japan.

My father had to endure many inconveniences because of me. It was I who had made him a victim.

At the busiest time of the fishing season, I had deprived him of my mother who would normally have prepared his meals to eat at the fishing ground. I had a lot for which I had to apologize to him.

However, at the time, what was foremost in my mind was my desire to study Japanese so that I could not think of other things. I was a self-centred and selfish person concerned only with what I wanted. Thinking about it later, that time was one of a depressed fishery and there was political pressure in B.C. to reduce the number of Japanese fishermen's licenses. My parents suffered a great deal in that period. As for money and such, I had no thought of it. Afterwards, when I realized these things, I was overcome by remorse for what my parents suffered because of me.

**1931, April 15:** I received a message that my mother had arrived safely in Mio on April 13. I was completely surprised and so happy. That week-end, I saw my mother for the first time in two years and seven months. We were overjoyed to see each other. Just as in 1928, mother stayed with me in Mio for the summer holiday until the end of August. I never



Rear: Noboru, Kazue,  
Aunt Hashimoto  
Front: Sister-in-law  
Masako, Father Yakichi,  
Mother Koito  
1933



Kazue with her mother Koito, daughter Yachiyo  
Elsie and son Nobuaki Robert in 1939

expected that mother would come to see me and so I felt guilty for doing this to my father. My parents always made sacrifices for me. I was so lucky.

From June 1 to June 8, 1932, I participated in the traditional 8-day school excursion at the end of middle school. The most exciting part of the excursion was the Imperial Palace Yohai--the ceremony of worshipping the Imperial Palace from afar. The teachers bowed their most reverential bow (*saikereii*) while the students all touched their foreheads to the ground while formally seated. I felt acutely the good fortune of having been born in the Showa Period (the era of the reign of Emperor Hirohito). We prayed for boundless peace for His Imperial Majesty. I felt the emotion of the patriotic poem which says that "One need only to see the prosperity of our sacred country for proof that our nation is alive."

On the evening of June 2, the day we arrived in Tokyo, two teachers who had taught me in Steveston dropped by at our hotel -- Mr. and Mrs. Shuichi and

Yoshi Koyano -- who took me out to see Tokyo at night. Yoshi Sensei took my hand cheerfully as we sat on a bench in Ueno Park, squeezed it saying "after we parted in Steveston, I did not dream that we would one day be meeting again in the middle of Tokyo." We had so much to talk about that despite the sights of the Imperial City, I felt as if I were back in Vancouver.

**1932, November:** the family of Auntie and Uncle Hashimoto came home again and I was happy. And they brought salted chum salmon for the residents of the dormitory where I stayed. I was so happy that the dorm master and all the dorm students commented to me that it was delicious and a real treat. Of course, I too, felt nostalgic for Steveston while enjoying the tasty treat myself.

**1932, November 16:** as one of six school representatives, I was able to go to the Osaka Castle East Drill Ground to observe a military inspection by the Showa Emperor.

..... Continued on next page

In the presence of his divine majesty, I witnessed a military drill and the singing by the multitude of the national anthem to welcome him. It was exciting. I felt so fortunate and grateful.

**1933, March 17:** I graduated without incident. Uncle Hashimoto attended the graduation ceremony and I was happy for this.

I was blessed with good health and was able to win the Diligence Award the first three years of Middle School due to hard work. However, in fourth year, second term, I caught a cold and was not able to prepare properly for the exams. With one year to go my marks made it impossible to get back on track and win the Diligence Award for the fourth year. I really tried in the third term and was able to raise my class position to number four. After graduation, I returned to my Mio home and took sewing lessons and relaxed. I decided to return to Canada at the end of August.

**1933, Sept. 4,** I departed on the HIKAWA MARU to return home to Vancouver. I arrived in Vancouver on Sept. 18, in the morning. Father was busy fishing but mother had come to greet me. When I crossed the gangplank and saw my mother, I realized I was really home. I was overcome with emotion, my heart was full and I couldn't speak. "Welcome home! You worked so hard!" So as not to cry, I bit my lip. After we disembarked, mother took me to Woodward's and bought me a new coat. It was getting to be that time of year when you could feel the cold seeping in through your clothes.

So I returned to the Gulf of Georgia cannery house for the first time in five years and five months. It had been changed. The floor which had been just wooden boards was now covered with carpet. My parents' warm love welcomed me home and my whole body felt it. I was so happy. After settling in, I began to attend the Matsuzaki Western Tailoring School.

In the following June 1934, I started teaching at the Steveston Japanese Language School. In 1937, on January 30, I married Masayoshi Oye. On Nov. 15, of that year, I stopped teaching. On Feb. 2, 1938, I gave birth to a daughter. After that, the parents'



Kazue with Nobuaki Robert, 1940

association requested that I return to teaching once more and I started teaching again in April of that year. In April, 1940 I again retired and on May 27th gave birth to our son. I returned to teaching in September, until December of 1941 when the Japanese Language School was closed due to the outbreak of the war with Japan.

