# Political NIKKEI NIKKEI National museum & cultural centre IMAGES



FRANK KAMIYA & GRACE EIKO THOMPSON AT OPENING OF NATIONAL NIKKEI HERITAGE CENTRE IN 2000



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Treasures from the Collection

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Roy Sumi was always very thoughtful in his approach to designing a garden, considering the subtleties of the location, proximity to natural surroundings and to urban structures. He incorporated natural elements wherever he could. He considered the soil type, climate, and a balancing of the natural and social aspects of the garden. He possessed an encyclopedic knowledge of garden designs in Japan that he used in his creations. He created designs that were pleasing from all directions, levels and angles, and used indigenous plants in keeping with the Kansai style.

see page 16



### **Welcome to Nikkei Images**



Nikkei Images is a tri-annual publication produced by the Nikkei National Museum that focuses on Nikkei history and culture with articles in keeping with our mission to honour, preserve, and share Japanese Canadian history

and culture for a better Canada. We invite you to tell us your *Nikkei* story. We accept submissions of memoirs, short stories, or short academic papers relating to Japanese Canadian history, culture, and arts. Our values include inter-generational leadership, community, and professionalism; to respect and honour Japanese heritage: to nurture, build, and honour our commitment to community involvement; to embrace humility and compassion and to encourage innovation and inclusiveness.

Nikkei Images is edited by a volunteer committee who has been dedicated to the preservation and sharing of Nikkei stories since 1996. Submissions are juried by the editorial committee. Articles must be between 500 - 3000 words maximum and we highly recommend submitting relevant high resolution photographs with proper photo credits along with your finished work. For our publishing guidelines, please send a brief description or summary of the theme and topic of your proposed article to Ireid@nikkeiplace.org. Our publishing agreement can be found online at centre.nikkeiplace.org/nikkei-images



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## Celebrating Over Thirty Years



The Nikkei National Museum, as part of the Nikkei Centre family, has a mission to honour, preserve, and share Japanese Canadian history and culture for a better Canada. Although only fifteen years in its current location, the museum's legacy is only possible through the dedication of its foundational members who in the early 1980's formed the Japanese Canadian Historical Preservation Committee and had the foresight to collect as many stories as possible from

the issei elders who were aging, before they passed on.

In 2010, the museum partnered with Simon Fraser University to digitize our collection and the interviews are now available to hear from the comfort of your computer chair. There are currently over 300 digitized interviews, with more to come. The museum would especially like to thank Dr Andrea Geiger for all the work she has done to make this project happen. You can listen to the Nikkei National Museum's Oral History Collection online at centre.nikkeiplace. org/oral-history-collection/

Frank Kamiya, who was part of the original Japanese Canadian History Preservation Committee, is a current Nikkei Centre board member, member of the NNMCC Auxiliary Committee, and is part of the Nikkei Images editorial team. His story on page 5 looks back at all of the iterations of the museum up to today. What began with 300 stories now includes 20,000+ photographs and digital images, 450+ oral history recordings, 25+ meters of archival and textural materials and 2000+ artifacts. Every month, over 1000 people visit the museum and over 15,000 access our online resources and web site. It is with immense gratitude that we honour everyone who has been a part of building the Nikkei National Museum. Thank you! 🌞

Sherri Kajiwara Director-Curator Nikkei National Museum

## Preserving our Japanese Canadian History & Heritage

by Frank Kamiya

ne Centennial of 1977 celebrating the arrival of Manzo Nagano, the first Japanese to land in Canada, inspired many younger *nisei* to start learning about their history and heritage. In the early 1980s Frank Hanano formed the Japanese Cana-

dian History Preservation Committee (JCH-PC) as a sub-committee of the Greater Vancouver Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association (GVJCCA). This committee included Suni Arinobu, Tsuneharu Gonnami, Tatsuo Kage, Frank Hanano, Yuko Shibata, Junji Uchimura and myself, Frank Kamiya. This committee realized the importance



Susi & Shane at first JC Archives office.

of preserving the history of our elders who were aging and passing on. Over the next few years, the committee recruited dedicated volunteers who recorded some 50 interviews that were later forwarded to the UBC Special Collections for safekeeping, subsequently copied and given to the Japanese Canadian National Museum (JCNM). They also collected many archival documents and photographs that we heard were being discarded by some families. This important work was the foundation for the collections of the JCNM.

From 1984 to 1987 Dan Tokawa, and I after him, continued the work of the JCHPC by hiring summer students through grants and recruiting dedicated volunteers who conducted and transcribed many more interviews. With limited funds, the committee purchased

Photos: Frank Kamiya collection

tape recorders, a transcriber, a 35-mm camera, a filing cabinet, and some archival supplies. Gradually, through fundraising, and with some financial assistance from the Japanese Canadian Redress Committee and GVJCCA, the committee was able to upgrade the equipment

> that included a used professional grade tape recorder, fireproof storage cabinet, and hire part-time staff and summer students through grants.

In 1993 the JCHPC officially became the Japanese Canadian Archives (JCA). With limited secure storage space the committee was only able to

accept archival material and continued to record interviews. Shane Foster who took several archival courses was hired as a part-time archivist in the early 1990s to maintain the Archives. Lana Panko, with a museum background, provided essential guidance on the operations. By 1994, the JCA had over 1000 historic photographs and 234 oral history recordings in both Japanese and English.

