

 **Nikkei** **NIKKEI**
national museum
& cultural centre **IMAGES**



NNM 1992-9 FUNERAL AT THE NEW WESTMINSTER BUDDHIST CHURCH CA 1930



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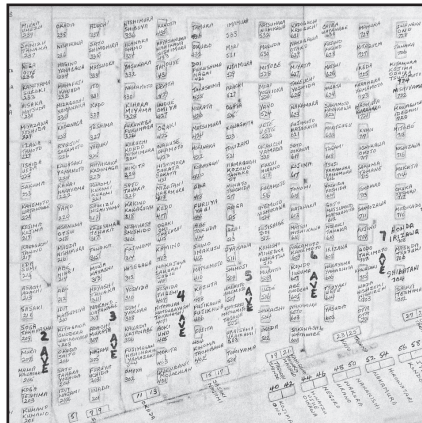
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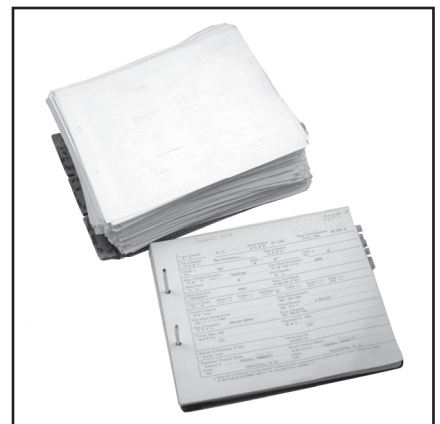
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My mother: "What are we going to do? We have nothing to eat tomorrow."
My father (smiling): "Well, we have miso don't we?"
"Yes"
"And do we have any rice?"
"Yes, we still have a little"
"Well, then, that should be enough"
And that's the way we lived.

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Message from the new Director | Curator of the Nikkei National Museum

by Sherri Kajiwarra

I am honoured to step into the lead role at the Nikkei National Museum and extend my deep respect and gratitude to my predecessor, Beth Carter, for her six years of dedicated effort to develop the NNM as the national repository of *nikkei* history, culture, and art in Canada.

I am biologically *issei*, legally *sansei*, and culturally *hapa*, having been born in Kyushu, Japan and adopted into a Japanese Canadian family. Mom's family were farmers in Mission and Dad's family, originally from North Vancouver, were in fishing and construction. Like so many *nikkei* families they have a complex history that bridges both Canada and Japan, and against all odds, came together in Southern Alberta. As a promise to my biological grandmother, my parents kept me in Japanese language and culture by enrolling me in classical Japanese dance class from the age of 4; first in Picture Butte, Alberta and then in Richmond, BC. If only the Nikkei Centre existed back then, their task would have been a bit easier, but for many years they shuttled me back and forth to classes, and tirelessly supported my *nihon-buyo* career until well into my twenties. A highlight of that was dancing for and meeting Queen Elizabeth during her Silver Jubilee visit to Ottawa during the Centennial tour of the Nikka Dancers. When I first joined the NNMCC as Acting Executive Director in 2010, then-Board member Gordon Kadota flatteringly commented that he could still remember seeing me perform on stage as a young dancer.



My connection with the Nikkei Centre extended beyond my initial contract when I was guest curator of the summer exhibition at the Nikkei National Museum titled YO-IN in 2012. In 2013 the NNMCC board retained me as Acting Executive Director again, and then the new Executive Director Roger Lemire, created the role of Project Manager in 2014 where I divided my time between the Museum and the Cultural Centre.

I am a graduate of the Sauder School of Business, UBC. My arts and cultural education comes through lived experience. After an initial start in the hospitality industry with the Pan Pacific Hotel, I joined the contemporary art world, moving from gallerina to gallery director to gallery owner over 15+ years before leaving the commercial fine art world in 2008. I co-owned Bjornson Kajiwarra Gallery from 2004 to 2008. My formative contemporary fine art training was through the Buschlen Mowatt Gallery and the Vancouver Sculpture Project which has morphed into what is now the Vancouver Biennale. It is an interesting coincidence that the first senior artist I had the privilege of working with in that world was Bill Reid, and Beth Carter is now the Curator at the Bill Reid Gallery. Other notable artists whom I had the pleasure of working with directly were Robert Rauschenberg, Tom Wesselman, and Bernard Cathelin, as well as many local artists who continue to do extremely well on the international stage. I have been involved in non-profit arts and cultural organizations

I am biologically issei, legally sansei, and culturally hapa, having been born in Kyushu, Japan and adopted into a Japanese Canadian family. Mom's family were farmers in Mission and Dad's family, originally from North Vancouver, were in fishing and construction. Like so many nikkei families they have a complex history that bridges both Canada and Japan, and against all odds, came together in Southern Alberta. As a promise to my biological grandmother, my parents kept me in Japanese language and culture by enrolling me in classical Japanese dance class from the age of 4; first in Picture Butte, Alberta and then in Richmond, BC.

throughout those years as board member of the Dr. Sun Yat Sen Gardens, Museum of Vancouver, and the Contemporary Art Society of Vancouver where I am past president. Over the years I have also supported Arts Umbrella, Friends for Life, Dr. Peter Foundation, and the Arthur Erikson Foundation through art fundraising events.

It's common to hear about the starving artist, but in 2004 a good friend took pity on my starving art dealer status and helped me supplement my income by training me as a food stylist. That led to some interesting work on commercials, product campaigns, and development of a vegetarian cookbook. I also embarked on yoga teacher training during that time and still find a nice balance to the pressures of life through both interests. While I am no longer in the commercial contemporary art industry, I continue to have an online arts communication company called Vantage Art Projects with business partner Jennifer Mawby, and maintain the private collection of Byron Aceman in Vancouver as his personal curator and collections manager.

Along with my art gallery career came experience in publishing. My first book project was *Gallant Beasts & Monsters* for Bill Reid. Through my time with the Buschlen Mowatt Gallery I edited, wrote for, and/or produced catalogues for exhibitions including Bernard Cathelin, Otto Donald Rogers, Yehouda Chaki, Ross Penhall, and Pat Service. In recent years I've written for artists Erika Tolousis and Malcolm Levy. With Vantage Art Projects one of our services are exhibition-in-print catalogues and collections catalogues through the print on demand technology that is now available. Completed

projects include *BAC Vol. 1* and *Lateral Learning*, on reverse pedagogy with Paul Butler. Both are available through Blurb.

The Nikkei National Museum has a small but mighty team of talented staff who I am excited to work with. In addition to gallery exhibitions that rotate annually, generally through historical, cultural, and contemporary arts perspectives, the museum is working on two SSHRC grant funded projects. *Revitalizing Japantown?* culminates with an exhibition in late 2015/early 2016, and *Landscapes of Injustice* is set to conclude with a major exhibition here in 2020. Beyond exhibitions, the museum is committed to several community initiatives. These include the maintenance of the War Memorial Committee which successfully renovated the War Memorial in Stanley Park in 2014 and continues to commemorate annually on Nov. 11; museum assistance with the Fisherman's Committee Oral History book project; and the official establishment of a Redress Committee library and resource centre. We are also working towards improving our web and social media presence, and endeavour to appeal across all demographics.

According to the theory of Malcolm Gladwell of *The Tipping Point* and TED Talk fame, I am a connector, given that my preferred style is collaborative. Even more importantly than my nikkei heritage, fine arts background, or management experience, I trust that that skill will help me effectively guide the Nikkei National Museum into the future. *Gambarimasu. Yoroshiku onegaishimasu.* 🌸

Kondo: A Shrimp Fishing Family in Vancouver

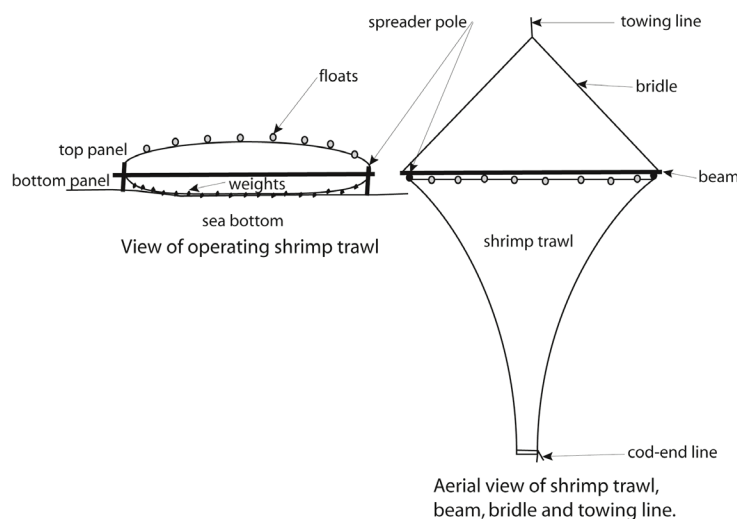
by Moe Yesaki

Seisuke Kondo was born in Shiga-ken, Japan in 1887. He immigrated to Canada and fished salmon in Steveston for a few years. He subsequently moved to Vancouver and married Iwa Tsuji in about 1912. Iwa was born in 1894 and immigrated to Canada in 1908 when she was 14 years old to live with her family in Steveston. She was the daughter of Tobei Tsuji, a fishing boss who had about eight fishermen.