The joy of the birth of our son was quickly eclipsed by the death of my husband on May 31, 1940. They did not inform me of this sad news until June 10, the day I left the hospital. Doctor Kuwabara was usually on duty only until noon but on that day stayed longer. On the day I was to be released, uncles from both the Oye and Shiyoji families and Uncle and Auntie Hashimoto came into the hospital. "Why are they



here?" was my thought. "Why don't you sit down," someone said and so I did. As soon as I did, they told me that my husband had died. At that instant I felt the greatest sorrow and my sense of Heaven and Earth were turned upside down.

But I realized that I could not allow myself to cry in my suffering or break down. Tears would be a luxury. Were I to cry and faint, the two babies, one just recently born and peacefully sleeping in complete ignorance of reality, the other just two years old-- what would happen to them? I had to be ready even to steal from the weak for their sakes. My deceased husband would have wanted me to be strong for the babies rather than to weep in sorrow over his death. As the saying goes "women are weak but mothers are strong."

At suppertime that evening, not a single morsel passed through my lips and that night I did not sleep. All I noticed was the sound of the waves. I had not eaten or slept, but strangely, I did not feel tired. I whipped myself with the determination to be stronger, much stronger, for the children.

I knew that my husband would surface for us. On June 17, while they were out fishing, Mr. Unosuke Hamade and his son Hiroshi collected his body and took it to the undertaker's. I went to the casket and thanked him for surfacing. I assured him that I would raise these two children so that he should

rest in peace and become a Buddha. Whereupon, no sooner had I uttered the words then there was a stiffening of the shroud covering him, near his chest. He had heard me and was reassured. I felt happy and gratefully bowed my head deeply, my hands folded in prayer.

When the round of funeral services was all completed and we went home to the silence, the reality of the death of my husband pressed upon me and I felt the sadness and loneliness. However, the newborn, whatever the place or the time of night or day, if he felt hunger, would cry out. The two-year old ran about in unself-conscious abandon and you could not take your eyes off of her. They were so dear to me and I kept telling myself to be a strong mother for them.



Kazue with the Hamagami/Ode Family  
at Christina Lake, 1942-1946

# JEAN SHIGEKO KITAGAWA

APRIL 28, 1921 - OCTOBER 21, 2012

By Masako Fukawa

Jean was born in 1921 in Duncan on Vancouver Island where her parents, Toemon and Kiku, settled after emigrating from Ehime. When Jean was 3 or 4 years old, her father was hired as a carpenter at Mayo Lumber and the family moved eleven kilometers northwest of Duncan to Mayo, which became the town of Paldi.

Paldi was named after Paldi Village in the Punjab, India, the birthplace of its founder Mayo Singh Manhas. He immigrated to Canada in 1906 and worked in sawmills for his relatives in Abbotsford, Chilliwack and New Westminster before starting out on his own on Vancouver Island. When Mayo Singh began the company in 1918, he brought with him three Japanese men with whom he had worked in Chilliwack. Initially only the Japanese had families but in the late 1920s East Indian families began to arrive and a mixed community of East Indians, Japanese, Chinese and Caucasians grew up around the mill. There was a company store, bunkhouses for workers, housing for families, a school, and a Sikh temple, the second to be constructed on Vancouver Island. The first was built in Victoria in 1912. A Japanese temple was eventually constructed as well. The temples became places where the children had lessons in their respective home languages.



1 Jean and friend at Sikh temple

Jean says that *"at about age 10, I started experiencing pain in my leg. My mother took me to one doctor after another but seeing no improvement after two years, she decided to take me to Japan to be seen by a bone specialist at a university hospital near her village in Fukuoka. I was diagnosed with tuberculosis of the bone and treated with bone grafts. It was very painful but meeting my older sister made up for the pain. It was the best thing about my visit to Japan. Kinue was left in Japan in the care of our grandparents while our parents came to Canada to work. We spent two wonderful years together but we had to part. Saying goodbye to my sister was one of the saddest moments of my life but I returned to Paldi determined to continue my education. It was not an easy return. I had to re-learn English and since there were not enough students for a high school in Paldi at the time, I finished my grades 9 and 10 courses through correspondence.*

*I then moved to Vancouver to complete my high school diploma. I stayed with family friends while attending King Edward High School. I was in my graduating year when Pearl Harbor was bombed. My Nisei classmates and I felt rejected by the teachers, the other students and my own country...an enemy alien. I remember a school assembly where all the students were told to stay standing on the gym floor and when our names were called, to go and sit in the bleachers. We all stood in anticipation of hearing our names. At the end the only ones left standing were the Nisei students. I can't remember what was said or anything else that happened except the feeling of shame. There was one sympathetic teacher, a Mr. Osterhouse, who took me and my girl friend aside and said "if you ever need any help, just tell me."*

Beginning in March 1942 and while Jean was enrolled at the Pitman Business School, the Japanese were being rounded up and housed in the livestock buildings at Hastings Park. "My parents were among the first to be removed from their home and to be incarcerated there. Other families were being relocated to the interior and the Mayeda family with whom I was staying also had to leave. I was now left homeless.

