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2017: 75th Anniversary of the Japanese Canadian Internment

Thomas Madokoro (third from left) at Black Camp in 1942



# Contents



Our Journey: Revisiting Tashme and New Denver After 70 Years, Part 3 Page 4



Steveston Community Society and the Nikkei Community

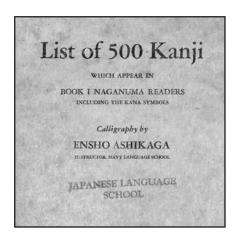
Page 12



Thomas Hiroshi Madokoro Page 14



Karl Konishi: A Memoir, part 2
Page 19



Treasures from the Collection

Back Cover

# **Welcome to Nikkei Images**



Nikkei Images is a publication of the Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre dedicated to the preservation and sharing of Japanese Canadian

stories since 1996. We welcome proposals of family and community stories for publication in future issues. Articles must be between 500 – 3,500 words maximum, and finished work should be accompanied by relevant high-resolution photographs with proper photo credits. 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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6688 Southoaks Crescent Burnaby, BC, V5E 4M7 Canada TEL: 604.777.7000 FAX: 604.777.7001 www.nikkeiplace.org

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# Our Journey: Revisiting Tashme and New Denver After 70 Years — Part 3

by Micki Nakashima

As part of our 2017 commemorations of the 75th anniversary of Japanese Canadian internment, this is Part 3 of Micki Nakashima's story of her 2015 visit to former internment camps, along with her childhood recollections, in instalments. Part 1 is printed in Vol. 22 No. 1, and Part 2 is in Vol. 22 No 2.



### Mother's Name is Found

The names of all who were interned in New Denver are engraved on a plaque in the reception centre of the Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre. The mission of my trip was to find my mother's name, and I did. She was listed as Tanaka, Kimi.

Our house number was #62. The sign listed our house number as #315. After consulting the helpful receptionist, we concluded that #315 was the house number in Nelson Ranch

Next to Mother's name was another name, Masuya. I do not know this name. No other person lived with us in that two-room shack. I believe that Masuya was the name of the previous resident at #62 and that, when he or she moved elsewhere and vacated the house, we were relocated there.

Photos courtesy Micki Nakashima.



Apt Tanaka Yoshitaro
Apt Taura Yagoro
67/ Tanabe Shichihei
Town Tovama Motozo

315 Tanaka Kimi/Masuya

Apt **Takano Matsushiro**37 **Tanaka Jinya** 

# The Community Hall

As the centre of camp life, the community hall hosted many activities – movies, dances, banquets, meetings. It also served as the Buddhist Temple on occasion.

I was pleasantly surprised to find a picture of my sister Kay and a kindergarten graduation picture of me in the hall.

Many items common to our homes during the internment years are on display. It was fun to see and remember them

Sticky rice, called *mochi*, is made for special occasions such as the New Year. To make *mochi*, the rice must be pounded until all the grains are smashed. The cooked rice is placed in the bowl of a hollowed log. Two men face each other and alternate pounding the rice with large wooden mallets. Mother would moisten the rice between hits to keep it from sticking to the mallets. I would watch in fear that Mother's hand would get pounded, but it never did.

We had one homemade sled and one bought sled. The bought sled had runners and handles to steer with. It went faster and farther. It was my favorite sled. One day all the elementary school children were taken out for a day of sledding. My sister Jane insisted on using the bought sled. I wanted to use that sled but she got it first. As we were walking to the hill, past Jane's classroom I spotted the bought sled sitting outside. After a short moment of hesitation, I swapped sleds. I made one great run down the hill only to find Jane and my teacher waiting for me at the bottom of the hill. I refused to get off the sled and hung on to it tightly even as my teacher lifted me, sled and all. After shaking me as she laughed, my teacher convinced me to give the bought sled back to my sister.



Names of those interned in New Denver

The Japanese community held an annual picnic with races of all kinds. There was great anticipation and excitement among the children as we got prizes for winning. We would practice the three-legged race, the wheelbarrow race, and the sack race. One year, to our surprise and delight, several business owners from town came to our picnic and participated in the races. A few years later the picnic was held in town.

# The Heiwa Teien (Peace Garden) at the Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre

This Japanese-style garden was established to honour the many Canadian citizens of Japanese heritage who were forcibly resettled to the B.C. Interior in 1942. It is a serene lakeside place for contemplation and enjoyment of the landscape.





Bay Farm sports day. NNM 1996.178.1.16.

## Drive through Silverton

For unknown reasons, when I was in grade 3 our class in New Denver was bused three miles away to Silverton, to attend school there. Mrs. Kinknock was our teacher. She was the kindest teacher I ever had, especially after Miss Elder. During the winter the school bus would often be late. It was cold waiting on the side of the road. Once the bus was so late we decided to walk to Silverton. Halfway there the bus went rumbling by. We had to run in the slippery snow to catch the bus or we would miss it. How we ran.