On June 22 1995 with endorsement from the National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC) at their AGM in Kamloops in 1994, the Japanese Canadian National Museum and Archives Society (JCNMAS) was federally incorporated. With substantial funds provided by the Japanese Canadian Redress Foundation, the Society hired qualified staff: including an executive









director Dr. Michael Wilson, curator of collections Susan Michi Sirovyak, curator of programs Naomi Sawada, Shane Foster continued as archivist, and Minnie Hattori as part-time office assistant. Suzi Nitta Petersen was our General Secretary, Ray Ota was our treasurer who ensured that our finances were in order, and I was the founding president.

The purpose of the JCNMAS was "to collect, preserve, research, exhibit, and interpret historical artifacts and archival material covering the history and culture of Japanese Canadians from the 1880s through World War II to the present day." The first office of the JCNMA was a 190 sq. ft. space on the second floor of the GVJCCA office at 511 E. Broadway, Vancouver. Some of the furniture and equipment were donated or built by volunteers. We still use some of these desks and filing cabinets today.

In January 1996 the first issue of our quarterly journal *NIKKEI IMAGES* was published, edited by Michael Wilson. It is now published three times a year and is also available on-line. A new logo was designed by Gerry Foster, son-in-law of director Dr. Wesley Fujiwara, using the traditional Japanese mon motif in a simple and pleasing way with maple leaves, the symbol of Canada. In 1999 the JCNMA officially changed its name to Japanese Canadian National Museum (JCNM) as it

was felt that "Archives" was redundant.

Some of the museum events and projects that the early JCNM was involved with include the following:

- Since the mid-1980s, provided historical displays and conducted walking tours at the annual Powell Street Festival. Some of the volunteers and former directors still conduct tours to this day.
- Researched and produced for sale the Powell Street area map '-1941'.
- In 1989, worked with the Consulate of Japan on their Vancouver Centennial Joint Photo Display.
- Participated in the Pan American Nikkei Association (PANA) Conference in Vancouver (1993) and Peru (1996) with a photo display and members of panelists.
- Sponsored thirteen nikkei from across Canada to attend the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) International Nikkei Symposium in Los Angeles in 1994 with a historical photo display and also participated as panelists.
- Partnered with JANM's International Nikkei Research project.
- Organized many successful BC Internment Camp bus tours that attracted people from across Canada,

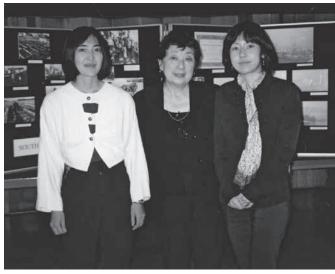


Michael Wilson & Shane Foster at 511 West Broadway office of JCNM from 1995-2000. The office was located on the second floor of the JCCA building.

the USA, and Japan.

 Initiated fundraising events including the Spring Manure and Plant Sale, Things Japanese Sale, Powell Street Festival Food booth and the traditional Mochitsuki at the end of the year. Many present members of the NNMCC Auxiliary were former museum members who have continued some of these fundraising events.

In the spring of 2000 after many years of volunteer initiatives the JCNM moved into a 2870 square foot space in the newly constructed 34,000 sq. ft. NNHC building. After many years in cramped quarters, we were thrilled to have an 1140 sq. ft. exhibition hall, a 530 sq. ft. environmentally controlled archival storage with preparation area, museum offices, a research/resource centre, and a museum shop where Suzi Petersen took on the task of establishing and managing the shop that provided much needed revenue. Grace Eiko Thomson, who began as Executive Director in 1999 secured funds for the inaugural exhibition that she curated and



Daien Ide Archivist, Grace Eiko Thompson Director, & Chisato, 2001



David Yamaura & Ray Ota at one of the displays offered by the JCNM in 1996. Both were directors and long-time supporters of the JCNM.

titled Reshaping Memory, Owning History: Through the Lens of Japanese Canadian Redress. The exhibition successfully toured Canada and an abridged version is currently used in education programs. The museum was able to flourish in the new premises with exciting exhibits and a growing collection. In addition, several educational programs were developed, including the Taiken Program and the Journeys Outreach kits. To date, over 14,000 students have learned about the history of internment through the museum's educational programs.

In 2002 Stan Fukawa was elected as the second President, and in June of that year the membership approved the merger of the JCNM with the National Nikkei Heritage Centre Society. This was a critical event for both organizations as both societies had similar missions and goals and cooperation was seen as more fruitful than competition. The merger agreement was







JCNM & Archives Board of Directors 1999 – Brian Negoro, Stan Fukawa, Yosh Kariatsumari, Roy Hamaguchi, Elmer Morishita, Craig Natsuhara, Frank Kamiya, David Yamaura, Marilyn Sakiyama, Midge Ayukawa, Suni Arinobu.

formally signed in May 2003 to create the new society, as the National Nikkei Museum and Heritage Centre (NNMHC). Since that time the museum has been actively involved in many important community and historical events. The 2002 Nikkei Week celebrations highlighted both the 125th anniversary of the arrival of the first Japanese immigrant to Canada, Manzo Nagano, and the centennial of the fight for citizenship rights for Canadians of Asian origin taken to the Privy Council by Tomekichi Homma.