*I remembered the kind offer by Mr. Osterhouse. I called him and he invited me to live with his family. They had another Japanese Canadian house guest who was also a student. When the summer holidays began, the family left the city for Salt Spring Island where they had a summer home. Arrangements were made for the other student and me to stay upstairs in the home of Mrs. Osterhouse's sister, Mrs. Farhney (spelling?). Before long the other student also had to leave. His father had already been sent to road camp and his mother needed his help with the packing. After 3 weeks of being alone and scared in an empty house, I made the decision to move into Hastings Park. My parents had been housed there behind barbed wire now for several months and some of my friends were there too.*

*There were guards at the entrances and a special permit was needed to go in and out of Hastings Park. I went to the BC Security Commission and asked "Can I go to school from here?" They gave me a permit that said I was a member of the hospital crew and I was able to travel into town daily to attend classes and finished my business program.*

*My time at Hastings Park was a very difficult period. It was such a crude place, cold. Eating in a mess hall with thousands of people, with tin cups and bowls, I felt like a convict. The food was strange too and I got sick of it. Lots of people had diarrhea, athletes' foot and contagious diseases spread easily. There were ten shower stalls (for 1,500 women) and they had no curtains. There was no privacy. It was embarrassing and humiliating."*

In total, 12,000 Japanese were processed at Hastings Park and at its peak it housed 3,000.

The BC Security Commission set up a "hospital" in the Poultry barn. Ann Sunahara describes it thus: "On March 18 public health nurse Trenna Hunter, working under BCSC medical advisor Dr. Lyall Hodgins, began



2 Hastings Park hospital staff

..... Continued on next page

to set up badly needed health facilities, including a laundry, a kitchen for the preparation of infants' formulas, and a rudimentary hospital. The last task had to be done twice. No sooner had Hunter set up one 60-bed hospital, using discarded equipment from Vancouver's Shaughnessy Hospital, and then she lost it to the Director of Vancouver's Tuberculosis Hospital. Anxious to free beds for use by Caucasian patients, the Director of the T.B. hospital shipped his Japanese patients to dusty Hastings Park at the first opportunity. Eventually Hunter created a second hospital, this one with 180 beds, staffed by Japanese Canadians and with wards for communicable childhood diseases, new mothers, and male and female patients."<sup>1</sup>

Jean adds: "The ladies and men's wards were separated by the office where I worked. There was a huge door that opened from my office and I could see the patients getting so sick right in the hall way. Mr. X was really, really sick and finally died. His wife had gone before and left their two girls and two boys. John's (my future husband) relatives took the two boys and another family the two girls."

It was here in these miserable, inhumane conditions that Jean began her career as a medical secretary. "A nurse's aide told me to apply for a position that had just come open. I found it intimidating at first since I had no knowledge of medical terms but I must have done alright because the doctors kept me on. My main job was taking dictation from the doctors on the conditions of the patients in the tuberculosis ward. The other job was to count the number of tuberculosis patients who died in the night and report it when I received a phone call, the next morning, from TB Control at the General Hospital".

Jean's memories were not all sad ones. Hastings Park was full of young people, teenagers, who were relocated from the fishing villages and pulp towns up and down the coast waiting to be sent 100 miles inland. "The hospital crew had a separate compound. My bunkmate was from Prince Rupert. She worked in the office and looked after the records of the non-TB patients. I made many friends. I also met John. We all had fun together. The guards let us come and go without any problem. We went down town to a Chinese restaurant, for fried oysters, bowling; nobody asked if we were Japanese. Some of the fellows poked the knots out of the boards and made holes to watch the guards

talking to the streetwalkers. They also liked looking for empty shower stalls and would come back and tell us what they saw."

Over the next several months, the Japanese were dispersed to the various ghost towns, shack towns, and the sugar beet fields of Alberta and Manitoba. "My brother was sent to a prisoner-of-war camp in Ontario. He was living in Vancouver as an insurance agent when he got ordered to a road camp. Before being shipped out, he wanted to see our parents. He ventured out, was caught and detained in the Immigration Building. My parents went to see him but were told to stay one block away. My parents knew he was there but they weren't allowed to see him. They saw men at the windows, yelling, waving, and some were throwing toilet paper out the windows. They couldn't tell who they were or what was happening. Soon after my parents were relocated to Slocan and eventually moved to New Denver. They didn't hear from my brother for quite a while but they somehow got word that he was in Petawawa.

By the end of fall 1942, all the rest of Hastings Park was emptied out. Only the TB patients and the staff were left waiting for the sanatorium in New Denver to be built and completed. We survived the winter months with two small furnaces. On March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1943 the medical staff and the patients boarded the train. During the night there was a rock slide and the train jerked and stopped. By morning the tracks were cleared and we arrived in New Denver the following day."

That winter of 1942/43 was one the severest in the Slocan Valley. Temperatures dipped below 25 degrees Fahrenheit and the water pipes froze. The internees, mostly women, children and the elderly, spent the winter in the most primitive conditions; in canvas tents, in the skating rink or in hastily built shacks. They awoke to find five-foot drafts of snow piled up against the sides of their tents and shacks. The "luckier" residents in the shacks of rough, green, shiplap with no insulation, not even tar paper, spent every morning scraping frost off the walls "about two buckets full". Minimal warmth came from the cook stoves when they finally arrived. Coal oil lamps and candles provided light. Water taps were located at the end of each street and the residents carried the water to their own dwelling. Outhouses were shared by four or five families.