Seisuke and Iwa lived in a house on Heatley Avenue and continued to live there until 1942. They had eight children: Haruye born in 1914, Yoshio in 1915, Shizuye in 1917, Kiyoyuki in 1919, Hideo in 1921, Shigeo in 1923, Mitsue in 1925 and Fumie in 1927.

It is unknown when Seisuke started trawling for shrimp, but possibly soon after moving to Vancouver, and was one of the earliest Japanese in this fishery. He moored his boat at the foot of Campbell Avenue in Burrard Inlet and usually started before daybreak, steaming out to fish the shrimp grounds of English Bay and Howe Sound.

His boat was about 33-foot in length and seven-foot in breadth. The cabin occupied approximately one-half the length of the boat, while the middle one-quarter section was the decked fish-hold and the stern quarter section was used to store and operate the shrimp trawl. On the deck of the fish-hold was a stove to cook the shrimp, a sorting table and a nigger-head. The approximately 40-foot wooden beam to spread the trawl was greater than the length of the boat and was carried along the starboard side of the boat. The shrimp trawl was a funnel-shaped net with top and bottom panels. The equal sides of the triangle were sewn together except for the base and the apex of the triangle. Floats were attached along



the base of the top panel and lead weights along the base of the bottom panel. Wooden, three-foot spreader poles were attached to the ends of the base to keep the trawl open as was a short bridle to which the towing rope was attached. A short line was laced through the webbing at the apex to close and open the cod-end to release the catch.

Once on the shrimp ground, Seisuke slowed the engine to minimum, then went to the stern, tied the cod-end shut and threw out the shrimp trawl. With the trawl in the water, he attached the port end of the trawl to the stern end of the beam, then slowly paid out the beam until the starboard end of the trawl was attached to the front end of the beam. He paid out the bridle and enough towing rope to accommodate the depth of the shrimp ground and then secured the rope to the towing post. Seisuke increased the engine to trawling speed and trawled for approximately three hours. He hauled in the rope with the nigger-head until the beam came up to the stern of the boat. He pulled in the short line attached to the beam and to the middle of the trawl to haul in the cod-end. He untied the line closing the cod-end and spilled the catch onto the sorting table. He reset the trawl for another drag. While making the second drag, he sorted the

catch, cooked the shrimp in seawater with the on-deck stove and stored the cooked shrimp in wooden boxes. After dragging for another three hours, he hauled in the trawl, took out the catch, secured the beam on the starboard side of the boat and stored the trawl in the stern, then set course for home. He sorted the catch and cooked the shrimp, while keeping a look-out while steaming back to port. He generally returned to the wharf by 4pm, where the boxes of shrimp were transferred onto a hand cart for transport to a fish-processing plant to peel the cooked shrimp. The principal catch was pink shrimp with lesser amounts of the larger side-stripe shrimp on the English Bay and Howe Sound fishing grounds. Shrimp fishermen occasionally fished the Deep Cove grounds for coon-stripe shrimp, a slightly harder-shelled and apparently tastier species.



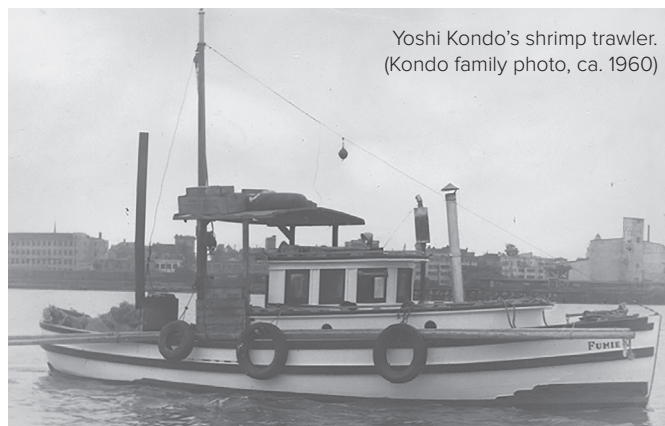
Yoshio Kondo.
(Kondo family photo, ca. 1945)

Seisuke rented a stall from Polley, a fish broker, who rented space from a fish processing plant at the foot of Campbell Avenue, which was generally vacant during the night. Iwa was responsible for overseeing peeling operations; recruiting sufficient family members and neighbouring wives to peel the shrimp, generally twelve peelers. The peelers would start working at about 6pm. They sat on benches at both sides of a table, six pickers to a side. The whole shrimp was piled in mounds on the table in-front of the peelers, who sat with basins on their laps. They would pick up a shrimp, peel off the shell, let the shell fall into the basin, and drop the peeled shrimp into an aluminum container. After completing their task, they gathered the peeled shrimp into sealed containers for refrigeration, cleaned and washed down the premises. After the war, wages for peelers were about 60 cents per hour and after the rate was changed to piece work, about \$1 per pound. A shrimp trawlers daily catch averaged approximately 125 pounds which yielded about 50 pounds of peeled shrimp. They were usually finished by 9pm. If one stall crew finished before another crew, the first crew would assist the second crew.

Seisuke passed away in 1933. Yoshio started operating his father's boat at 17 years of age and continued trawling for shrimp until his boat was confiscated in 1941 after Pearl Harbour. Iwa continued to oversee the

peeling operations of Yoshio's catch. Other Japanese shrimp fishermen before the war were Yojiro and Seibei Kondo, who were nephews of Seisuke. Other Japanese fishermen were Araki, Okada, Bando and Hirakida. Many of these fishermen also fished for salmon during the summer and autumn.

During the war, the four brothers were interned at the POW camp in Angler, Ontario and the rest of the family were relocated to Popoff in the interior of British Columbia. After a short stay in Popoff, the family moved to New Denver where they remained for the duration of the war. In 1950, Yoshio returned to Vancouver and purchased a boat to resume shrimp fishing. Kiyoyuki and Hideo also returned and purchased boats and commenced



Yoshi Kondo's shrimp trawler.
(Kondo family photo, ca. 1960)

shrimp fishing. Haruye arrived soon after Yoshio's arrival to supervise the processing of his catch, instead of Iwa as she was getting too old. She passed away in 1959. Yoshio resumed commercial contacts with Polley who rented space from the Murray fish processing plant on Campbell Avenue. In the 1960s, the provincial health department implemented regulations prohibiting cooking shrimp in seawater onboard vessels destined for sale in retail outlets. Consequently, Yoshio, Kiyoyuki and Hideo landed and cooked the raw shrimp with cookers installed in the Murray fish plant.

Yoshio continued shrimp fishing until he passed away in 1977. Kiyoyuki and Hideo quit fishing soon after.

The history of the Kondo family was obtained from Mitsue and Fumie Kondo whereas the author provided the description of the fishing boat, net, and operations. 🍁

Isaburo Tasaka's 100-year old Charcoal Kiln found on Salt Spring Island

by Chuck Tasaka

What is the old saying? "What is old is now new again." For thousands of years, the Wakayama Prefecture craftsmen made charcoal to produce the finest steel to pound into samurai swords. These skilled Wakayama artists were coveted by the Shogun. They knew how to produce high-grade, quality charcoal to melt the iron to produce weapons as well as churning out clay potteries. Once electricity and gas were introduced, charcoal-making became a thing of the past. In present day, however, this kind of charcoal-making became trendy again and it is now widely used by exclusive chefs who grill eel and chicken (*yakitori*) because it gives off high heat with very little smoke.