In 2003, Jari Osborne presented the world premiere of *Sleeping Tigers*, an NFB film about the Vancouver Asahi baseball team at the NNMHC Events Hall in recognition of the help that was given to her by the JCNM. In October 2005, the JCNM opened the exhibition *Leveling the Playing Field: Legacy of the Asahi Baseball Team*, curated by Grace Eiko Thomson. This exhibit also traveled across Canada.

In 2006, the SUIAN MARU Centennial project and celebration introduced the fascinating story of the 1906 voyage of the SUIAN MARU, a three-masted schooner that transported 84 people from Miyagi Prefecture to the BC coast. It was part of Jinzaburo Oikawa's dream of establishing a colony of people to

turn British Columbia's then scrap fish, the chum salmon and salmon roe, into valuable trade commodities in Japan as salted salmon and salted roe. Through the involvement of people in the *nikkei* community with contacts with the Oikawa family, the museum was able to receive the family's historic collection of artifacts including Jinzaburo's hand-written autobiography, clothing, and many photographs. The SUIAN MARU Centennial program attracted visitors from Japan and descendents from across Canada and the U.S. Almost 400 guests gathered in the Nikkei Centre Events Hall for the sold-out dinner. The museum staff created a SUIAN MARU exhibit from artifacts received shortly before the celebratory event that was received with great appreciation.

In July 2009 the NNMHC hired Beth Carter as Director-Curator. She was previously Curator of Indigenous Studies with the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, Alberta. Beth brought to the museum her expertise in managing a major museum and her many contacts in her field to advocate for grants and collaborative ventures across Canada. The NNMHC has worked closely with the Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre in New

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## The Last Living Asahi: Kaye Kaminishi and His Life in Baseball

by Howard Shimokura

celebrated about the resurrection of the remarkable story of the Vancouver Asahi baseball team of 1914-1941. This retelling of the Asahi story, beginning with the publication of Pat Adachi's book, Asahi: A Legend in Baseball, in 1992, was followed by the release of Jari Osborne's National Film Board film Sleeping Tigers: The Asahi Baseball Story in 2003, the induction of the Asahi baseball team into Canada's Baseball Hall of Fame in 2003, and most recently, the release of the Japanese film production Vancouver Asahi in 2014.

Now, in 2015, Kaye Kaminishi of Kamloops, the last man still living who played for the famed Asahi before it was disbanded in 1941, remembers how he started as one of the rookies in 1939 at the age of 17. He played for two seasons until Pearl Harbor forced the Asahi to disband and cut short his baseball career as an Asahi.

"When I got my uniform, I couldn't sleep all night," he says. "I was so proud and so happy. The team I dreamed to get into was the Asahi." In those days, all the young kids dreamed about playing for the Asahi baseball club. Most of the other Asahi players were older, between 25 and 30, and some had been there for seven or eight years. In Kaminishi's two seasons with the Asahi, they won the Pacific Northwest championship each year.

But why baseball? Why would kids of Japanese ancestry be drawn to baseball in Vancouver in the 1930s? "The Vancouver Japanese community was crazy about baseball," says Kaye. The players were revered in the community because the team was able to compete and win in a time when the discrimination against the Japanese was intense. The success of the team Photos: Nikkei National Museum archive.



First Pitch at Shin Asahi Exhibition Game, October 2014.

demonstrated that skill combined with sportsmanship and fair play could win over the Caucasian bias against the Japanese, at least on the baseball field.

Born in Vancouver on January 11, 1922, Kaye learned his baseball basics as a youngster in Japan where he was sent to attend school, a custom common to many Canadian-born nisei. He returned to Canada in 1933 at the age of eleven after his father, a business man and major investor in the Royston Lumber Company on Vancouver Island, passed away suddenly. On his return, he adapted quickly to life in Canada: learning English, attending public school as well as Japanese Language School after public school, and still having time to play sports. He did well in school and he loved sports.

Kaye started playing baseball in the Vancouver Buddhist Church League at the age of 13. He says he played there for "two or three years" and then "went up to the Japanese League" for another "two or three years". He loved to see the Asahi play and made it a point to go to every game. This was very easy to do, since he lived right across the street from Powell Grounds in the Dunlevy rooming house that his mother owned and operated.

He remembers being scouted by the Asahi and joining the team as a rookie in the 1939 season when he was 17, while he was still attending King Edward High School Asked why he, out of the many other voung players in community was asked to join the team, he says it was because of his skills in fielding and bunting, prime attributes of the Asahi's winning ways.

As a youngster, Kaye also played badminton, table tennis, roller hockey, and lacrosse, "but baseball was my sport" he says, and he was always a third baseman. "Somehow, I always played third base, even when I was a kid," he says. "Even in the Buddhist Church League, I played third base."

Powell Grounds, the home field of the Asahi that is now Oppenheimer Park, was the heart of Powell-gai, a thriving, bustling community where the Japanese ate, slept, shopped, socialized, and lived. The entire community came to watch the Asahi play. On game days, crowds of fans overflowed the bleachers and stood surrounding the playing field on four sides. And the team had a fair share of Caucasian fans that loved the way the Asahi played and came out to cheer them

The Asahi played a style of baseball that was called "brain ball". Today, it would be called "little ball". The Asahi players were smaller in stature than virtually all of their opponents, so the home run wasn't part of their arsenal. Instead, the team relied on getting on base with walks or with bunts, then advancing by stealing bases.