3 Jean Kitagawa

4 New Denver Sanitorium



"The Orchard" was the largest of the five internment camps along the north end of Slocan Lake called the "New Denver Relocation Area". It had 300 shacks built by Japanese carpenters. The shacks were of two sizes: the 14' x 20' ones were divided into two rooms by a partition and the 14' x 28' was partitioned into 3 rooms. Each shack was furnished with four bunks, a table and benches and shelves made at the skating rink by Japanese Canadian carpenters. (For visuals, visit [http://www.mon-photo.com/North\\_America/Canada/10/index.htm](http://www.mon-photo.com/North_America/Canada/10/index.htm) and click on New Denver).

New Denver boasted a 100 bed sanitarium for Japanese with tuberculosis. 'The San' was built "to be a showcase of how well the Japanese were being treated in Canada."<sup>2</sup> It also housed the doctor's and dental offices, x-ray and other workrooms, a kitchen, two dining rooms (one for the staff and the other for the patients), a women's and men's ward, two sun porches, staff quarters and a library. Vegetable gardens and lawns were planted and cared for by Japanese gardeners. The Pavilion was added in November 1944 for patients whose disease was "arrested" and who were being readied for discharge.

Jean continued her work as a medical secretary at "The San". *"Miss Boyd was my boss but I worked for Dr. Uchida. He was very good. He has studied osteo (bones) in Japan. When he manipulated broken bones, the joins were perfect. A Caucasian doctor was the head even though Dr. Uchida was there."*<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Uchida was born on October 23 1900, on Hastings Street in Vancouver and was educated in public schools there. He studied medicine in Toronto and graduated in 1926. Not allowed to intern in Canada, he was forced to go to Japan. On completion of his internship, he returned to Vancouver and set up his practice in the Japanese Canadian community. Dr. Uchida was one of five Japanese doctors in Vancouver. He was allowed to go to Hastings Park to look after the patients there. From 1942 to 1949 he worked at the Sanatorium in New Denver and the Slocan Community Hospital. He practiced in Kamloops for three years and returned to Vancouver in 1951.

In addition to the patients who were transferred from the Hastings Park hospital, patients came from Lethbridge and Taber in Alberta, and from Bridge River,

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New Denver and other internment camps and ghost towns in British Columbia. In a report dated December 1947 to the Director of Tuberculosis Control in Vancouver, Dr. W.K. Massey of the Kootenay Travelling Clinic in Nelson, BC provided the following statistics on the 212 Japanese treated during the five years 1942-1947 <sup>4</sup>:

# of patients on opening of Sanatorium	61
# of patients admitted since	151
# of patients discharged	96 (45.2%)
# of patients died	53 (25%)
# of patients in sanatorium now	68

Jean continues: *"Every three months a specialist from Nelson arrived at The San to go over the x-rays of each patient. I took the dictations and typed up the letters and reports so I probably knew more of each patient's history than the patients themselves. Some patients thought that they did not have the disease because they were not coughing but the tuberculosis bacteria did not attack just the lungs. It settled in other regions of the body as well, in the bones, spine, and hips. The treatment depended on the seriousness of the disease: minimal, moderate or advanced. At admission, patients were confined to complete bed-rest for 3 months. They could not even go to the bathroom. The doctor decided bathroom privileges."*

Jean observed that they usually arrived on their own and visitors were rare. *"Mrs. K, a young woman with TB in her spine, had to spend all of her time in bed. She had a baby and we called him "Baby K". He was not yet walking when they were in Hastings Park. There was a woman who looked after the baby and she and her husband wanted to adopt him, but Mr. K was in a road camp or somewhere, I don't know where, I never saw him visit his wife or their baby. Mrs. K. gave up the child. It was so sad to see them say goodbye. A year later she was discharged. I heard she had another child but I'm not sure."*

At the end of the Pacific War, all Japanese were ordered to a second uprooting: exile to Japan or relocation east of the Rockies. All internment camps were ordered closed except for The Orchard. Those living there were forced to vacate to accommodate internees from the other camps who were sent to New Denver. The only exceptions were the very old without children to look after them, patients with tuberculosis and their immediate families, and staff members of 'The San'.

After their work of building houses was completed, able-bodied men had to seek other employment and ventured out. Some found work in lumber camps or in cutting firewood. Women stayed closer to "home" and found work as teachers, hospital workers or in the office of the BC Security Commission. Jean says: *"Nisei were hired as nurses because the patients were Japanese but the supervisors were all white. Irene Anderson was the matron at Hastings Park. She was young, nice. She took young girls as aides and taught them nursing skills – how to care, put on gowns, wash patients. At The San, as Nisei nurses' aides started moving out east, there was a staffing shortage and mothers of patients took over the job and fathers became janitors and other maintenance staff."*

In 1949 when restrictions were finally lifted and Japanese Canadians were allowed back on the coast, *"Jean "pushed" me to return to Vancouver", says John. "While I was staying at the Patricia Hotel, Karl Hansen, a missionary came to visit me, and found me a Christian place on 10<sup>th</sup> Ave, a boarding house. Jean joined me*