I looked forward to grade 4 with Mrs. Kinknock the following year, but unfortunately circumstances did not allow it. That summer Mother took us to Kamloops to pick hops. We live in a bunkhouse. Mother had to cook over a fire pit. In the evenings the First Nations men would sit along a hollow log to drum and chant. I grew to love that beating rhythm.

As the hops season lasted past the start of school, I attended a small elementary school there for two months. My sister Jane and I were in the same class, an experience I was glad to leave. When we returned to New Denver I was sadly not assigned to Mrs. Kinknock's class in Silverton but to Miss Elder's split 4-5 class in New Denver.

## Drive through Slocan City, too

One year I was selected to go to Slocan to run in a race. I was quite excited as it meant a bus ride to Slocan where I had never been. That's me on the left side of the picture. The starter used a gun to start the race. I had never heard a gun shot before. I was so startled, I jumped instead of running. That was just enough time to allow the other children to leave me in the dust

# Back to Nelson

My trip through Silverton and Slocan was emotional and exhausting, filled with the recognition of old haunts and memories long forgotten. The next day, though, we returned to Nelson, and a nice dinner at Itza Ristorante



The Heiwa Teien (Peace Garden) at the Nikkei Memorial Centre

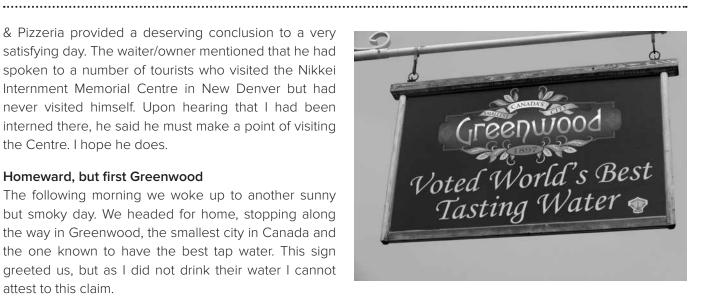
The Heiwa Teien (Peace Garden) was designed by Tomomichi "Roy" Sumi, a former Rosebery internee and founder of the Vancouver Japanese Garneners Association. Roy was a former supervisor of Nitobe Memorial Garden at UBC. Roy was the father of my sister-in-law Kathi (brother Ed's wife).

& Pizzeria provided a deserving conclusion to a very satisfying day. The waiter/owner mentioned that he had spoken to a number of tourists who visited the Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre in New Denver but had never visited himself. Upon hearing that I had been interned there, he said he must make a point of visiting the Centre. I hope he does.

# Homeward, but first Greenwood

The following morning we woke up to another sunny but smoky day. We headed for home, stopping along the way in Greenwood, the smallest city in Canada and the one known to have the best tap water. This sign greeted us, but as I did not drink their water I cannot attest to this claim.

I can, however, attest to the best butter tarts at a bakery we found on Copper Street.







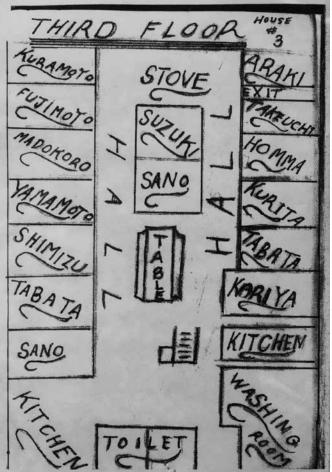


While Kaslo, Sandon, and New Denver were silver mining towns, Greenwood, once a city of 3,000, was a copper mining town. When the demand for copper declined after World War II, the mines closed. The town needed people. Perhaps that is why Greenwood welcomed the Japanese internees, the only town to do so. The two groups worked well together. Many of the internees chose to remain in Greenwood.

Greenwood was one of the first internment camps to open and receive the Japanese. Abandoned hotels and business buildings were converted into small crowded rooms with communal kitchens and bathrooms. The Pacific Hotel, Building #1 housed over 200 internees. As many as 14 families lived in Building #10.

At the end of the war, T. F. McWilliams from Kelowna sent a letter to the federal government demanding the repatriation to Japan of the Japanese Canadians. However, a letter was sent from Greenwood, disagreeing with the letter from Kelowna. The Greenwood letter stated:

"Their record has been very good. They have been law abiding citizens under very difficult times. They should



be treated fairly and be given the same rights and privileges accorded to other people."

### **Epiloque**

"After studying the question on the spot, the thought occurs to me that there is far more possibility of trouble developing against the Japanese in Canada as a result of agitation at present being carried on by certain individuals than there would be by the Japanese against this Country." – Fred Meade

Major General Ken Stuart, the Chief of General Staff, advised after the outbreak of the Pacific War, "From the army's point of view, I cannot see that Japanese Canadians constitute the slightest menace to national security."