The southern Kishu area in Wakayama Prefecture was noted for their charcoal made from oak. It was called *binchotan*. The charcoal is considered to be of high quality because it is hard and burns for a very long time. When many Kishu people immigrated to Canada, their skills in charcoal-making came in handy. When fishing season was over, these people traveled to the Gulf Islands to make charcoal so that they would earn extra money to get them through the winter months. They went to Mayne, Galiano and Saturna Island. The Gulf Islands had sprinkling of Japanese settlement thriving in market gardening, therefore, fishermen found out from the local settlers the type of wood needed to make charcoal. Charcoal was used in the fish canneries in Steveston to solder the cans. Once the snap-on lids were invented in 1912, charcoal demand fell out of favour.



When I learned about the ancient methods of making charcoal, I couldn't help but imagine what Isaburo Tasaka, my grandfather, went through to earn extra money in the off season. I have greater appreciation for what he did to support his family. Grandfather learned to make charcoal from his Wakayama friends. In his days in Japan when he captained his father's cargo ship, he was ship-wrecked near Mio in Wakayama-ken. The whole village came to save him. They built a campfire, brought food and dry clothing for him. He was forever grateful for the hospitality shown by the villagers. As a result, Isaburo made many friends in Mio and later re-connected with them in Steveston, BC. Isaburo was a fisherman by trade, but in the off-season, he returned to Salt Spring Island to make charcoal.

In the early 1900s, Asians were not allowed to buy properties on Crown Land. Isaburo befriended a local blacksmith, Mr. McAfee and they made a handshake

The southern Kishu area in Wakayama Prefecture was noted for their charcoal made from oak. It was called 'binchotan'. The charcoal is considered to be of high quality because it is hard and burns for a very long time. When many Kishu people immigrated to Canada, their skills in charcoal-making came in handy. When fishing season was over, these people traveled to the Gulf Islands to make charcoal so that they would earn extra money to get them through the winter months. They went to Mayne, Galiano and Saturna Island.

deal so that Mr. Tasaka could buy 300 acres on Salt Spring Island to cut down the alder trees. In return, Mr. McAfee had access to charcoal for his business. The two charcoal pits are located inside Mouat Park.

As explained to me by Steve Nemtin, a local charcoal kiln restoration expert from Galiano Island, Isaburo's first step was to dig a pit that was about six meters long, three meters wide and two meters deep. Next step, he had to use his masonry skills to build a rock wall around the inside part of the pit. Unlike the other pits found on the Gulf Islands, Isaburo made modification to his kiln. Most Wakayama kilns were shaped like a uterus or a teardrop, however, grandfather enlarged the kiln to make it look like a mushroom. Isaburo created three air vents or flues for controlling the amount of oxygen entering the pit. Grandfather then placed cedar planks on the ground, one row north-south and another row east-west. After that, he chopped down alder trees. They were in uniformed size, and placed vertically in the pit. Next, the kiln had to be covered. Sticks and branches were strewn over the vertical logs, and sand covered the kiln to make it air-tight. Isaburo then lit kindling wood at the front opening to start the smoldering process. This was very time-consuming to complete the job. It took maybe four to five days, 24/7 to make sure the logs did not catch on fire. When they were little children, aunt Masue and uncle Taisho's chore was to watch the smoke coming from the kiln. When the whole process was completed, grandfather uncovered the kiln and raked the charcoal from the front opening. Traces of charcoal are still found where Isaburo piled them. Masue sewed the ears of the rice sack when it was filled. From Walter's Cove, Isaburo, being an experienced sea captain, transported 200 lbs. of charcoal in his fishing boat to a soap factory in Victoria.

He was paid 30 cents a bag. The extra income enabled Isaburo to see his large family through the winter.

Isaburo and Yorie Tasaka moved to Salt Spring in 1905 because their eldest son, Hajime, died of typhoid fever in Steveston. He must have heard from his friends that Salt Spring had clean water. Fourteen children were born in Ganges, BC. They were: Koji, Arizo, Sachu, Judo, Masue, Taisho, Fumi, Fusa, Iko, Chizuko, Kiyo, Takeo, Hana and Hachiro. Only eldest Masuko, Hajime and youngest Sueko were born in Steveston, BC. In 1929, the Tasaka family moved back to Steveston and finally Isaburo and Yorie took the four youngest back to Japan in 1935.

After nearly one hundred years, grandfather's two charcoal pits were found. Mrs. Kimiko Okano-Murakami, daughter Rose and Stephen Nemtin knew the location of the kilns. In 2014, Rose took the initiative to kick-start the restoration project. Rumi Kanesaka, President of Japanese Garden Society jumped on board to help receive grants and donations. The CRD-PARC of Salt Spring enthusiastically took on this project with great passion. Stephen Nemtin of Galiano Island offered to help. Once Stephen and the PARC employees kept finding original pieces of charcoal, creosote, fire pit and crystallized plates of compressed sand, they became ecstatic. They worked like little boys playing in a sandbox. The large pit will be restored first and the smaller one at a later date.

On behalf of all the Tasaka family, I am very grateful for the keen interest taken by the CRD-PARC and volunteers of Salt Spring to make this project come to fruition. The estimated completion time is around July. 🌻

Memories of My Life

by Rev Susumu Kyojo Ikuta



I was born in Kyoto, Japan on November 23, 1926 and lived there until I was 10.

My father came to Canada in 1936. A year later, I, with my mother, brother and two sisters followed him to Canada. We sailed on a ship called Hikawamaru, which is now a museum docked in the Yokohama harbor. I'm told I was a naughty, hyperactive child. Fortunately for my mother, the voyage was made easier for her because I became seasick and was in bed for a good part of the journey.

I still vividly remember coming through the Burrard Inlet. It was early morning and the fog was gradually lifting. I felt, "Ah, this is *gaikoku* (foreign country). This is where we are going to live." The pier was way inside the harbour, with a warehouse on the opposite side. I thought, "What a primitive place we have come to." Then we saw Father waving at us as we descended the gangplank and the family became united again.

Our first place of residence was New Westminster where my father was the Buddhist minister. I did not speak a word of English and was afraid of 'white' people. The first English words I picked up were "shut up." I got frustrated and angry when people spoke English and I couldn't understand what was being said, so I would shout "Shut up, shut up, shut up". I was later told it was wrong to use those words.

I was put into Grade 1 at school because of my lack of English, but because I was already in Grade 5 in Japan, all other subjects were much too simple for me. After a few months, my brother Mak and I were moved to Grade 4.

Although we lacked many material things, we grew up living a very good life in New Westminster. Most other people didn't have much either. No one had a chesterfield, we all sat on homemade wooden benches. Everything was going well until Japan entered World War II.

On the morning of December 8, 1941, we were playing baseball when someone ran towards us shouting, "The war has started. Japan has attacked Pearl Harbor." We all stopped playing and ran home. When I reached home, Father was delivering a sermon at the Sunday Service. He was crying as he spoke and I realized how seriously the war was affecting him.

Immediately, the persecution and discrimination began. The menfolk were removed from the coastal areas and sent to road camps. Families were evicted from their homes and sent to Hastings Park and from there to interior BC.

Because my father was a minister, he was appointed to stay behind to look after the women and children. Those were frightening times. Stones were thrown at our temple.

We had to 1. board up the windows to protect ourselves. Many frightened families moved into the Temple so we all lived together.

We were given 48 hours to decide whether we wanted to move to internment camps in interior BC or go to work on sugar beet farms in Alberta. My father chose Alberta. By then, my father had not been employed for sometime and since the evacuation notice was so sudden he had not been able to make any arrangements about money

Images courtesy of Grant Ikuta



matters. So we left New Westminster a penniless family and were put on very old trains that I'm sure the CPR had not been used for a long time.

On the train, a man named Takeda Fusajiro approached us and said "Reverend, I know you haven't got money. Here is some you can use." And gave Father a crisp fifty dollar bill. Fifty dollars was a fortune in those days.

When the train arrived in Calgary, we had a 3 to 4 hour wait for the train to Lethbridge, so we decided to get off to buy some food, but all the shops were closed to us. No Japs allowed. But I still remember we found a corner store run by a German fellow who sold us canned goods and fresh fruit.