Often, the team would win with few hits but superb fielding and base running. A former player said one batter was so exact that "he could bunt with a chopstick wherever he wanted to". Learning to read, or hear, and smartly follow the signals from the coaches was critical.

The Asahi had an advantage. Their coaches gave their audible signals in Japanese.

The Asahi's cohesive effort and emphasis on teamwork resonated with an important Japanese concept of cooperation

and group philosophy.

"You couldn't hit the ball through the infield past them, they were just like cats onto it," Al Moser, an opposing pitcher with the Downtown Patricias, said in the NFB film 'Sleeping Tigers: The Asahi Baseball Story'. Moser, six-foot two, towered over the Asahi, who averaged about five-foot-two. "If they did bunt, they were fast as heck.

They were thieves," he said, admiringly. "They'd win a game 3-1 and never have one hit."

Kaye remembers, "Powell Grounds was so rough that sometimes you didn't know which way the ball would bounce. The coach told us "If you can't stop it with your glove, you've got to stop it with your chest". The team intensively practiced the bunt and the squeeze play. Key to the bunt was to make sure to touch the ball with the bat every time.

As one of the youngest Asahi players, Kaye looked up to the other Asahi players as mentors and coaches. He vividly recalls his first success at bat, a misjudged outfield left field fly that went awry when he stumbled between first and second and ended up on second base when he might have made it home. As a third baseman, he was sometimes called the 'vacuum cleaner' as he scooped up the ball for throws to first base. He often joined the veterans in the post-game ritual: a hot bath

Photo: Kaye with plague in Oppenheimer Park

Kaye remembers, "Powell Grounds was so rough that sometimes you didn't know which way the ball would bounce. The coach told us "If you can't stop it with your glove, you've got to stop it with your chest". The team intensively practiced the bunt and the squeeze play. Key to the bunt was to make sure to touch the ball with the bat every time.

in a local public bath followed by a steak dinner in a nearby Japanese restaurant.

For two years, Kaye was an Asahi. He also participated with the team in the social life of Powell-gai and exhibition games in places like Chemainis, Cumberland, Mission, and Woodfibre. The team thrived as a source of community pride in the era of discrimination against the Japanese. The Japanese Canadian boys and men of the Asahi baseball club were worshipped as gods. Like the Yankees, theirs was a winning dynasty with its own signature style and strategy. Any athlete skilled enough to wear the emblematic 'A' of the red and white jersey earned himself a coveted position that came with respect, admiration, and a history of athletic prestige dating back to 1914. In the 1930s the Asahi won the Terminal League three years running and topped the Pacific Northwest League five years in a row from 1937 to 1941.

As the only ethnic, non-Caucasian team to play at a near professional level in several leagues in the Pacific Northwest, the Asahi built a forward-thinking player recruitment program based on teams at mill sites along the B.C. coast. The Asahi also formed a boys' development program that could have competed in Little League if that had been possible.

This all came to an abrupt end with the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The Asahi played their last game in Vancouver on Sept. 18, 1941. In 1942, the evacuation order came down, the players were dispersed among the many internment camps and the story of the Asahi soon faded away. Although baseball remained a popular sport and pastime in the camps, the Asahi were never again to play as team.

Kaye's baseball career did not just end with the disbanding of the Vancouver Asahi. Kaye and his mother were evacuated to East Lillooet, one of the first self-supporting internment camps. Internees in self-supporting camps received no government support. For the first year, life was very hard, as the internees had to

build their own homes and households in very primitive camp conditions. Camp internees were restricted from entering the town of Lillooet, which was across the Fraser River. The bridge across the river was the only link to Lillooet and the internees required a permit to cross the bridge.

Soon after he arrived in the East Lillooet internment camp, Kaye organized a softball team among the residents of the camp and was looking for more opportunities to play. The RCMP detachment in Lillooet was responsible for ensuring that the regulations of the BC Security Commission were upheld. RCMP officers often visited the internment camp to check on camp conditions. On one of these visits, Kaye approached an officer to propose that the East Lillooet softball team play a Lillooet team in an exhibition match. The officer thought that this was a good idea and gladly accepted the challenge.

Exhibition games between the Japanese and a team in Lillooet opened up interactions between the two distinct communities. The merchants in Lillooet were excited by the new opportunities that the Japanese afforded. Until then, Lillooet was a dying community. The Japanese had cash to spend. So the game of baseball created a bridge to a new social and economic relationship that benefitted everyone.

At the end of the war and internment, at age 25, Kaye was anxious to get on with his life and continue playing baseball. He moved to Kamloops where he found employment and a church baseball team to play for. He was the only Japanese person on the team. He played third base in Kamloops for several years, first with the Kamloops CYO in the Interior League, then the Elks in the Okanagan Valley League. After his playing days ended in 1954, he coached young players in Little League, then retired from baseball entirely. For Kaye, baseball took a backseat to life and raising a family.

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The first Japanese Canadian Archives office at 348 Powell Street, 1994.



Dick Nakamura; Reiko Tagami, archivist; Grace Eiko Thompson, Executive Director; Tony Tamayose at the JCNM 1999.