5 Dr Uchida and nurse

6 Jean, John and dog



*shortly after. We planned a very simple wedding in a church with just the minister and a friend of mine but when Jean contacted Mrs. Osterhouse and explained our wedding plans she immediately coaxed us to marry in her home. She gave us a beautiful wedding."*

*Nisei struggled to rebuild their lives filled with uncertainty. Those returning to the coast remember being turned away from apartments and jobs because they were of Japanese origin. Jean's experience was no different. "I had so many disappointing interviews. Finally, I was hired by the Catholic Sisters at Mount St. Joseph's Hospital to clean and keep the Lab in order and do a bit of office work. Trying to rebuild our lives was tough."*

*"My parents also returned to the coast. They had been living in Passmore, 63 km south of New Denver, where my father was working in a mill owned by a Doukabor family. They had initially signed up to "repatriate" to Japan because they were already in their 60s, had lost all their possessions, and couldn't make a living. They told me to sign up too. When I refused, they changed their minds and went back to Mayo. I don't know how they communicated because my parents didn't write any English, but the Mayos wrote to them to come over. Other Japanese families joined them. John and I stayed in Vancouver for a while but we too returned to Paldi and started our family. Our children were born in Duncan: our daughter Donna in 1959 and our son David in 1961. In 1979 we moved to Nanaimo."*

Jean lived to celebrate her 91<sup>st</sup> birthday. She passed away in 2012. Her life story during the years of exile provides a record of the ever widening chorus of voices to give a more accurate account of this time spent as enemy aliens. The interment provides a bond of shared experiences but also the differences among them. Many *Nisei* women are still active and vital in their 80s and 90s and are the backbone and heart of the *Nikkei* community. We are indebted to them for the amazing legacy of strength and stability and for re-establishing themselves in the *Nikkei* and wider community.

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3. Jean's observation is also noted in the "*The Medical Aspects of Evacuation Days 1942-1946 (New Denver and Slocan)*", 1979 page 4) "*Although the BCSC officially designated R. Francis as the Chief of Medical Services in the San, it was Dr. Uchida who did the work, along with Miss Boyd. Miss G. Reynolds assisted at the clinic.*"
4. *Survey Done at New Denver Sanatorium*, Dec. 17, 1947, BC Archives courtesy Linda Reid, Assistant Archivist, *Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre*

**Shin Shimotakahara  
(née Kusama)**

**1891-1972**

Shin and her husband, Dr. Kozo Shimotakahara, were a prominent couple in pre-war Powell Street. Trained as a nurse, she worked alongside her husband to run a TB clinic.



**Hanako Sato  
(née Awaka)**

**1901-1983**

Hanako Sato was one of the most prominent women in the Japanese Canadian community. She worked tirelessly beside her husband Tsutae Sato, the principal of the Japanese Language school from 1918-1966. Hanako was a teacher at the school but was also a most graceful ambassador for the Language School.



**Yoko Oya  
(née Shishido)**

**1864-1914**

Yoko was the first woman immigrant to Vancouver in 1887. She came to marry Washiji Oya who ran one of the first Powell Street businesses, Oya Shoten. She gave birth to the first *ni-sei* child in Canada in 1888.



## CELEBRATING

**Hide Shimizu  
(née Hyodo)**

**1908-1999**

Very active in the United Church, Hide became the first nikkei teacher in Steveston, BC. She was the only female delegate of the four community members sent to lobby for the vote in Ottawa in 1936. A grade one teacher at the time of Internment, she became supervisor of education in Hastings Park and then the Internment camps. Eventually she married Rev. Kosaburo Shimizu and led an active life in Toronto.



**Muriel Kitagawa  
(née Fujiwara)**

**1912-1974**

One of the quiet activists of the 1930s, Muriel became a writer for the New Canadian newspaper in 1938, voicing her protests against racism. Her thoughts of the internment process are recorded in a book, *This is My Own: Letters to Wes and Other Writings on Japanese Canadians, 1941-1948*.





**Motoe Yamazaki  
(née Yorioka)**

**1866-1958**

Motoe was a daughter of a clansman in Wakayama, and married Mr. Osawa who was the surgeon for the clan. But her happy life ended at her husband's death, and she decided to move to Canada. With a midwife license she opened the Osawa Maternity Hospital after working briefly in the Steveston Fisherman's Hospital.

Her business was prosperous during the baby boom of the picture bride era; many nisei were born in her hospital. She later married Yasushi Yamazaki, editor of Tairiku Nippo and one of the leaders in the Japanese Community.

山崎寧と結婚当時の山崎元枝

## NIKKEI WOMEN

This group was established 1904 by Mrs. Kaburagi, Komako Yamamoto, Lady Consul Morikawa and Ms. Genko Nagamine.

Originally it was called the *Aikoku Fujinkai* set up to honor Statesman Iwakura's idea of sending money to the families left behind by the Russo-Japan War. In 1908, the name changed to the *Nihon Fujinkai* and raised \$1,000 for the City Hospital in 1909, and \$10,000 for Natural Disaster relief in Japan in 1913. They also arranged a welcome party for Admiral Togo in 1911.