Eventually, we reached Lethbridge and were met by many Japanese people, most of them pioneers (*senjusha*) who had settled in the Lethbridge area before the war. They came in trucks and pick-ups to transport us to various places. We rode on the back of a pickup and were taken to Raymond. My father was designated to be the minister of the Raymond Buddhist Church, but the arrangements were not quite ready so we had to work on a sugar beet farm for a year.

Probably as with many, many evacuees, it was very hard times for us. I still remember a conversation between my parents:

My mother: "What are we going to do? We have nothing to eat tomorrow."

My father (smiling): "Well, we have miso don't we?"

"Yes"

"And do we have any rice?"



"Yes, we still have a little"

"Well, then, that should be enough"

And that's the way we lived.

For me, as a teenager, I realized we were poor, but I did not feel the anguish my parents must have experienced.

We eventually moved into the residence at the back of the Church, but it really was not fit for occupation. The windows were all single paned, no insulation in the walls. During the winter the canned goods froze in the kitchen; and of course, all the eggs broke. We had a single coal stove which glowed red hot but didn't radiate the heat very far, the rest of the room was freezing. But we survived.

The *senjusha* people were very kind. In spite of their own difficulties, they welcomed the evacuees with warmth and kindness and shared what they could.

Being a kid, I enjoyed evacuation as a big adventure, not really understanding how my parents were suffering. I went to Raymond Junior High and High School. During the summer I used to go and help at various sugar beet farms. The one that I particularly remember is Mr. Yosaburo Nishimura's farm. His son, Danny, was my



classmate. He was a brilliant student who eventually went on to work on the team to develop the atomic energy plant in Chalk River.

After graduating from High School, my brother Mak and I went to Toronto. My dream had been to become a medical doctor but the University of Alberta barred Japanese students from their Faculty of Medicine. In Toronto I discovered that Latin was a prerequisite so I decided to study Latin at night school. During the day I worked in restaurants to support myself.

I joined Rev. Takashi Tsuji's Buddhist group in Toronto and became very much interested in the way he was propagating Buddhism. Because many of the Japanese people had no place to go on Sundays, they came to a small house where Rev. Tsuji conducted his services. Gradually, through his influence and that of a fellow named Richard Robinson (who became the head of the Dept. of Buddhist Studies at the University of Wisconsin) my interest shifted from Medicine to a more spiritual field.

In 1949, I entered University, taking Western Philosophy as a major and Psychology as my minor, graduating in 1953 with Honors B.A. During my studies, I came to know two Jewish Philosophy professors, Professors Savant and Fackenheim who persuaded me to stay another year to get my Masters degree, which I did. In those days, if you worked very hard, you could earn a Masters degree in one year. After that, they tried to talk

me into remaining at University for a PhD. When I think back, the reason for their persistence in trying to get me to stay on was because they wanted my background and way of thinking which was quite different from those of westerners. For example, being a Buddhist, I would not recognize the existence of "Soul," which surprised them. Buddhism was still quite new to them back then and subject matters of Karma and Rebirth was of great interest to these professors.

About this time, my interest in Western Philosophy was beginning to fade. I began to see weaknesses in the theories of philosophers such as Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, Emmanuel Kant, etc. Perhaps Western Philosophy would not fulfil my internal quest for the truth. Eventually, I became a nervous wreck. I couldn't sleep, I lost weight, I was at a total loss as to what to believe. It was at this time that my father came to visit me.

I unburdened onto him my mental agony, my feeling that I would probably take my life in the near future. I told him there was nothing worth living for. Strangely, my father smiled at me and said, "just keep on doubting." I went to Professor Savant and asked him why my father would say that. His answer was, "I think your Dad said the right thing. You just keep on doubting." Of course this did not solve my problem. I was sick. During his visit, my father shared a bed with me. He would go to sleep but I would be wide awake. One night, I noticed that my father was saying something in



his sleep. I listened carefully and heard him reciting the Buddha's name, "NamuAmidaButsu, NamuAmidaButsu, NamuAmidaButsu," in his sleep. When I heard this, it came to me that he had something that I did not. That made me decide to go to Japan to study Buddhism to seek the spiritual enlightenment that was eluding me. I registered into graduate school at the Ryukoku University. It was quite disappointing because all I received was academic education and I was unable to grasp the spiritual goal that I was desperately seeking. For four years I studied Tendai philosophies which were considered the base of Mahayana Buddhism.

In the midst of those four years, on March 27, 1957, I married Teruko Yamazaki. I received my Masters degree by translating and making comments on a major work of Tendai called *Tendai Shikyōgi*. I had planned on staying in Japan longer, but about a year after we got married, I received news that Father had been in an automobile accident and suffered broken ribs and decided to return to Canada. By then Teruko was pregnant and we often laugh about how we smuggled Mari into this country.

Because of his injuries, my father was unable to carry on his ministerial duties so I took over his position as the minister for the Buddhist Churches of British Columbia. Although the office was in Vancouver, my territory covered Steveston, Aldergrove, Kelowna, Vernon, and Kamloops, and held services in these Churches once a month. I started a Sunday School and a Japanese

School in Hope and Lulu Island for the few families who lived there. It was a very, very busy life. But it was a good life, one that involved me in the lives of a lot of people.

In one annual event, right after Obon at the Vancouver Church, a representative from the Church and I conducted graveside Obon services throughout communities on Vancouver Island. When we first went to Cumberland, the Cumberland Japanese Cemetery had become a dump site with headstones scattered around. The Vancouver Buddhist Church planned a restoration for this travesty. I wrote to a Japanese Canadian newspaper asking for donations. I approached the Kiwanis Club in the City of Courtenay to see if they could help us. They were happy to help, and between them and families from pre-war Cumberland, headed by Mrs. Hayakawa, all the headstones were collected and were cemented into a single monument. The area is now chained off to keep off dumpsters and vandals.

Another event I recall during my time in Vancouver was about the Doukhobors from Nelson BC. In an act of repentance to God, they burned down their houses, violating a law of Canada. Many of the men were sent to prison. In protest, hundreds of women and children walked from Nelson to Victoria. When they reached Vancouver, the weather had turned colder and the City of Vancouver called on their citizens to shelter these people. The response was good and all but about two hundred Doukhobors were given accommodations.

The City canvassed Churches, asking for help, but were turned down and finally approached the Buddhist Church. This was a decision which had to be made immediately and Mr. G. Yada, the president of our Church, and I took the responsibility upon ourselves to shelter the remaining two hundred people for a few days. The few days turned into two weeks. They had the use of our kitchen but had no food, so I canvassed the grocery stores and bakeries for food donations. Some of our Church members severely criticized Mr. Yada and me for taking on this responsibility without going through the proper channels. Then, the CBC radio station heard about us and broadcast the fact that the Doukhobors were being sheltered in the Buddhist Church after being turned away by a number of Christian Churches. The response was donations coming into the Church from all over Canada. The same members who had criticized us were now smiling and saying we made a good decision! How fickle some people are!

As if I didn't have enough to do, the Government of Canada was encouraging professionals and skilled laborers to come to Canada, and immigrants came, which was fine, but the government did not have plans to place these people. The Consulate would phone asking me to look after them so my wife and I looked after many, many families. At one time we had three families living with us while I went around finding work for them.

Still, I had time to lecture on Buddhism at the University of British Columbia. The head of the Department of Religious Studies encouraged me to do further studies to earn a PhD. When I told him I couldn't afford to quit working and go to Japan, he recommended that I apply for a Canadian Council grant. With his recommendation, I applied and received the grant. After 10 years of work in Vancouver, my family and I left to further my education.

In Japan I registered for a PhD course and attended both the Ryukoku and Kyoto Universities. With the help of many scholars and friends, I was able to complete the course. Even after all the years of study, I felt I had not grasped the spiritual aspect of Buddhism. As I lived amongst these friends and scholars, I came to know truly religious people, who lived their religion. Some were Zen masters, but others were ordinary people. They were wonderful spiritual leaders, and through them, I received even more than what I was seeking. My family and I returned to Canada.

I wanted to stay longer in Japan amongst these people, and I had job offers from such places as Notre Dame University, Sangyo University and Mt. Hiei Tendai School, but having received the grant from Canada, I felt I should go back. Besides, my wife said "You can stay in Japan if you want, but I'm going to take the children back to Canada." On the way back we stopped in Hawaii. The Bishop of Hawaii offered me a position there, but I still felt that my allegiance was with Canada.