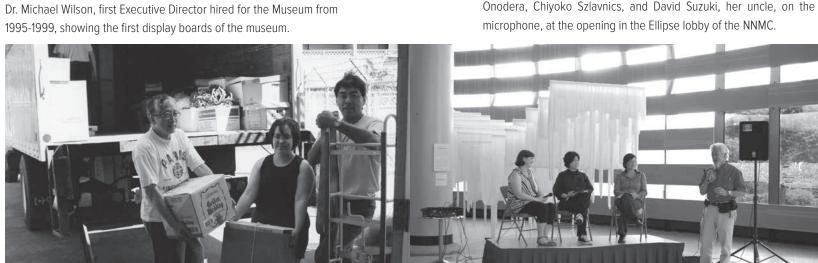
Photos: Frank Kamiya collection and Nikkei National Museum archive



International Nikkei Symposium, November, 1994 in LA. Audrey Kobayshi, Wes Fujiwara, Norm Tsuyuki, Naomi Kamiya, Shoha and Misa.



1995-1999, showing the first display boards of the museum.



Moving into the new building on Southoaks Crescent, 2000. Reiko Tagami, archivist and Elmer Morishita.



Unearthed From the Silence exhibit in 2002, Craig Natsuhara is one of the viewers. Craig was on the early "Vision to Reality" team for the Centre.



Mochizuki 2002 – Mits Hayashi, Frank & Naomi Kamiya, David & Bev Yamaura, Stan Fukawa, loyal supporters and board members of the JCNM.



## Japanese Canadian National Museum

JCNM logo adopted 1999-2012, after which the museum was rebranded to Nikkei National Museum.

Tributaries: Reflections of Aiko Suzuki exhibit. Beth Carter, Midi Onodera, Chiyoko Szlavnics, and David Suzuki, her uncle, on the

Yo-in Reverberation exhibit curated by Sherri Kajiwara 2012. Beth Carter, Yoshiko Karasawa, and Sherri Kajiwara at the opening in the gallery.







### The Last Living Asahi continued

As Kaye tells it, the resurrection of the Asahi story began with the 1992 publication of Pat Adachi's excellent book *Asahi: A Legend in Baseball*, which was a tribute to the team and its people: the founders, players,

coaches and managers. The Asahi story, a tribute to overcoming adversity in the face of the racial and economic discrimination that an ethnic group encountered on a daily basis at the time, captured the imagination of many. Jari Osborne, a National Film Board film maker, produced the movie Tigers: Sleeping The Asahi Baseball Story, which premiered at the Nikkei National Museum and Cultural Centre in 2003. A nomination to Canada's Baseball Hall of Fame spearheaded by a group in Toronto, including Pat Adachi, led

to the team's induction into the Hall of

Fame in 2003. Grace Eiko Thomson curated the 2005 NNMCC exhibit called *Leveling the Playing Field: Legacy of Vancouver's Asahi Baseball Team*, an exhibit that also toured Canada. The team was inducted into the BC Sports Hall of Fame in 2005. Journalists in Japan took a strong interest in the story and wrote newspaper and magazine articles as well as books in Japanese for an audience who had little or no knowledge about the Asahi, but who were captivated by the story of overcoming adversity. In 2014, a Japanese film studio released the movie *Vancouver Asahi*, a fictionalized period drama based on the Asahi story. This film premiered at the 2014 Vancouver International Film Festival and won its People's Choice award.

While the resurrection of the Asahi story was happening in Canada, Kaye recalls a similar story about captivating audiences in Japan. In the summer of 1992, shortly after Pat Adachi published her book, Kaye and his wife were on a Gray Line tour bus touring Vancouver,

showing relatives from Japan the sights of Vancouver. When the bus passed Oppenheimer Park, Kaye told his relatives that the Asahi played baseball on that field.

Another tourist from Japan on the bus overheard

the conversation and very excitedly approached Kaye to find out more.

Mr. Norio Goto, who was a media announcer with the professional Japanese baseball team Chumichi Nagoya Dragons, was that tourist. Mr. Goto was so enthralled by the Asahi story that he returned to Japan to organize a project to tell the Asahi story to the Japanese audience. Two years later he and a five-person film crew returned to Canada to research the history of the Asahi baseball team and

film interviews with Kaye, other former Asahi players, and Pat Adachi.

The resulting film, which described the Asahi in the context of the history of the Japanese in Canada,

was shown in prime time to a wide Japanese audience. Mr. Goto also wrote a book, *The Vancouver Asahi Monogatari* (story), which was published in 2010. In 2014, a manga series of five issues called *The Vancouver Asahi Story* was published. Kaye and Mr. Goto remain strong friends to this day.

Several baseball teams playing today have honoured the Asahi as a role model for overcoming racial and economic discrimination and a metaphor for living in today's diverse society. On May 15, 2002, the Asahi and four of its original players were honoured before a Blue Jays game at Toronto's Skydome. On more than one occasion, most recently on August 10, 2015, the Vancouver Canadians have honoured the team and asked Kaye to throw the ceremonial first pitch at Nat

Photo: Flo and Kaye Kaminishi at induction into the Kamloops Sports Hall of Fame, April 2011.

Bailey Stadium in Vancouver where a large wall mural of the Asahi is on display. Signage honouring the team is also on display at Oppenheimer Park.

The formation of the Canadian Nikkei Youth Baseball Club is another legacy inspired by the Asahi baseball story. Consisting of 200 members and 80 players making up five *shin* (new) Asahi teams, in five age categories from age nine to adult, they play Asahistyle baseball in exhibition and tournament play in the greater Vancouver area every summer. As an honourary founding member of the club, Kaye is an inspiration to the young players who come from diverse backgrounds and have a common interest: playing baseball.