**Nihon Fujinkai**



**Chitose Uchida**

**1895-1989**

Chitose grew up on Powell Street in one of the earliest pioneer families. Yoko Oya was her aunt. Kinu Uchida, her mother was an advocate of higher education and set

up a scholarship in her name. Chitose was the first nisei and female UBC Arts graduate in 1916, and the first nisei to graduate from Vancouver Normal School (teacher's training). She moved to Alberta to teach for 8 years but joined her parents at Taylor Lake in central BC during the internment years, becoming the principal of the school there.



Sada Shinobu founded this school in 1937 at 302 Alexander Street. She taught dressmaking, flower making, embroidery, manners and cooking in a three year course that prepared girls for professional work. Other academies were Kawano School or *Yawata-ya*, run by Mrs. Y. Kawano who taught dress design, tailoring and dressmaking. The Academy of Domestic Arts run by Mrs. T. Matsuzaki in the East End of Vancouver taught dressmaking, tailoring of suits and coats, embroidery and needlecraft. Mrs. Matsuzaki also provided home-like accommodation for out of town girls. Nisei girls were expected to work and help support their families.

**Girls College of  
Domestic Arts**





LEFT  
Margaret with her family, c.1923

ABOVE  
Margaret (left) and her friend Aiko in front of her grandparents' home in Mission, c.1929

# MY SHARE OF GOOD LUCK

by Margaret Lyons

*(Editor's Note: Margaret Lyons is an acknowledged leader in the development of Canadian broadcasting and has been honoured with the Order of Canada and an honorary doctorate.)*

My mother would say I was too opinionated for a well-bred Japanese woman, especially when I was young. Looking back, I feel sorry for my mother. She was trying to fulfill her mission in life which was to bring up modest daughters, educated, but not too much. Her girls would know how to sew and cook and how to manage a household, so they would be good fodder for the marriage market. Her goal was to arrange good marriages not just for us, but for any other young village girl who needed the help. Neither her husband nor I would cooperate in her mission. You have all known such Mothers. My good fortune was in having a father who encouraged me. But I was a great disappointment to my mother.

My father thought I was just fine, I was quite a decent substitute for the first son he really wanted. It wasn't my fault that I tried hard but never enjoyed hunting and fishing and looking for *matsutake* in the cold dank woods. I made up for it by being pretty good with the cross-cut saw and keeping the woodpile stocked for the kitchen stove. He wished that I would not be so free with my comments about the war in Asia. He mostly read the *Tairiku* while

my war news came from the Vancouver Province. The good man did not want to believe what was going on in Nanking.

Before the war we were poor fruit farmers in Mission. But we were rich in culture.

My grandfather was a theatre fanatic. He subscribed to *Kabuki* magazine with lavish photographs and for the annual January village variety night, my grandparents and their friends would stage a well known set piece from a *Kabuki* play. I was an enthusiastic participant. What kid wouldn't enjoy all this attention? My grandmother made me a new *kimono* every year for the silent child parts and for the *odori* bits. I remained a theatre enthusiast for the rest of my life. This gave me a nodding acquaintance of the traditional Japanese culture even if I longed to escape the stifling demands of everyday life.

Then the war came.

My one great regret was I did not share the internment camp experience of the majority of B.C. evacuees. At the time, I thought it was a great escape. We deliberately chose the prairie alternative instead of the Hastings Park and ghost town route. I feel that I missed a valuable life lesson, and I admire the hardy pioneer spirit of people who pulled the communities together after they had lost everything.

We escaped the route forced on most Japanese Canadians by taking the offer made to farmers. "Volunteer" to work on the sugar beet farms on the prairies. This was the way to keep the family together, out of the road camps and Hastings Park. We chose Winnipeg because it was the furthest away. It was my good fortune that no farmer wanted us because we were three girls and three young boys unfit for heavy farm work. One sister and I were placed as domestics in a kind young family with three toddlers, myself as cook/downstairs maid and my sister as nanny/upstairs. They had to put up with my learning on the job, since I knew next to nothing about how to prepare a complete Canadian meal. My first task was to roast a chicken and the fowl arrived with feet and innards. Fortunately it was heavy cleaning day and the cleaning lady, a Mennonite family retainer, showed me the art of gutting the bird before stuffing it. When I left twenty months later, they wished me good luck in my pursuit of

a university education. It helped that my replacement was provided by my other sister! Now I could pursue my dream of a life in journalism.

My good luck fairy did not leave me. I went to McMaster University because my mother could no longer stop me from becoming overeducated. There I decided that I could pursue my life dream to become a journalist, to tell stories which were fresh to most people, to look for reasons for why the world was what it was, and to satisfy my nosiness to try to get to the bottom of things. Hamilton was one of the few eastern cities with no restrictions against Japanese Canadians, and McMaster University welcomed diversity among its students. It also hired Japanese Canadians for behind-the-scenes service work in the kitchen and in the dormitories. I spent one year as a chambermaid in the women's residence while I attended night school to complete Ontario university entrance requirements which were higher than those in B.C.

McMaster provided me with a university education equal to any in England. I chose Economics to give me a competitive edge as well as an understanding of an area of public life which most people regard as incomprehensible dark science. After graduation and marriage to my best friend for life, we set off to see the world, starting with London.