"It is a fact that no person of Japanese race born in Canada has been charged with any act of sabotage or disloyalty during the years of war." – *Mackenzie King* 

In 1988, 46 years later, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney delivered an official apology in recognition of the unjust internment of the Japanese Canadians. A compensation package was given to every living internee for the loss of rights and property. Additionally, in recognition of a need to assert principles of human rights, \$12 million was given to the National Association of Japanese Canadians and \$24 million toward the establishment of a Canadian Race Relations Foundation to help eliminate racism.

Mother remained in New Denver. Re-establishing the family in Vancouver would have been very difficult, and she dismissed the idea of moving to Kamloops after our summer there. Here in New Denver, we had a roof over our heads (even if it was a shack) and a vegetable garden that produced enough vegetables to feed us all year as Mother preserved many jars of vegetables for the winter. As the years went by we said goodbye to our friends as, one by one, they moved on to a better life either out east to Ontario or back to the west coast of BC.

In 1951, my brother Ed graduated from high school. His high school teacher encouraged him to attend university. Ed was Mother's first-born and the only son. Mother was reluctant to let him leave home at 17 but, realizing that education was important to lead to a better life, she hesitantly and anxiously agreed to let him go. He stayed with a family who provided him room and board in exchange for chores, a common practice in those days. This family was good to Ed and encouraged and supported him in his quest for higher education. They reduced the number of chores so that Ed could spend more time studying. A year later, Mother heard of a rental suite in Vancouver that became available. Thus we were on our way to Vancouver.

The first thing Mother did when we arrived in Vancouver was to go to the Royal Bank of Canada, bank book in hand. Her account contained the money that Mother and Father had saved to return to Japan. The bank clerks were very surprised. The manager told us that the account had been closed as there had been no activity for 10 years. The account was reactivated and was credited all the past interest earned.

When Mother was widowed she was expected to return to Japan and live with her in-laws. My uncle had come to Vancouver to assist with her return, but it was not her preferred option. She knew it was not in her best interest, nor was it where she envisioned her children's future. The war and the internment allowed her time to

reconsider and make alternate plans. She knew she absolutely needed that money to make a life here in Canada. I speculate that she withheld that bankbook from the B.C. Security Commission against their rules. I marvel that she defied the commission and I am eternally grateful for her perseverance in her fight to remain in Canada.

So it was that, with this money, we started a new life. Mother bought an old house on 6th Avenue. She found work peeling shrimps, picking berries, or pulling weeds, and later worked in the fish cannery. We children too found whatever part-time work we could – peeling shrimps, picking berries, babysitting, cleaning houses, working in the fish cannery – all to help out. With each passing year, life became easier and more stable. We were on our way to a better life. Of her four children, three earned degrees from UBC. Ed became an electrical engineer, Jane, a social worker, and I, a teacher. Kay became a respected stenographer working for Canadian National Railway. We are all married with children and grandchildren.

The Japanese have an expression that they live by, shikata ga nai, which roughly translates to "it can't be helped." It means that one must soldier on even in the face of the most difficult and trying times, accepting struggles without complaint, anger, or bitterness. I don't know what internal fortitude Mother had to be able to soldier on as she did. Widowed with four young children in a country whose language she did not speak, her life turned upside down with no end in sight, with no close relatives to help or support her. She must have been worried, depressed at times, perhaps even felt hopeless and ready to give up. She never shared that with her children. The only signs of anxieties and worries were her constant smoking and quiet prayers. She sacrificed everything she could and more for her four children. She allowed us to live as children should with joy and happiness, and taught us to hope for a better life through hard work, tenacity and integrity, letting past events fade and not letting them define our outlook on life. She is a hero in my eyes.

I often wonder what my life would have been if Mother had not resisted deportation. I would not have met Luke Nakashima, my husband of 53 years. We would not have our three children, Lynne, Patti, and Jim. Lynne became a doctor of pharmacy and is Provincial Director of Pharmacy for the B.C. Cancer Agency.





She married Yu-Zhi Kiang, and has two sons, Ben and Sam. Patti earned her chartered general accountant degree, became controller at IDS Management Inc., married Steve Bates, and has a daughter, Amy. James, a computer engineer and project leader with Microsoft in Redman, Washington, married Yeni Son and has a son, Jaden.

What started out as a simple desire to photograph my mother's name at the Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre became a truly worthwhile and memorable trip that I was so fortunate to share with my daughter, Lynne, and grandson, Sam. What was so unexpected and a little frightening was how memories so deeply buried and so long forgotten became vivid and alive so quickly. Just the sight of an object or the sound of a word or name from the distant past instantly conjured up images and incidences and little stories.

Aside from all the childhood memories I recalled, I came to realize the importance of keeping this significant historical event alive for my grandchildren and future generations. While it is critical that the injustice committed, the difficulties suffered, and the inhumane treatment of the Japanese Canadians cannot ever be forgotten or diminished in significance, it is equally important to remember the resilience and strength of character of our parents, their realization that life went on and that even at times when the light at the end of the tunnel could not be seen, they knew it was there. We came out of this experience better than expected. With this account of my personal memories, I hope to illustrate my young and limited perspective of what life during those years was like.