These events have brought the Asahi back to life and Kaye could not be more delighted.

Kaye, as the last living Asahi team member, continues to be asked for interviews. He is humbled by all the attention. "This all happened over 70 years ago. I was just a kid who was good enough to be selected to play for the Asahi. I think I was the youngest on the team, and I played for only two seasons. My career with the Asahi was over before I was 20," he says, with more than a touch of bewilderment in his voice.

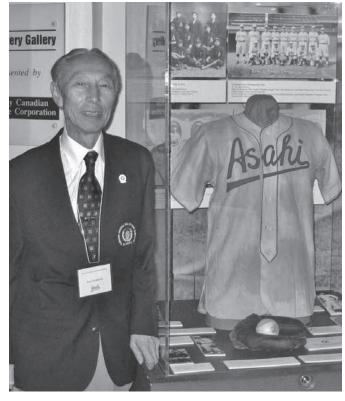
Kaye often reflects on his good fortune to have been chosen to play for the Asahi and for his good health that has enabled him to participate in the many events honouring the team since the publication of Pat Adachi's book. He says that he is often overcome by an overwhelming sense of the pride that he imagines his parents, the ancestors of the Asahi players and the entire Japanese community must be feeling now. He is also saddened that his parents and the parents of Asahi players are not able to share in the limelight of the Asahi story's retelling.

Until a few years ago, Kaye played competitive level badminton. He participated in the BC Senior Games for more than 20 years. With his partner Herb Pendell from Salmon Arm, BC, they captured first place in the men's doubles category for 10 consecutive years from 1971 to 1980. In 1995, he and his partner won second place in men's doubles at the All American Senior Games tournament in San Antonio Texas. In a recent interview about his participation in the BC Games he said, "I've

got about 25 medals," pointing to a display on a wall in his home in Kamloops. "I used to play singles, doubles, and mixed doubles. Now I just play men's doubles. I'm taking it easy."

"Sports has been really good to me." 🦫

"This all happened over 70 years ago. I was just a kid who was good enough to be selected to play for the Asahi. I think I was the youngest on the team, and I played for only two seasons. My career with the Asahi was over before I was 20," he says, with more than a touch of bewilderment in his voice.



Kaye donated his uniform to Nikkei National Museum in April 2005.





## Roy Tomomichi Sumi: Renowned Designer and Architect of Japanese Gardens

by Emiko Sumi and Howard Shimokura

This story describes the life and work of Mr. Roy Tomomichi Sumi, a renowned designer and creator

of many outstanding Japanese gardens in Western Canada. It was first drafted by one of Mr. Sumi's children, Emiko Sumi, in 2007, and has been edited and updated. Mr. Sumi has been honoured many times for his work, and his creations are cited in references on Japanese gardens in Canada.

Roy Tomomichi Sumi was born on October 20 1908, the second son of Takeyoshi and Yoshino Sasaki in Tomimasu, Yonago-shi, Tottori-ken, Japan. The family lived in Osaka where Roy worked for a period as an elevator operator in a department store. He came to Canada in July 20 1925 at 17 years of age, arriving at the port of Victoria aboard the AFRICA MARU.

He left behind his parents (Takeyoshi Nagami Sasaki and Yoshino Sumi) and his older brother Yasuhiro, younger brother Shigetomi, and sisters Kikuko, Setsuko, and Utako. Yasuhiro would later come to Canada with his wife Toshihiko and youngest child Keiko in 1963.

Four years after Roy arrived in Canada in July 1925, he returned to Japan to study gardening. He studied the Japanese art of landscaping and of *bonsai* in the traditional Japanese way at the Ikeda Institute in Kyoto Japan, graduating at the top of his class. When he arrived back in Canada in 1933, because of the Depression, he could not practice his art. Instead, he worked as a gardener, looking after established gardens of homeowners in Vancouver. He also found work as a carpenter in the off season.

He married Sakae Yakura (daughter of Nobutaro Yakura and Tsui Kadowaki) on December 16 1931 in Tottori-ken

Japan. In Vancouver they lived in the building that housed the Sumi store at 1642 W 2nd Avenue and, for a time, in West

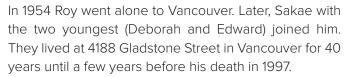
Vancouver at 509 Keith Road near the Capilano River and Taylor Way. Two of their children, Kathleen Yoshiko and Emiko, were born in Vancouver.

In 1942, following the mass evacuation of the Japanese from BC's west coast, the family was interned for at time in Tashme, a Japanese Canadian internment camp near Hope where they lived until they moved to Rosebery and New Denver

prior to the end of the war. Roy spent time at the Blue River road camp, where he and scores of other able-bodied Japanese Canadian males over 18 built the highway between Kamloops and Jasper. Their third child, Deborah Allison, was born in Tashme.

During the summer of 1946, the family moved to Farnham Quebec, where they lived in what was formerly a German prisoner-of-war camp. The camp still had a wire fence around it and a watch tower at the entrance. A few of the prisoners remained and did the cooking in the mess hall where the family had their meals. Roy lived and worked in Montreal until he was able to find a place for the family to live, and just before Christmas 1946, the family moved to a house on St. Urbain Street. Again he worked as a carpenter and Sakae worked at home sewing blouses for several factories. Their fourth child, a son, Edward Satoru, was born in Montreal.