Again luck, because with a little persistence, I got into the BBC. There I progressed using, not my mother's modesty, but Canadian cheekiness, or to use the Yiddish word, *chutzpah*. We got stuck there for eleven years, where I eventually became a producer. I started at the bottom, as a dictation typist. When the personnel officer was looking for a clerk in the French News, she went into the staff file and found a Canadian, me. "You are a Canadian, you can manage French". A big joke, but you seize whatever stereotype is around if it works for you. I did not say no as I had two years of University French. Fortunately the translators for whom I was delivering the written English material always spoke English. And I managed.

Then they needed a program assistant in the Japanese section. Again the personnel officer asks me whether I could cope. Why not? I did not tell her that I never got beyond second year after school Japanese in Mission and that was a long time ago.

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The relations with the real Japanese broadcasters and myself was a mutual aid society. I helped them with their English and they did not make rude remarks about my Japanese which I avoided using. These Japanese were NHK-trained who only spoke in modern standard Japanese which is basically Tokyo. My language was ancient peasant regional, though I would not insult Shiga people with that description. I did not need to be told to keep my mouth shut or they would treat me like a country bumpkin in a period play.

My boss, a perfectly bilingual Englishman was not interested in my Japanese. He had taught Japanese to men in intelligence work in both the Canadian and British armies, including the *nisei* recruits. He did not mention this but he probably knew about the language skills of overseas Japanese and was too tactful to test me. All he required was that I kept the office and broadcast records.

But again luck, he said I was overqualified for the job and recommended me to producer training school, or perhaps he was tired of my Canadian answers to overeager Japanese listeners. The standard BBC was boring and bureaucratic, so I decided to add a few personal touches. He had to sign these letters.

Whatever his reasons, I was grateful to this man, Trevor Leggatt, who I regard as a mentor. Because he was an expert in Japanese culture, he did not commit the sin of most English people who expected me to be the kind of young woman my mother tried to groom. The outspoken ones would say, "You don't look like the way you sound on the telephone." Oh, what do I sound like, "Someone 5'8" tall with long blond hair." Then polite women trying to make conversation would say, "Do you do the tea ceremony?" I had to restrain myself from replying that we do not spend our days at the BBC whipping up tea and admiring tea bowls.

My short time with the Japanese service was very rewarding. There I received the beginnings of my education in modern Japanese culture through the Japanese staff and the various artists, writers and musicians, like the composer Takemitsu. I also started to read Japanese history (in English, of course).

I reached my goal as producer in less than three years. It was in the Overseas Service in English for Asia Division. The competition for this position was the

cream of British universities, but I think my education at McMaster gave me an advantage. The Supervisor of this service at that time was an Orientalist, and I am sure that I was the only candidate who had actually read some of the Hindu Scriptures called the Upanishads for the Comparative Religions course at McMaster.

My education continued through my work as producer in the English section of the World Service to Asia. My good fortune stayed with me because I was working in this service in London during the fifties, one of the most interesting and turbulent periods in world history. World



Graduation, May 16, 1949  
Margaret with her sister Yoshiko





Margaret interviewing trade union leader Sam Watson in 1954 on Asian Club, a BBC TV program. Her costume was borrowed from the Japanese embassy.

leaders coming to London were guests in our programs. It was only a few years after the independence of India and Pakistan and my fellow South Asian producers were part of the independence movement. Malaysia and Singapore were negotiating their independence; the civil war was still going on in Malaysia. The most controversial leader of the group was Harry Lee who was studying Mandarin and renamed himself Lee Kuan Yew. He was particularly sensitive about his background which included a Cambridge education paid for by Shell Oil. He would accuse anyone who did not agree with his political goals of being a racist. He wanted the BBC to give only his side of the independence negotiations. When I declined, he dressed me down in public for being worse than a racist, a turncoat who sided with the enemy. I forgot my responsibility as a neutral journalist and told him that he was acting like a fascist controlling the media. This was great training for the time when his good friend Pierre Trudeau would criticize the CBC. Only by then I learned to keep my mouth shut.

Most leaders fortunately were not so aggressive. The most impressive guests of the many whose greatness influenced me were Bertrand Russell who in his late eighties was the world leader in nuclear disarmament and Lester Pearson who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in cooling the Suez crisis and invented the United Nations Peace keepers with Canada taking the lead. He told me that I should be back in Canada working for the CBC, not wasting my time in the BBC. A few years later, I took his advice and came home. This time in London was a great preparation for the CBC.

We returned to Canada in 1960 and I joined the CBC as a radio producer at the time when TV was starting to replace radio as the dominant public broadcaster. By the end of the decade it was clear that CBC Radio had to redefine itself. I was in the right place at the right time to join the team that remade the service into the form heard today. It became a daytime service for a mobile nation, serving people where they lived, in their communities, a local service, with strong national and international backing. Today it is secure in the affection of the nation and spared the harsh attacks leveled at

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Television. As executive producer, program director, and finally vice president of the English Radio Services, I was fortunate to work with a brilliant team of producers and radio personalities such as Mark Starowicz, Peter Gzowski, Barbara Frum and David Suzuki in his early radio days. Stuart McLean honed his craft then. They created programs still flourishing today: *As It Happens*, *Morningside* (today's *Current* and *Studio Q*) and *Quirks and Quarks*. Today Stuart McLean is recognized as the king of Canadian humour. As Program Director and Vice President I was privileged to be responsible for reflecting the Literature, the Arts and the Musical Life of Canada and to make sure that this was heard abroad through our connections with the other great broadcasters in the world.