Mother passed away in 1985, before the official federal government's apology and redress. I think she would have been pleased but nothing more.

The only regret I have is that Luke, my husband, who is afflicted with Parkinson's disease, was unable to accompany us on this trip.



# Lynne's Note

At first, when Mom suggested a trip to New Denver to the family, we were lukewarm, at best, to the idea. It's quite a road trip and doesn't quite have the same appeal as, say, Hawaii or Disneyland. But I had some free time and agreed to go with her.

When asked what I was doing this summer, I said I was going on a pilgrimage of sorts, with my mother and son, Sam. My mother, I would explain, wanted to return to New Denver, where she had lived as a child during the war, when her family was interned there. She had not been back since she was a child and now, 63 years later, wanted to see the Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre.

My father usually did not speak about the war years, and really all I knew was that he had moved around a lot as a kid and that, with each move, he would have to fight to establish his place. For this reason, he left the Air Force when I was a couple of years old, to take up a new profession as a teacher, because he did not want his children to have to move around.

But my mother was willing to share many more memories with us, some of them heartbreaking, but others funny and inspiring.



Micki with grandson Sam, 2015. Courtesy Micki Nakashima.

Who we are as individuals, as a family and as part of the greater Japanese Canadian culture, stems from where we came from. One of the things that came through in each of the places we visited was the dignity and strength that our grandparents displayed during a very difficult time.

My mom was three years old when the family was moved to Tashme, and five years old when she moved to New Denver, so this is the life she knew. She didn't have memories of life before the internment.

Seeing the beautiful surroundings and the small towns and the museums dedicated to this memory of World War II was an amazing experience. Watching my mom's reaction, seeing the memories come, all without anger or regret but with a need to remember and tell the story, was probably more emotional for me than it was for her. For me, her experiences during the war meant that I was raised as a Canadian and with our culture very much in the background. It was important to fit in, to be a part of the greater community and not separate. I consequently don't speak Japanese, have not been to Japan, never learned *obon* dancing, and can't make *sushi*.

Sam, whose knowledge of the war is extensive, but focused on battles in Europe, learned about a part of the war that happened on the home front, and a lot about his own family's history. It may be that the thing he passes on to his children and grandchildren will be how to select a rock that will skip seven times, but he will always remember that he learned that from his grandmother. The perspectives from the three different generations made this a very special time.

So I am very glad that we were able to share this trip with Mom/Nana. We enjoy each other's company and we have shared an important memory together. For it is the past that shapes the future. Who we are is because of what's gone before. And like with all things in life, it is not what happened but how you respond to what happened that shapes your character and being. It is that choice that you make that is the most important. And I am very proud of my grandmother, my mother, and her sisters and brother for the choices that they made, which, in turn, make me who I am today.





# Steveston Community Society and the Nikkei Community

by Kelvin Higo



Photo courtesy of Richmond Archives 1985 68 3

Steveston, at the southern end of the city of Richmond, had long been home to a large and active Japanese community—until 1942, when all Japanese Canadians were removed from the west coast of Canada.

The Steveston Community Society (SCS) was incorporated on September 17, 1946, with the objective to promote the establishment of a community centre in Steveston.

Japanese Canadians were allowed to return to the B.C. coast beginning in 1949, and, upon their return to Steveston, they immediately re-engaged with the local community. In 1952, at the first meeting of the Japanese Canadian Citizens League (JCCL), the topic

of building a community centre was raised. Rintaro Hayashi, acting chairman, assisted by Genji Otsu and D. Tamemoto, listened to a presentation made by B.C. Packer president Ken Fraser, who was also a member of the Steveston SCS. Mr. Fraser asked the JCCL to support the construction of the first community centre in Richmond, and this was unanimously supported.

Japanese Canadians soon joined the SCS, the most prominent community organization of its day. The minutes of the February 14, 1955, SCS meeting record that "Mr. Sid Teraguchi informed the meeting that the Japanese Canadian Community Association (JCCA) had approximately \$15,000 and wished to build a hall.



Steveston Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre, built in 1992



Kuno Garder

But rather than build a small one of their own they were interested in joining with the Community Society in their endeavor toward a community centre."

On April 11, 1955, Bob Kosaka was elected First Vice-President of the JCCA and reported that his organization had agreed to combine its trust account with that of the SCS for the purpose of building the Steveston Community Centre. This donation was contingent on two provisions: that one room be set aside for the *judo* club and that the gym could be used by the *kendo* club.

The Steveston Community Centre was officially opened on November 2, 1957. In his book titled *Steveston:* A Community History, author Bill McNulty stated that new program attractions relating to Japanese and First Nations culture were added to the community centre's programming.

The community centre functioned under an operating agreement with the City of Richmond and required the SCS to pay for all maintenance and repair costs. Eventually this operating agreement was amended so



Steveston Martial Arts Centre, built in 1972



The Murakami House at Britannia Historic Shipyard

that the SCS was tasked with hiring program staff and the City was responsible for building maintenance and other ancillary costs.