When we returned to Canada, I was given three options: the Toronto Buddhist Church, the Vancouver Buddhist Church, or establish a new Church in Calgary. I had a family of four children so I'm not sure why I chose to come to Calgary instead of going to an established temple. Perhaps because I knew that many of the young people from Buddhist families around the Lethbridge area were coming in to Calgary for higher education and careers and would need and want a Church at which to gather. I was told that there were about 50 Buddhist families in Calgary which I felt I could build on, but in reality there were much fewer potential members. Buddhist Churches of Canada agreed to support me financially for three years so my wife and I concentrated on visiting Japanese families throughout the city, and renting an Oddfellows Hall, started regular Sunday Services and a Japanese School. The turnout kept increasing and quite an active Church was in the making. Then, after a year, the Buddhist Churches of Canada informed me that they were short of funds and could no longer support me. Our congregation just was not big enough to support my family. It was a big problem.

I discussed the situation with many of the members and suggested I run some sort of business to bring income to the Church so that it could support a minister. Buying an apartment building and renting it was suggested, but real estate was depressed at the time. A member of the Church was already running a Japanese food store, so that couldn't be considered. Then, establishing a Japanese Restaurant came up. The idea was good, but nobody knew the first thing about running a restaurant. Providentially, a lady by the name of Mrs. Kaagaya came to Calgary, and in conversation, mentioned that her nephew was a Japanese chef and was managing a restaurant in Los Angeles, but was wanting to come back to Canada. I took this opportunity to meet with Keisuke Yokoyama who said he'd be willing to come to Calgary and establish a *teppanyaki*-style restaurant. With this backing, I held a meeting with Church members

and friends, who agreed and committed themselves to the venture by investing their money. I invested all our savings.

A big Japanese corporate investor came to us. They wanted to take part in our venture, offered to provide all the funding if we would run the restaurant. It seemed like too good an offer to turn down. Many, many meetings were held to discuss every detail, and at the last moment, this company sent us a letter regretting that they cannot participate in our venture: What a terrible situation! We went to everyone we knew, looking for new investors.

In desperation, I went to the Royal Bank downtown and was able to have a meeting with Bob Taylor, the Bank Manager. He knew that restaurants were risky businesses, he didn't know anything about Japanese restaurants, so you can imagine my joy, when he said he'd take a chance on us and loaned us 50 percent of our start up cost. I am still grateful to him. Mr. Yokoyama came from LA with three cooks and an assistant manager and Omi of Japan opened in Gulf Canada Square downtown.

Because of the novelty of the *teppanyaki*-style, Omi of Japan did very well, and the Church did not have to pay my salary. We served many well-known people such as Ralph Klein, then mayor of Calgary, Ed Whalen, sports announcer, who, once a year would bring in the Stampede Queen and Princesses.

The Cascade Hotel in Banff asked us to open a restaurant on their premises. That restaurant too, saw many celebrities and politicians from Japan. A Japanese TV entertainer asked us to sell the restaurant to him, which we did, but unfortunately, it closed within the year.

With the restaurant doing well, I started to concentrate on my work as a minister and started meditation and kendo classes at Mount Royal College. As my contribution to the citizens of Calgary, I made an agreement with the College to teach the meditation classes as long as they did not charge a fee to the people who attended. After 5 years, with several clashes with the administration regarding our agreement of fees, I resigned. At that time I was also teaching regular daytime credit course at the College on comparative eastern religions. I was back on my non-stop schedule of running the Church, the Restaurant, and teaching.

It was about this time that I started receiving a series of

nasty anonymous letters saying that religious ministers should not be actively running a business, threatening that they would expose me to the Japanese media. It was casting darkness on our family. To make matters worse, Nishi Hongwanji heard about what I was doing and sent a special envoy with a letter requesting my resignation as a minister of Nishi Hongwanji, to the BCC General Meeting being held in Toronto. I knew that something like this might happen so I was carrying my letter of resignation. But a wonderful thing happened. Before I could tender my resignation, one hundred percent of the delegates at the meeting stood up and defended me. They said I was not running the restaurant for my own gain, but to establish and maintain a Church in Calgary. The Nishi Hongwanji envoy must have reported what had happened, because the next thing I knew, they were asking me to become the Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of Canada. They made me the offer several times, but I declined.

While all this was going on, in 1981, through tremendous efforts by the Board of Directors and cooperation from all the members and generous donations from other churches, we were able to purchase an old Catholic Church building which has become The Calgary Buddhist Church. The members held a booth at the annual Chinook Charity Bazaar, The Chicken Teriyaki Dinner was the big fall event, and smaller fund raising functions and of course the generous donations helped to defray a good part of the cost of running our own Church. We were able to help out the Tibetan Buddhist group by allowing them to use our facility for several years until they were able to have a place of their own.

During the Big Recession of the early 1980s, Omi of Japan went into bankruptcy. The Calgary church, which by this time had become a vigorous and enthusiastic group, still could not sustain itself financially, so then, we opened a fast food chain, Edo of Japan, with another group of investors. Being very much aware of the "Us" and "Them" mentality of employers and employees in business in Canada, I thought it would help to use the fundamental Buddhist concept of interdependency in our business. I made sure that each employee was aware that "Because of you, Edo of Japan exists, but without Edo of Japan, you would not have work. So let us try to cooperate instead of putting each other down. The key words are cooperation and harmony." I promised that if they worked for us satisfactorily for three years and learned how to manage a kiosk, in turn,



I would guarantee a bank loan for them to establish their own Edo of Japan franchise. This worked well, and some of them still have one or more franchises and are doing well. I sponsored about 50 boat people from Thailand and Vietnamese, some of them with very sad stories to tell. They were very grateful to be able to make a good living here and many of them still remember to get in touch with my wife and me. It took an unbelievable amount of my time and energy, but with the help of friends, directors and employees it expanded into a good business with franchises throughout Canada, U. S, and even in Hawaii and Australia so Edo was able to help support the Church. The business was sold in 2005.

In 1998, I finally agreed to become the Bishop and had to dissociate myself from Edo of Japan. I went to the Bishop's office in Vancouver by myself for four years. During that time I expended my efforts to unify the Churches across Canada and bring them into closer communication with each other, even though one year I flew across Canada 50 times.

Up to this time, The Buddhist Churches of Canada had no pension plan for retiring ministers. The ministers' wages did not leave much room for savings, and although the minister himself would have income from CPP, the wives worked for the Church without income. So a minister

and his wife retired in poverty. I felt something had to be done about it. So I went to Japan and visited the Temples of all my friends and relatives, explaining the situation and trying to raise funds for the cause. In all, I received about a half a million dollars which is now invested as the foundation for a Minister's Retirement Pension Fund.

Soon after that, I felt unwell, was taken to hospital and found I needed triple by-pass surgery. I came through the surgery well and was back at work in a few months, probably much sooner that I should have been, so I'm told. However, I was able to complete my term as Bishop. I came back to Calgary and was the minister of the Calgary Buddhist Church until my retirement in 2008.

These are some of the highlights of the events that unfolded around me during my 84 years of life. When I think back, I owe much to the tremendous help, guidance, and support I received from various people. I am particularly grateful to my parents, spiritual teachers and close friends.

Of all the people who have influenced me, I must express my greatest gratitude and appreciation to my wife, Teruko. Without her loyalty and encouragement, I would not have been able to put my entire effort into all my endeavors. Thank you, Arigato. 🙏

Tashme Historical Project: An Update

by Howard Shimokura

QUESTION: “What was everyday life really like in the Tashme Internment Camp?”

ANSWER: “I have heard stories over the years but I don’t really know what went on.”

Well, let's find out.

With those words in mind, a group of volunteers at the Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre in Burnaby and the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre in Toronto established the Tashme Historical Project to integrate the considerable and diverse existing historical material, conduct research on new materials, and create a consolidated detailed description of the Tashme Internment Camp.