Thanks to my father's attitude, I never noticed gender discrimination through my time at the BBC and the CBC. I did not think of myself as the first woman in any of these roles, but it was reported that I was a pioneer in the English-speaking world in each of these positions. Perhaps it was due to my good fortune in serving the greatest leaders of the BBC and the CBC, Hugh Carleton Greene (brother of the novelist Graham) and Pierre Juneau. I will also always remember the brilliant Trevor Leggatt, my boss in the BBC Japanese section. He taught Japanese to our *Nisei* military volunteers in WW II. He also happened to be an international Go champion, a Judo black belt, a good calligrapher and translator of Tenrikyo scriptures.

Perhaps I should add that the only time I experienced discrimination against me in my working life was in Japan in 1956. I was one of twenty British journalists on a flying visit to Tokyo, my first visit to Japan. From the time I arrived at the Imperial Hotel in the pouring typhoon rain to my departure four days later, I was the

subject of contempt by the men in the service industry. The porters left me in the rain to manage my bags on my own, the waiters served me last. In a restaurant bar, the servers speculated whether I was a street worker because I was talking to American servicemen. I have often wondered whether they expressed the resentment of the American Occupation or reflected the conservatism of the government of the day. I should emphasize, that in contrast, I was received in the offices of NHK and the Asahi newspaper as a colleague and given all the help I needed, including the repair of my heavy portable tape recorder.

Perhaps it is fitting that my last assignment for the CBC was as Director of European Operations in London. I retired in 1991. It was a busy and demanding life which I could not have managed without the support of my ever patient husband.

As part of my retirement plan, I enrolled in the University of Toronto's full Japanese undergraduate language program hoping to make myself bilingual as a journalist. I had to admit defeat since it required more time and effort than I was prepared to give and the approach to the language of journalism in Japanese is different from English. I was also inhibited by my Mother tongue in Japanese which is rural Shiga of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Where was I supposed to practice my modern received Kanto Japanese? My family thought I was joking when I tried it on them. Who spoke like that in our circle (when they spoke Japanese at all)? Meantime

Margaret Lyons at CBC, 1970s





Cartoon by Aislin, 1986 - a gift from Margaret's staff when she retired as head of CBC radio to be Director of European Operations in London.

a number of volunteer efforts for McMaster University, the most important, as member of the Senate for six years.

I was honoured with a D.Litt from McMaster and with the Order of Canada, the latter for my work in broadcasting, for the promotion of women, and for my volunteer work.

How was I able to achieve all this?

I had excellent education; at home, in Canadian schools and university, and in the BBC.

I had rebelled against my religious background that had instilled in me the Buddhist sense of responsibility to *Sangha*, or community, which is basically CBC's mandate. If you examine CBC responsibilities, it is about public service, that CBC belongs to the people of Canada and exists to serve them.

And of course I have been blessed with good luck and the Canadian cheekiness to seize every opening.

at the University at our weekly language exercise, I was having this antique peasant accent beaten out of me in favour of modern standard Japanese. My Japanese academic acquaintances thought my usage quaint or unsuitable, or even downright vulgar. In return, I thought that the NHK preference for Kanto usage was wrongheaded. I used to watch their TV service and only heard regional accents when there was a disaster in Kobe or Kagoshima.

I gave up this fruitless exercise and concentrated my volunteer work in the preservation of old buildings in Toronto which are in constant danger of being torn down by developers of giant condos. I also continue as a volunteer guide in one of our museum houses, William Lyon Mackenzie, the rebel. I have volunteered as teacher for English as a Second Language for the Toronto Board of Education and also as teaching assistant in beginners Japanese for the Board's High Schools. I have served in

# TREASURES FROM THE COLLECTION

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**Shizuye TAKASHIMA**

**Men and Woman**

pen and watercolour

June 23, 1964

Shizuye Takashima collection

NNM 2010.40

**Shizuye Takashima** (1930-2005) was born in BC and during the internment, her family was sent to New Denver. Later Shizuye studied at the Ontario College of Fine Arts, graduating in 1953. Afterwards she travelled extensively, mounted numerous successful exhibits in Toronto, Montreal and New York, and eventually came back to OCAD to teach watercolour painting from 1976-1994.

Her life events influenced her art and teachings; particularly the fears she experienced as a child during internment. Using art, Shizuye worked through her memories, producing an award-

winning autobiography titled, *A Child in Prison Camp*, as well as a body of art that now hangs in leading museums and the homes of major art collectors.

In the 1960s, her work was dominated by a series of paintings and sketches of bound figures who menacingly gaze out at viewers. They raise questions of imprisonment and repression, both literal and figurative. The Nikkei National Museum has several paintings and sketches by Shizuye Takashima in the collection representing her important contributions as an artist, a woman and a Japanese Canadian .