In 1960 the Steveston Japanese Language School relocated to the Steveston Community Centre from the Steveston Buddhist Temple. The major fundraiser for the Language School was an annual bazaar that was held every spring, beginning in 1961. This event took over the whole community centre with the upstairs banquet room used for the sale of *udon* and other Japanese foods. Downstairs, in the gym, a variety show featured singers, dancers, and musicians. Everyone in Steveston looked forward to the bazaar, as Japanese foods were not widely available back then. Unfortunately, in 2002, the bazaar was cancelled due to the lack of volunteers.

The *judo* and *kendo* clubs flourished in the new community centre, but it soon became apparent that the growth of both these clubs would soon outgrow the space. In 1972, Jim Murray, a city councilor and the first Caucasian to obtain his *shodan* (black belt) in *kendo*, suggested the idea of a building dedicated to



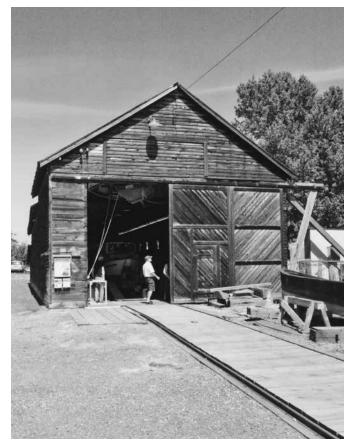


Nikkei Fishermen Memorial

the practice of martial arts as a Centennial project. Bob McMath, a fellow councillor, supported this, and even though there were competing Centennial projects, the martial arts centre was selected for funding.

The Nikkei community, spearheaded by the *judo* and *kendo* clubs, committed to raising \$95,000 of the estimated \$237,000 building costs. The support of the SCS was essential in completing the martial arts centre. However, at the end, not enough monies were raised.

Jack Gilmore, then-president of the SCS, and Ted Lorenz, a long-time supporter of the Nikkei community, as well as two other Board members felt strongly enough about the need for a martial arts centre that they signed a \$15,000 mortgage so that construction could commence. The two martial arts clubs were able to raise the remaining funds and the mortgage was paid out. This was just another example of how the different ethnic groups in Steveston came together to work towards a common cause. The building officially opened on March 18, 1972, with S. Hori, Consul General of Japan, in attendance as well as many other dignitaries and guests. The martial arts centre was recognized as the first purpose-built *dojo* outside of Japan. A few years



Kishi Boatworks at Britannia Historic Shipyard

later, at the request of Mayor Uchiage of newly formed sister city Wakayama, a *karate* club was established and became the third club to utilize the martial arts centre. Uchiage made this request after discovering that the new martial arts centre did not have a *karate* program. His son, Takeshi Uchiage, was sent here to start the club. Jim Kojima was instrumental in having the *karate* club established as both the *judo* and *kendo* clubs would have to set aside time for the *karate* club to operate. Takeshi is still the head *sensei*, and his club members have won many national and international competitions.

The Steveston Nikkei community again asked for support from the general community in the early 1990s, when several members of the Nikkei community decided to make application for monies available through the Japanese Redress Committee. Surveys and public meetings were held, and Steveston citizens supported the construction of a Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre. The Redress Committee approved a grant of \$500,000 towards its construction, and the provincial government provided \$256,000 through the GO BC fund.

The Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre officially opened on September 12, 1992. It became the new home of the Steveston Japanese Language School and much other Japanese-related programming.

In addition to working and partnering with the SCS, the Nikkei community has, since the late 1950s, actively participated in the annual Steveston Salmon Festival, which celebrates Canada's birthday on July 1. The first major participation was the Japanese Language School's sponsorship of a *chow mein* booth as a thank-you to the SCS for its support. The booth was soon hosted by all of the Nikkei non-profit groups in Steveston, including the *kendo, judo*, and *karate* clubs, the Japanese Language School, and the Steveston Buddhist Temple *fujin-kai* ladies.

The *chow mein* booth takes a considerable amount of effort. A few days before the event, 50 to 60 volunteers gather in the upstairs banquet room of the community centre to chop vegetables and cook pork. The noise from chopping is so loud that you can't even carry on a conversation! On July 1, members of the various Nikkei organizations cook, serve, and take cash. It takes close to 100 volunteers to staff the *chow mein* booth each year. All proceeds from the booth are donated to the SCS in recognition of its continued support for Nikkei programs.

In addition to the *chow mein* booth, an annual Japanese cultural show is held in the cultural centre and martial arts centre. Displays and demonstrations are held throughout the buildings, including bonsai, ikebana, martial arts, a tea ceremony, *koto* performances, *odori*, and so on. Between 80,000 and 100,000 guests visit Canada's self-proclaimed "Biggest Little Birthday Party since 1945." It takes approximately 150 volunteers to host this cultural show.