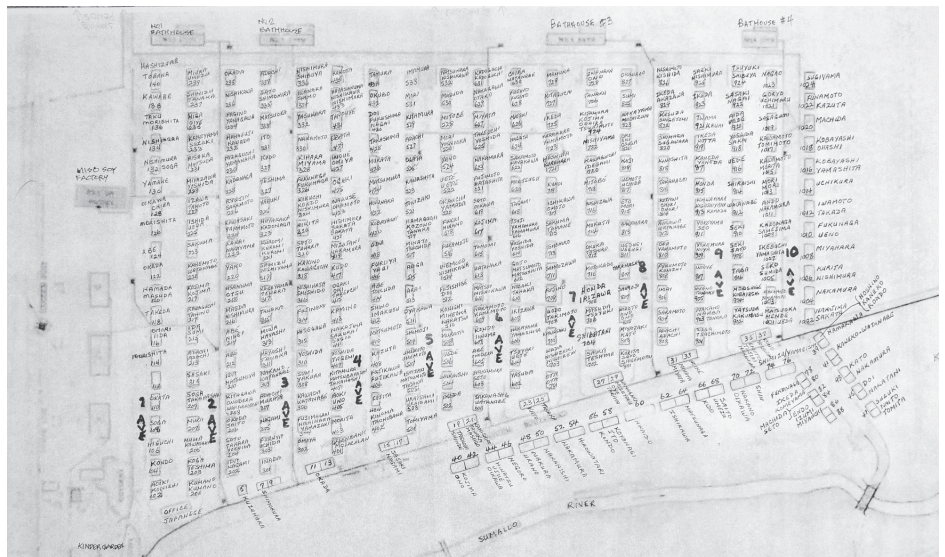
A specific audience for this project are the children, grandchildren, and descendents of those who lived in Tashme, who have heard about Tashme all their lives, and want to know more.

The general history of the evacuation of Canadian residents of Japanese ancestry, including those born in Canada, Japan, and elsewhere from the west coast of British Columbia, and their incarceration in internment camps in the interior of British Columbia from 1942 to 1946 is well known and has been described in many books, journal articles, television and radio stories, and school curricula. However, a detailed description of the Tashme Internment Camp and a description of “What life was like in Tashme” has not been done.

The goal of the project is to consolidate information from many sources, including archival material from Library and Archives Canada, universities, museums, material from published books and articles, and material from individuals including textual documents, photos, oral history interviews, and video materials, and to make

this information available to historians, academics, and members of the public.

To make the project materials accessible, the Tashme Internment Camp exhibit will be displayed on a dedicated website. We hope to make the website a living and evolving repository of Tashme Internment Camp historical material. Visitors to the website are invited to provide comments and make contributions to extend and enhance the exhibit. This interactive approach, we hope, will attract the interest and assistance of individuals and other groups and organizations in



conducting additional historical research into the Japanese Canadian internment experience.

What Has Been Accomplished So Far?

Since the project was launched over two years ago, a great deal of existing material has been collected, edited and organized. New material based on research into existing sources has also been written and edited.

Images courtesy of Howard Shimokura

The most challenging task has been the acquisition of materials held by Library and Archives Canada (LAC) in Ottawa, which holds all of the official records of the British Columbia Security Commission and the Japanese Division of the Department of Labour, entities that were created by the Government of Canada for the evacuation of the Japanese from BC's west coast and their maintenance in internment camps and elsewhere, from 1942 to 1946. Hundreds of pages of documents were located, photographed, and processed. A particular issue has been locating the relevant files in the vast LAC repository for which bibliographies, finding aids, and other search tools were found to be wanting. Most of the materials found were in the form of official reports. Highly desired maps, drawings and construction plans were not found. The only construction plan found was for the Tashme hospital. We could not locate any construction plans for other buildings, plot plans for the town layout nor drawings of other infrastructure. This is not to say that they do not exist; only that they could not be found.

UBC's Special Collections' Japanese Canadian Research Collection yielded several interesting files of original material. In particular, we have obtained interesting details of Tashme life from the Reverend Yoshio Ono Collection. He kept a daily diary over many years in which he recorded events of daily life in Hastings Park and Tashme. Other research is being done into fonds of Reverend McWilliams. Detailed records were found of the Shinwa-kai, the elected Japanese governing body in Tashme. It may take some time to curate these files as they are entirely in Japanese.

Back issues of the *New Canadian* have been a rich source of information on internment and Tashme, particularly details of interesting and relevant events of the day. Other sources include theses of students at University of Victoria and the University of Toronto, books on the internment experience by several authors, and journal articles from RCMP, Boy Scouts of Canada, etc.

All of these sources are referenced. Most of the LAC and other materials will be accessible from the website hopefully precluding visits to, for example, the LAC in Ottawa.

Approvals for 'Permission To Use' have been obtained or are being sought for all of the material that is being directly incorporated into our material.

An original work is the creation of a map of Tashme with the names of residents on each house and apartment. This map of names on houses is a snapshot of residents as of November 1942. Another original work is a compilation information on family structure, location prior to internment, and other details listed by family surname.

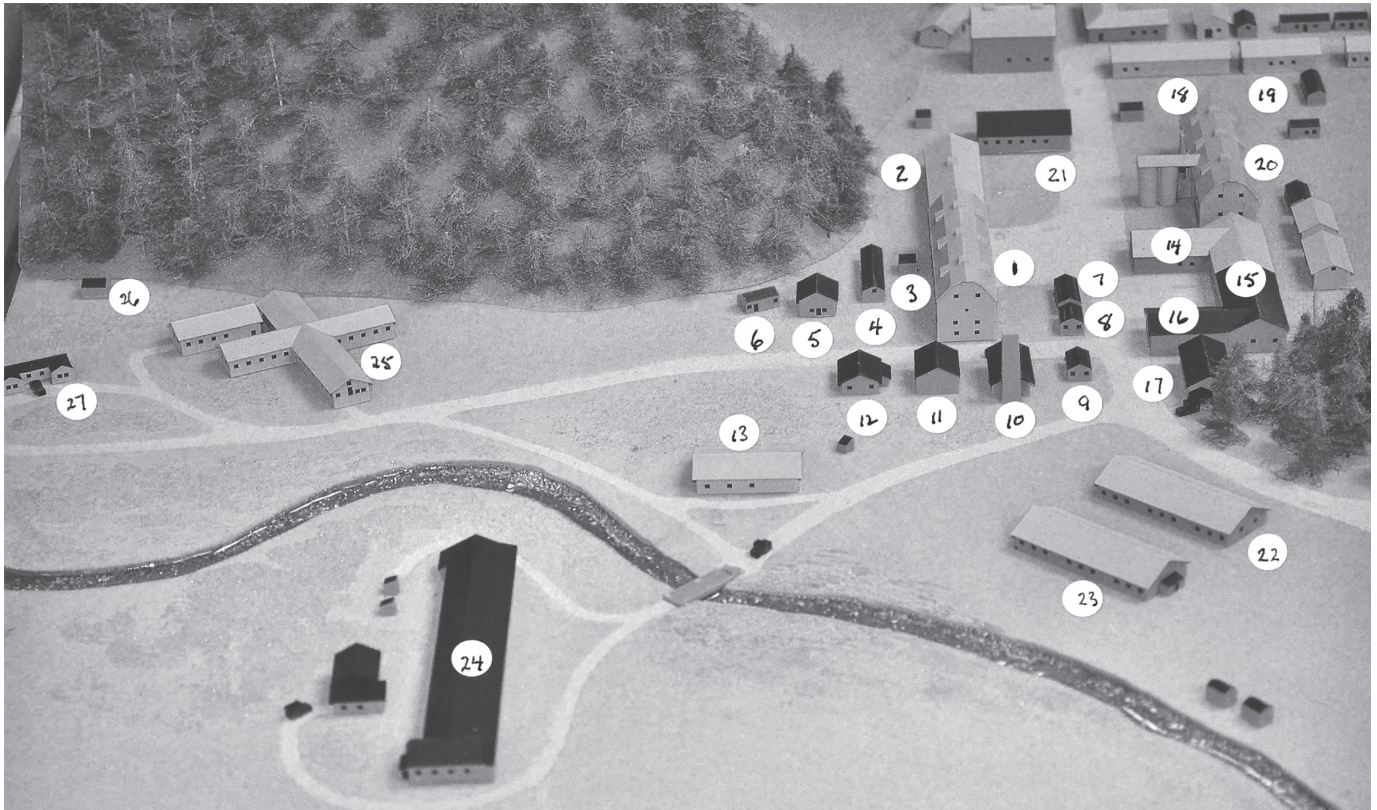
Details of the population profile as it changed over the internment period, as people migrated out of Tashme east of the Rockies as well as to other locations in BC, have been compiled.