Photo: Roy Sumi and Mr Kannosuke Mori. Emiko Sumi collection



Roy ran his own business, initially working as a gardener and later establishing himself by designing and creating private and public Japanese gardens. There are numerous examples throughout the province (including Coquitlam, New Westminster, Revelstoke, Vancouver, and West Vancouver) as well as outside the province in Alberta (Edmonton, Marak residence) and Saskatchewan.

In 1959 the Vancouver Japanese Gardeners' Association was formed with Roy as president. Roy Sumi was one of the original founders and is the namesake for the annual Sumi Award, that honours the best gardens.

During 1959-1960 Roy was asked by the University of British Columbia (UBC) and the Consul General of Japan to work with Mr Kannosuke Mori, whom UBC invited from Japan, to design and construct the Nitobe Memorial Garden at UBC. Roy's major task was to interpret and coordinate Japanese traditional ways with Canadian practices and materials, and to supervise the construction of the garden. He stayed on as supervisor in the development and maintenance of the garden until his retirement 14 years later. The following, taken from an article from the summer 1970 issue of *Davidsonia*, describes their relationship:

"This Japanese Garden in Memory of Dr. Inazo Nitobe was designed by Professor Kannosuke Mori of Chiba University, a distinguished Japanese Landscape Architect, and was his last creative achievement. The creation of the Garden was made possible by the help of the Government and people of Japan and the Japanese Canadians of British Columbia. Mr Roy Sumi, who is responsible for its maintenance, was carefully tutored by Mr. Mori during his fifteen months with the University. He will impart to his successors the knowledge of the special techniques necessary to retain its character."

On the occasion of his 'retirement' from the Nitobe Memorial Garden at UBC in 1973, *Davidsonia* paid him the following tribute: "Mr. Tomomichi Sumi, best known to the staff and his many friends as Mr. Roy Sumi, retired on October 31, 1973 after 14 years with The University of British Columbia. The relatively short time Mr. Sumi spent at the University does not belie his contribution to the

development and management of the Nitobe Memorial Garden. He became the chief gardener for the Nitobe Garden prior to its opening and had the opportunity to work under Mr. Mori, the landscape architect. The remarkable maturing of this garden has in large part been due to the devotion and dedication that Mr. Sumi has so carefully applied to his task of maintenance in the Garden. We wish him well in his retirement and hope he may devote more time to his excellent collection of bonsai."

On June 5 1981, the Asian Centre at UBC was officially opened. Located just off the West Mall next to the Nitobe Memorial Garden, the Asian Centre is surrounded by a classical Japanese garden completed by Roy Sumi.

Other gardens created by Roy Sumi include those at the Coquitlam Tozenji Buddhist Temple (1989) and the Steveston Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre.

In April 1987, Roy travelled to Japan to be honoured by Emperor Hirohito of Japan for contributions to his community and for promoting the cultural interests of Japan in his work. His citation cites that the award is "given to people of Japanese descent living abroad for promoting Japan" and signed by Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone.

From the time when he was a teenager, Roy wrote and taught haiku. He had many of his haiku published in Japan and corresponded regularly with a haiku group in Japan. For many years, he also taught Vancouver night school classes on bonsai and created the first bonsai club in Vancouver. The Vancouver Sumi Bonsai Club is named for Roy. He also contributed articles to the New Canadian (a Japanese-language newspaper) under the pen-name: 角 加竹.

In the fall of 1990 Roy was one of 75 recipients of University of British Columbia's The 75th Anniversary Medal. These medals were struck to recognize individuals who had contributed in a unique and extraordinary way over the previous 75 years to make UBC an outstanding public institution. The awards were given "to persons who have made a significant contribution to the University" and "performed their duties with extraordinary distinction and have demonstrated loyalty and commitment to the University." This was no doubt in recognition of his important role in the creation and maintenance of the Nitobe Memorial Garden and later his work with the Asian Centre.







Heiwa Teien (Peace Garden) Japanese Garden at the Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre in New Denver BC.

Photo: John Endo Greenaway.

In 1994 Roy created the Japanese Garden at the Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre in New Denver at the age of 85. He designed the Heiwa Teien (Peace Garden) as a *karesansui* ("dried-up water scenery") garden with stonework from the Kamakura Era. The buildings at the Centre are connected and enclosed by the garden.

Roy Sumi was a Master gardener revered for his Japanese garden designs. He preferred the Kansai (Kyoto) style used in older, 'gentler' locations where gardens are soft and natural, often showing a subtle appreciation of a tree limb, large stones, or the color of flowers. The other basic style of Japanese gardens is called Kanto (Tokyo), a style more suited to urban settings and feature, for example, topiary, and other not-so-natural design techniques.

He was always very thoughtful in his approach to designing a garden, considering the subtleties of the location, proximity to natural surroundings and to urban structures. He incorporated natural elements wherever he could. He considered the soil type, climate, and a balancing of the natural and social aspects of the garden. He possessed an encyclopedic knowledge

of garden designs in Japan which he used in his creations. He created designs that were pleasing from all directions, levels and angles, and used indigenous plants in keeping with the Kansai style.

Often, he had to deal with situations where desired plants were in short supply and so had to order plants from great distances in keeping with the design effects he sought. While he would have loved to import plants directly from Japan, the strict regulations forced a long and expensive detour through Holland so that Asian insects could not be accidentally imported along with the plants.