Though this article highlights the relationship between the Steveston Community Society and the Nikkei community, it should be recognized that there is also a long-established relationship between the City of Richmond and the Japanese Canadian community.

City Council has approved a myriad of projects and initiatives in support of the Japanese culture and history in Steveston and Richmond. In 1973, in recognition of its Japanese heritage, Richmond joined with the City of Wakayama as its sister city. This relationship remains

strong to this day with visits and cultural exchanges made between the two cities every few years.

The City supported the establishment of Kuno Gardens at Garry Point Park in 1988, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the arrival of Gihei Kuno. Kuno was the first immigrant from Mio, a small village in Wakayama prefecture, and he encouraged an additional 250 villagers to come to B.C. Every year, the Wakayama kenjin-kai volunteer to prune the garden's trees and vegetation. In 2000, the City supported the planting of 300 Japanese cherry trees in Garry Point Park by the Wakayama kenjin-kai, and, more recently, financially supported the first Cherry Blossom Festival in 2017.

As a requirement of the rezoning of the ANAF property, they had to set aside funds to create a plaza at the southwest corner of their property. This ANAF property was the previous site of the Fisherman's Hospital. The plaza commemorates the site as the location of the Japanese Fisherman's Hospital, the first permanent hospital in Richmond operated on the principle of socialized medicine.

In 1998, the City supported the restoration of Murakami House and Boatworks at the Britannia Historic Shipyards. This home was built in 1885 and is typical of the housing that the Japanese fisherman and cannery workers lived in. Also preserved on the Britannia site is the Kishi Boatworks building, which is currently used by the Britannia Shipyard Society.

More recently, City Council approved a grant for \$100,000 in support of the creation of "Nikkei Stories of Steveston," a series of 10 short videos depicting persons or events related to Nikkei history in Steveston. As well, City Council donated \$330,000 towards the creation of an appropriate memorial commemorating the 75th anniversary of the removal of Richmond residents of Japanese descent, and, more importantly, their return and their contributions to the development of the community. This project is currently ongoing and it is hoped that an official unveiling can occur in 2018.

Steveston demonstrates a unique relationship between a visible ethnic group and the rest of the community and is a true example of Canadian multiculturalism at work.





# Thomas Hiroshi Madokoro



Father Tamezo Madokoro's body was brought back to Vancouver in 1929 to be cremated

# Early life

Thomas Hiroshi Madokoro was born in Steveston on June 7, 1920, to Tamezo and Hine (Ezaki) Madokoro. Tamezo had come to Canada around 1880 with his brother Rinshiro from Shimasato Wakayama ken. Both were fishermen. About two years later, the family moved to Tofino. They lived in Storm Bay with seven other families: the Mori, Morishita, M. Nakagawa and S. Nakagawa, Nakatsu, Yamada, Izumi, and Kondo families.

Tamezo and Hine had five children: Yoshio (John), Yaeko (Mary), Michi (Andrew), Kuni (Frances), Nakagawa, and Hiroshi (Thomas).

In the house in Storm Bay, the boys slept upstairs on futons. Thomas remembers walking a mile to a one-room school in Tofino that included grades one to eight. He was a mischievous child and remembers getting the strap all the time from an English teacher who was strict. Thomas and his siblings were baptized in the Anglican

Church in Tofino, which was how all the children got English names.

Tamezo died in Storm Bay in 1929, so John, the eldest son, had to quit school. He took over his father's boat, *Gloom*, and was mentored by his uncle Rinshiro to fish and support the family. The family took his father's body to Vancouver to be cremated.

In 1930, when Thomas was about 11, Hine took him to join Yaeko and Michi, who were schoolchildren in Vancouver, working in domestic service. Yaeko and Michi were living with white families, attending school during the day and housekeeping after school. Hine got a job peeling shrimp to support them. They lived in the Fairview district in a rented home at 4th Avenue and Alberta Street. Thomas attended the Fairview Japanese Language School, whose principal was Mr. Miyashida. Thomas again was caught daydreaming or singing his own tunes and was hit on the head by the teacher.



Thomas Madokoro with cod for the Tofino Trollers' Co-operative Association at around 17 years old, circa 1937

# Working life

When Thomas was 16, his brother John got him a job at the Tofino Co-op. The whole family moved back to Tofino and rented a house there. Thomas's first job was to ice fish in the Co-op. At age 18 he worked as a cook on the *Western Chief*, the big packer owned by the Tofino Co-op. The first boat he owned was a dugout canoe, which he bought from a First Nations owner for \$10. He caught coho in it with a line and spooner, and often took his nephew and niece, Richard and May Seko, out in it for fun.

Thomas bought his uncle's boat when he retired and returned to Japan in 1939. The *HM*, a trawler, was Japanese-built, although it is not known by whom. Then he took over his brother's boat when John bought a new one in about 1941.