The schooling of Tashme's young people is an interesting story. Initially the BC provincial government refused to provide for the education of the interned Japanese but rather took the position that the education of the interned Japanese was a federal responsibility. Neither the provincial nor the federal government accepted responsibility for high school students and so the churches stepped in and provided high school teachers but not the school classrooms so high schools used the elementary grade classrooms after elementary classes were over. Despite the hardships, the schools were highly successful as evidenced by the ease of integration of students into regular schools following the closing of the camp.

An extensive collection of photographs has been assembled to supplement the written material. Copies of the school annuals illuminate the activities of the young both in and out of school hours. Official records of school attendance, population, hospital statistics, employment, and other aspects of life are included.

From this material a view of the everyday life of Tashme residents has emerged. Residents adapted to the hardships of living in the hastily constructed village. Homes were more like shacks, built very simply with no insulation, no electricity, no running water or indoor toilets. The village had only the basic facilities for everyday living. The isolation of the location, in an uninhabited valley surrounded by high mountains, made for a life with very limited activities beyond work and school. Residents found ways to keep busy and create their own recreational outlets.

Despite the research, there is still much that remains sketchy. We have few details of many of the sports such as baseball, judo, basketball, and hockey. We have found information associated with some of the organized groups like the Tashme Youth Organization, the Boy and Cub Scouts, but details of unorganized social activities



are missing. So, we are seeking additional information, assistance in research, and volunteers to conduct oral history interviews and write family histories.

How Is The Material Organized?

We have created topic categories that encompass all aspects of Tashme as a living community. We have organized the information in hierarchies under each category topic that are natural, logical and amenable to navigation on a website. We have added a search function for website users who wish to quickly locate information on particular subjects.

The category topics are:

HOME PAGE including project description.

OVERVIEW including history with a timeline.

CAMP LAYOUT including a population profile, a names-on-houses map, physical description, town layout, and descriptions of nearby road camps.

CAMP ORGANIZATION including governance, education, employment, healthcare, and religion.

EVERYDAY LIFE including shopping, municipal services, mail, farms and gardens, recreation including sports, movies, social activities, and clubs

STORIES including individuals' stories, biographies, and oral history audio files.

ABOUT including acknowledgements, references, source materials, contact us.

Where To From Here?

Website construction is about to begin. Web pages will be populated and navigation tools incorporated. Once all of the information is entered, a period of testing will follow. Test driving the website for ease of navigation and searching will lead to changes and redesigns until our test users are satisfied that the website works well.

We hope to launch the website for the general public in the fall of 2015.

Conclusions

We have come a long way in two years. We hope that the website launch will be only the start of the next phase of the project, namely the online dissemination of the Tashme Historical Project as an evolving exhibit that will expand and grow. We hope that the website will inspire comments, feedback, and contributions from former residents, their families, and others. Our goal is the creation of a rich detailed picture of everyday life in the Tashme Internment Camp for the benefit of our community, present and future. 🌟

George Nakamura turns 88

by Raymond Nakamura

My dad turned 88 this year, so we had a big party for him. Turning 88 is perhaps not so rare as it once was, but it is still a pretty big deal, especially in Japanese culture, where it is called *beiju*, meaning "rice age." This refers to the way the characters for "eighty-eight" resemble the character for "rice," a symbol of goodness and abundance. We were delighted that his health is still good enough to enjoy the party. To commemorate the event, I wrote up this summary of his life so far, based on his own recollections.

Salt Spring Island, BC

George was born so long ago that the tale is shrouded in legend. His birthday certificate says June 7, 1927, but his mother always claimed he was born a month earlier, on May 7, during strawberry picking time. For a long time, our family celebrated two birthdays, until a doctor friend insisted that since he was born in a hospital, the paperwork must have been done properly.

You'd think his mother Taki would know such things, but maybe it was hard to keep track, because George was their seventh child. His Japanese name, Hichiro, means seventh kid in the Yamaguchi dialect, as though his parents were just keeping inventory. His English name, George, was the name of the King of England at the time, whose picture was probably in the rooms at the Lady Minto Hospital on Salt Spring Island, BC, where he was born.

George grew up on a rented 10-acre farm on Salt Spring, where his enterprising father Shinkichi made a living growing vegetables, doing laundry, and cutting wood, while his mother sold moonshine to seasonal labourers. George was left to play with his younger sister Haru in a sand pit, using a piece of wood with three nails hammered into it for a car.



George on his father's knee on Salt Spring Island, c. 1928
(Nakamura family collection).

His mostly white childhood friends had names like Hippo, Cow, and Spider. George was known as Jeep, after the magical cartoon character in Popeye. He loved cars that are now dinosaurs and learned all their names: Durant, Whippit, Nash, De Soto, Hudson.

An annual highlight of life on Salt Spring was the July 1st celebration on the Ganges fairgrounds, which included sheep-shearing contests and most importantly, races for the kids. George and other poor kids kept their eyes on the prizes of vouchers that could be cashed in at local stores for new sneakers and so on.

When George was around ten, he began working for a British family on Saturdays, removing rocks from their field for ten cents an hour. His favourite part was tea time at ten and three, with milk and cookies. He still enjoys tea at these times, even though he doesn't have to sweat for it anymore.

Around this time, his father became ill and went back to his ancestral home on Oshima Island in Yamaguchi prefecture, where he eventually succumbed to throat cancer in 1938.

Nisan (meaning older brother) as George called his eldest brother Bill, 17 years his senior, became head of the family.

Victoria, BC

About a year later, Nisan moved the family to Victoria where he had acquired a dry-cleaning business. George, his mother, and Haru, along with Nisan and his young wife and baby, started a new life in a two-bedroom apartment behind the shop.



George with wife Terry and offspring at his 88th Birthday party (photo: Vince Noguchi)

George went to Central Junior High. Every day after regular school, he went to Japanese school, run by the Japanese United Church minister Ogura and his wife. George had not studied much Japanese before and got stuck with the little kids.

In the summer, he picked vegetables on a farm outside of Victoria run by a Nikkei named Kakuno. George saved enough money to buy his own treasured Raleigh bicycle, which he rode with his pals after Sunday school.

In early December 1941, George and his family heard the news on the radio about Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor. George wasn't allowed to go to school and the Japanese schools were closed. Nisan sold his business and whatever else he could for whatever they could get. In April 1942, with 72-hours' notice, George, like the two hundred or so other Victoria Nikkei, packed up his one allotted suitcase and boarded the ship to Vancouver. He joined the hundreds of other Nikkei detained in buildings at Hastings Park. Somehow George was still able to take his bicycle.

Hastings Park, BC

George stayed with other boys between 13 and 18 in an exhibition building which still stands on the PNE

grounds. He slept in one of the rows of crude wooden bunks on mattresses stuffed with straw and covered with a coarse grey blanket. He ate in a mess hall and took a correspondence course under the supervision of Nisei university students. Other boys from Victoria hung out together and for him, it was a big adventure. Sometimes they would get a pass to walk down to the big Nikkei hub on Powell Street, which according to Google maps, would take over an hour.

Popoff, BC

In September 1942, the family took a long, smokey train ride on hard benches to Popoff, a camp near Slocan, in the interior of BC. They lived in one of the hundreds of shacks hastily built with green wood sidings. With only tar paper between the joists and planking, it was freezing in the winter. The 8 x 28' shack had three rooms. George, his mother, two sisters and brother slept in one room with three bunk beds. On the other side, slept Nisan's young family. And in the middle was a shared kitchen. It had a wood stove and electricity, but no plumbing, so they had to fetch pails of water for cooking and cleaning. They had an outhouse out the back.



Every morning, George walked a mile or so to the high school in Slokan city run by nuns from the Sisters of Assumption. The sisters were kind and George learned a lot. In camp, he became involved with a boys club and helped build a community centre where he did judo and other activities.

Chatham, Ontario

The war with Japan ended in 1945, but Nikkei still had their rights restricted. The federal government forced them choose between the rocks east of the Rockies and the hard places in Japan. George was relieved his family chose to stay in Canada, despite all that had happened. They moved across the country to work on a farm in Chatham, Ontario. The whole family was hired for the dirty, back-breaking work of harvesting sugar beets and other crops. George never felt clean, but at least they always had a big spread of food.