Roy designed and constructed many public gardens and the gardens of over 50 homes in Vancouver, parts of BC, and elsewhere. Roy is recognized as a Master of *bonsai* and the traditional Japanese garden, being an educator, a designer, builder, as well as developer of traditional and modern Japanese gardens.

Roy passed away August 8 1997, at the age of 88. As of 2007, Roy had four children, five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

#### Preserving continued

Denver and the Kamloops Japanese Canadian Culture Centre assisting with their operations, and assisting the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre in Toronto with their archives. All three have catalogued their holdings onto the museum database that is fully accessible to the public at www.nikkeimuseum.org.

In 2012 the NNMHC rebranded and is now known as the the Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre (NNMCC). The Nikkei National Museum (NNM) has curated many diverse exhibits, produced mainly by the staff on modest budgets to interest an international audience. Beth has worked with the building committee and the architect, Ken Takeuchi, to develop a future expansion plan on the second floor that would double the Museum area. The NNM has curated the *Taiken* history panels on the second floor corridor walls as well as utilizing walls in some meeting rooms to display historical photos..

After nearly six years Beth Carter moved on to become the curator at the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art in Vancouver. In May 2015 Sherri Kajiwara was hired as director/curator of the NNM and already has planned programs and events into 2018. In addition to the inaugural exhibitions already mentioned, important projects curated at the NNM within the last five years include:

- Monogatari: Tales of Powell Street 1920 1941
- Ryoshi: Nikkei Fishermen of the BC Coast
- Call for Justice: Fighting for Japanese Canadian Redress
- Revitalizing Japantown? A Right to Remain Exhibit
   Select online exhibits include:
- The Open Doors Project,
   opendoorsproject.weebly.com
- Asahi Canadian Baseball Legends, ow.ly/UDepl
- Our Mother's Patterns ow.ly/UDel7

For full exhibition details past and present, please see the NNMCC website at www.nikkeiplace.org

The Nikkei National Museum is the result of many volunteers who had the foresight and vision to save the heritage of the community for future generations. The

Museum is excited to celebrate its second decade and continues to be dedicated to the care and preservation of important Japanese Canadian historical records and artifacts from across the country.

The museum is committed to the highest standards of preservation for the collections and is using new technology to digitize collections and make them available to a much wider audience through the Internet. We continue to work together with several community groups and centre's across Canada to gather historical information and prepare exhibits that we hope to share. We are also excited to feature younger contemporary artists who are looking to the future and interpreting their Japanese Canadian ancestry through new media. As the collections grow, we look forward to expanding the museum into a larger permanent history gallery that will truly reflect the national scope, significance, and influence of Japanese Canadians. As our nisei and now our sansei age and pass on, we encourage all nikkei to assist the NNM to record and preserve your family history and share with all Canadians through the Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre. Help build and maintain YOUR Museum and Cultural Centre for future generations! \*



### Nikkei Images: Call for Writers

Do you have stories from your family or others in the *Nikkei* community that should be preserved? Do you wish you had an excuse to ask your relatives and family friends about life way back when? Do you want to get to know our community better? Write for *Nikkei Images*, the tri-annual publication produced by the Nikkei National Museum. Join our team of writers to share your story ideas relating to Japanese Canadian history, culture, and arts. For more information, please contact Ireid@nikkeiplace.org.





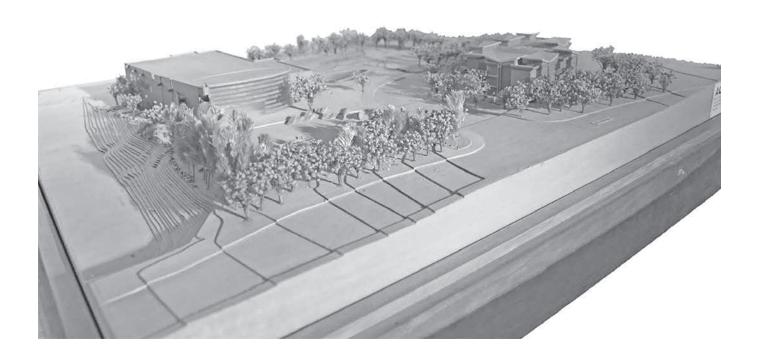
## Centre Model c.1990

#### TD 664-2, Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre fonds

by Carolyn Nakagawa

This early imagining of the Nikkei Centre and Sakuraso, shows the vision of the centre's conceptual design architect, Raymond Moriyama, with several features of the Centre as we know them today, such as the Ellipse Lobby with the Nikkei Garden at the front of the building. Not yet included is the design of Nikkei Home, but the space where it stands today is labeled as "supportive housing for seniors" in anticipation of that branch of the centre.

Moriyama's design was realized by project architect Ken Takeuchi, who took the lead in designing the New Sakura-so residence. The dream of a *Nikkei* community centre had murmurings beginning in the 1960s, and *Nikkei* community members started to look for a site to build on in 1986. When Moriyama presented his concept in 1994, it was a solid, physical representation of a long-cherished dream of the community. Today, this early conception of the museum and cultural centre lives in the Nikkei National Museum vault, its preservation a testament to its success.



Carolyn Nakagawa is the Museum Intern at the Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of British Columbia, where she studied English literature, Asian Canadian, and Asian miaration studies.