### Boat confiscated

In 1942, following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the Canadian government seized the property of Japanese Canadians and moved them away from the west coast. Thomas recalled: "The Mounties came by



Thomas Madokoro in Tofino in 1941

plane to Tofino. They told us not to move the boats, don't use them anymore. There were about 30 boats. We had to take them to Annieville. There was a navy guy on my boat with a gun. But most of the time he didn't do anything, just lay down in the cabin. First we picked up the Ucluelet boats, then the Bamfield boats, the Pachina boats, and the Carmannah boats. It was a long day. It got dark and hard to see, and some boats got lost. Some ended up in the USA, and they got shot at. Luckily no one got hurt. Some drifted for a while but finally made it. We were hungry, hadn't had food for three days. When we got to Annieville, the Navy took over the boats. Some got sunk because they didn't know what they were doing. Some of the shallow boats got full and tipped over. Scavengers on the beaches were taking what washed up and sold it off. After the boats were delivered, all the men came back to Tofino, but a week







ABOVE: Thomas Madokoro and his wife, Sachi Tsumura, were married in 1949 in Toronto

RIGHT: Thomas Madokoro and his daughter Wanda in Toronto in 1950

later, we were told that we had to go to a road camp and had 24 hours to pack up."

Thomas agreed to cooperate as he did not wish to go to an internment camp. Twenty-two men from Tofino decided to go in March 1942, one of the first groups to go to the Schreiber-Jackfish Road camp in Ontario. Shortly after that, Thomas went to Black Camp (which was full of black flies), then to a sugar beet farm at Glencoe, then to Toronto.

Thomas met his wife, Sachi Tsumura, who was the worked in the welfare office.

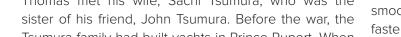
Thomas and Sachi were married in 1949 in Toronto and went to Niagara Falls on their honeymoon. Their daughter, Wanda, was born in Toronto one year later.



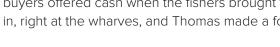
After the war, B.C. Packers offered the fishermen a loan to help them get set up again. Thomas took them up on their offer and borrowed \$35,000 for one of 12 boats on offer, the Hyson, which was built in 1950 by Osborne Shipyards in Port Alberni. He paid it off in just a few years. He bought a home next door to the Tsumura boat works on River Road in Sunbury, the Deltaga Boatworks. He then moved to north Delta and lived there for 58 years. He sold the *Hyson* to Ericson and in 1960 he bought a Tsumura boat, the Hyson II. This was a stateof-the-art boat, one of 50 or 60 they had built. It was smooth-riding, had a depth sounder and radar, and was faster and roomier than Thomas's previous boats. This was a high boat for bigger catches, and Thomas was the first Japanese Canadian to buy such a sleek new boat which could now fish in the fog. He was one of the best fishermen for B.C. Packers.

Later, when herring roe became popular in Japan, buyers offered cash when the fishers brought the boats in, right at the wharves, and Thomas made a fortune.

Thomas fished until he was 80, somewhere around 2000. 🗮



Tsumura family had built yachts in Prince Rupert. When the internment began, the Tsumura family was sent to Hastings Park, then to a camp at Popoff. In 1946, they moved to Meaford, Ontario. While in Popoff, Sachi







# Karl Konishi: A Memoir, part 2

by Karl Konishi

Part 1 of this story can be found in Nikkei Images Vol. 22, No. 1. When we last read Karl's story, he was working as the manager of the PX at the Shinodayama Post Exchange during the Korean War. One day he heard that the Canadian army was taking volunteers. He went to Hiro and met several fellows he had known from New Denver and Tashme.



## Service in Korea

After talking with them, I decided to enlist, as did my brother Fred. I took my basic training with Aki Fujino, Osamu Kobayashi, and Guerrio.

After basic training, we were sent somewhere way up in North Korea. It was very cold there. I ended up with a severe ear infection and was sent to the hospital, where they drained my ear and gave me antibiotics. While I was in the hospital a Kiwi soldier, a Maori, kept calling me "Hey Canada Boy," so everybody in the wing did the same.

In May 1953, the Royal Canadian Regiment came under fierce attack by the Chinese; the mountaintop lit up like

a Roman candle from the bombardment. The Canadians were severely outmanned but held on. Friendly artillery fire was directed at the Canadians. This prompted the enemy to withdraw; they didn't like being caught in the open as the U.S. Air Force had air superiority.

During the hostilities, the enemy used to fly an old biplane, always after midnight. We would hear the putput of the motor. The pilot would drop a few bombs on Seoul and go back home. We called him "Midnight Charlie."

Aki Fujino and I asked for leave and went to Tokyo. Aki's brother-in-law took us downtown. Surprise! He had brought along the famous movie star Mifune Toshiro,





who treated us to a lovely sushi lunch. Later that evening, he invited us to a beautiful dinner where they served a whole chicken in a bowl, as well as jellyfish and fugu. I got Mifune's autograph, in Japanese, on the back of the Maple Leaf token book used at the club to welcome back the first Canadian prisoner of war. The autographed token book is now at the Nikkei National Museum (NNM).