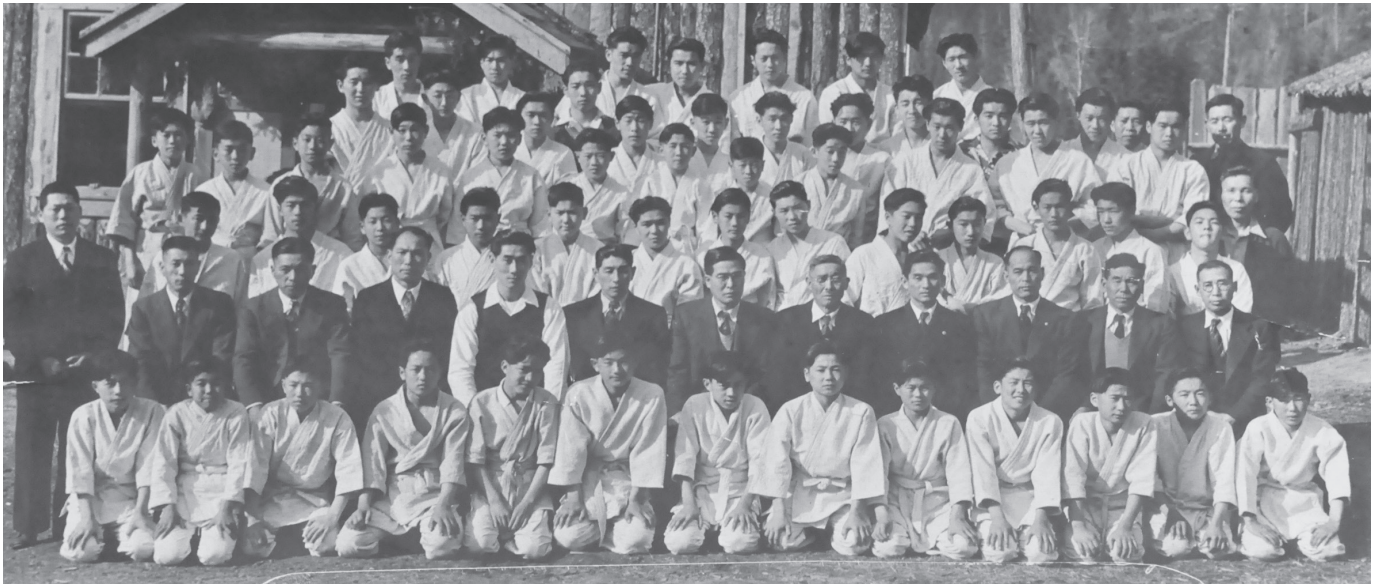
Toronto, Ontario

When restrictions to the movement of Nikkei were finally lifted in 1949, the family moved to Toronto, where Nisan found a house with three floors and nine rooms. Busy place. George found a job at Silverware Products where he worked his way into developing skills in engraving and mould-making.

The most important day of George's life was January 28, 1961, when he married Terry Yamashita. He had originally met Terry back in 1949, through his brother Gord, who was seeing Terry's pal Harumi Tomotsugu. At some point in that first go round, George and Terry had a falling out, but as Shakespeare said, "The course of true love never did run smooth." Eight years later, they met again by chance, at a funeral. They decided to try again and this time it took. This may be why they are always attending funerals. They splurged on a honeymoon in Hawaii and then scrambled to pay it off on their return.

Between 1962 and 1966, they had four boys. Busy times. George bought out his brother-in-law Kiichi to start his own company in acrylic embedments, which he called Clearmount Plastics. He rented a 600-square-foot space with three rooms in an alley with the auspicious name of Crystal Arts Square. Terry had the office skills to set up the bookkeeping, though at first their income was still from mould-making and engraving. When George actually got orders for his new business, he hired Jack Watanabe who lived at brother Bill's place, and also brother-in-law Asakichi Ashizawa, beginning a long tradition of exploiting the sweat of family members.

On the home front, George bought a partially-converted schoolbus that he finished up for camping. They enjoyed



George second from the right in the second last row in his judo *gi* in front of the community centre he helped build in Popoff, 1945
(Nakamura family collection)

visiting places like Sand Banks Park, later Gravenhurst, and even travelled as far as New Brunswick.

With the business growing, George found a new location at 13 Musgrave near Danforth and Victoria Park. At 3,000 square feet, it seemed huge, but with the Centennial coins minted in 1967, the souvenir retail business was good.

All this hard work was not without side effects. George developed ulcers, and in 1969, while Neil Armstrong was walking on the moon, suffered a gall bladder attack. Nowadays the operation is a much more elegant procedure, but in those days, he ended up with a scar like a zipper from the middle of his chest to below his belly button. But soon he was back to business, pleased his staff were able to carry on in his absence.

After seven years at Musgrave, with rumours of the complex being sold, George found another building at River St. And Queen. It took a lot of work to renovate, but fortunately George had good Nikkei construction connections and the transition went smoothly.

In 1980, George and our family went to Japan on a tour with the Toronto Japanese Language School. This was his first visit to Japan and the villages in Yamaguchi prefecture where his parents grew up. He visited relatives living and dead and saw the family crest in the ceiling of the local temple.

Following the Redress settlement in 1988 for government injustices committed during World War II against Canadians of Japanese descent, George and

Terry used their proceeds to take the family on a tour of England. A highlight for George was golfing at the legendary St. Andrews golf course in Scotland. He shot an 86 with his 15 handicap and had the score made into a plaque.

The following year, George was delighted to be able to sell off his business, after being in operation for twenty-five years. So at the ripe old age of 62, he retired and began a life of leisure with Terry. They began travelling in earnest, seeing many places throughout the world, including Egypt, China, and Australia. In recent years, his travel has been more of the armchair variety, but he still gets out to bowl and golf, and the old dog has been learning new tricks in the kitchen. At the party, he invited everyone to his 99th birthday party. 🍷



George and Terry in Hawaii on honeymoon in 1961
(Nakamura family collection)



Treasures from the Collection



Fishing Boat Disposition Ledger

Kishizo Kimura fonds

NNM 2010.4.4

by Hikari Rachmat

This fishing boat disposition ledger, a detailed record of the sale of Japanese Canadian fishing boats impounded shortly after Canada declared war on Japan on Dec 7, 1941, was created by Mr. Kishizo Kimura during his tenure on the Japanese Fishing Boat Disposition Committee (JFVDC) in 1942.

It contains detailed information on the number of Japanese-owned fishing vessels that were sold and requisitioned in 1942, the registration, dimensions, ownerships, and values of the vessels, whom they were sold to and for what price.

Kishizo Kimura was born on May 27, 1899 in the Village of Hikona, an incorporated part of the present city of Yanago, Tottori prefecture. In 1911, Mr. Kimura went to Kobe to board the Panama Maru of Osaka Shosen bound for Canada. He arrived in Victoria, British Columbia on June 29, 1911. After a few days of rest and sightseeing, he departed for Vancouver, British Columbia.

Mr. Kimura also served for a brief period in 1943 on the Advisory Committee for the disposition of Japanese-owned properties that were being held by the Custodian. Mr. Kimura served on these committees because he had a complicated "anti-racist" point of view and he believed that the most effective resistance was often cooperation. Unfortunately, he had a difficult time conveying his anti-racist message to younger Japanese Canadians.

In October of 1942, despite a special exemption

because of his work with the liquidation committees from the Order-in-Council that uprooted Japanese Canadians from the British Columbia Coast, Mr. Kimura and his family moved to the Alpine Lodge Community in the "self-supporting" camp at Christina Lake. This former resort location became the residences for approximately 100 Japanese Canadians who were able to have some measure of control over their living conditions than those who were sent to internment or work camps.

Most of the men in the community were employed at Sandner Brothers Sawmill and its logging operations at the south end of Christina Lake. Mr. Kimura, following his tenure with the Custodian, became the book-keeper and later general foreman at Sandner Brothers Sawmill. Mr. Kimura continued to work at the sawmill until 1961 when he retired and moved to Vancouver.

As a part of the Community Records and Directories cluster of the Landscapes of Injustice Research Project, I am digitizing the pages contained in the fishing boat disposition ledger and recording all the valuable information contained within them. This ledger is our most comprehensive piece of data that reflects to whom the fishing boats of Japanese Canadians were sold and at what price. This information is important because fishing was one of the largest industries in which Japanese Canadians were employed before their internment. ☺