We arrived in Hiro, Japan, where I remained for about a week. Mom and Dad came down to say farewell to Fred and me. This would be the last time we would see either of them. My sister Kay asked Dad to come to Canada but he said he would rather stay in Japan, since my sister Aguri was still there.

At the time, the government did not consider Korea a war, but rather a police action. About six years later, the government acknowledged that the conflict was a war.

# Back in Canada

I returned to Canada in September 1953 with the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. I remained in Vancouver until 1955, when I was posted to 9 Personnel Depot in Regina, Saskatchewan.

There I was surprised to see wooden sidewalks, water taps near the sidewalk, and outhouses at the back of homes on Railway Street, a district mainly populated by indigenous people. I loved the fishing in Saskatchewan, primarily pike and muskies.

In 1958, I re-enlisted in the Regular Force, this time as a medic. I kept my trades pay as a clerk, but lost the rank that I had held. I reported to Camp Borden medical school, where I performed general duties, and then was posted to 3 Field Ambulance in Calgary, Alberta.

I worked as a clerk in 3 Field Ambulance and attended the medical assistant course, where I topped the laboratory portion. I hoped to become a medical assistant, but I was told that, since I was a Group 3 clerk, younger people were being given a chance.

stop. We had an extraordinary chief mechanic, Gordie Carefoot. When we were about to return to Calgary

from summer manoeuvres at Wainwright, the unit was short of fuel, so Gordie told us to mix kerosene, naphtha, and diesel with gasoline. We did, and were able to return to Calgary. Gordie used to put a roast on engine manifold, and by time we reached Wainwright it would be cooked.

One year, Ralph Klein was running for premier in Alberta. His riding was in Wainwright, an area that included the military camp. Mr. Klein knew that he would lose votes if we didn't vote, so he arranged for us all to go to Calgary to see the Calgary Stampede.



to -50 degrees Fahrenheit.

Karl Konishi and a fellow soldier in front of an army truck in Etajima, Hiroshima, Japan, in 1950.

Next I was posted to the military hospital in Churchill, Manitoba. In order to qualify for Churchill you had to pass a battery of psychological tests to be sure you could handle the isolation.

When I arrived, I noticed many tents in town. Curious, asked why, and was told that many indigenous people lived all year in tents. I was dismayed; I'd thought that only the Japanese were treated badly in Canada.

Churchill had been built during World War II and used by Canadian and U.S. forces as a Strategic Air Command and radar base. The federal government also had an experimental rocket testing facility at the base. Our neighbours during wintertime were large, magnificent polar bears. The military police kept the bears out of camp with a noisemaker. One civilian from town was killed by a bear.

Twice a week, the train from Winnipeg picked up indigenous people and Inuit and brought them to the hospital. A civilian bus that ran between the camp and

Sarcee camp was about three miles from the closest bus For recreation we had a hobby shop run by the U.S. Air Force, which promoted leathercraft, volleyball, and

the town constantly broke down. When there was no

bus, we had to walk, sometimes in temperatures of -40

# Overseas Assignment in Egypt

In 1965, I was posted to Egypt. When I arrived, I had to obtain my U.N. driver's licence to drive a French Citroen motorcycle that probably weighed around 150 pounds. It would go 50 miles per hour downhill.

My brother Fred was one of the first to land in Egypt with the formation of the U.N. peacekeeping force established by Canadian Prime Minister Mike Pearson.

I tried to get out of the desert every three months; you had to get out, or you went stir crazy. Most personnel went to Cairo or Beirut, but during the year I was there I made trips to Greece and Italy.

One Christmas I borrowed, or, rather, stole a tree from the Danish hospital (since they had eight trees) and decorated it with coloured pill boxes, large and small syringes, cotton balls, silver foil cut into strips, and a chain link made from coloured paper. We were the only Canadian section that had a Christmas tree that year.







Karl and Fred Konishi with a cannon in Etajima, Hiroshima, Japan, in 1952.

I went to Syria on one of my trips and nearly got thrown I was posted to headquarters in Ottawa. The position into jail for taking a picture of a policeman beating someone. I was taken to the police station, where they stripped my film out of my camera and gave me a good lecture. Good thing I had a Canadian passport.

On one trip to Cairo I saw Cassius Clay at the Nile Hilton Hotel and got his autograph on a 10-piastre note. Over the years, the ink faded so that now you can hardly recognize his signature. It is in the NNM.

I left the Sinai desert one week before hostilities between Egypt and Israel started. As I flew over the border, I was amazed to see water spraying and green vegetables on the Israeli side and just sand and brown dead vegetation on the Egyptian side.

### Back in Canada

On returning to Canada, I was awarded the Centennial Medal. I was surprised to receive this medal, which was recommended by the colonel.

was very demanding as I travelled to Montreal often to coordinate the replacement of officers throughout Canada. I was in Ottawa during the F.L.Q. uprising when the headquarters was bombed, killing one girl and injuring a corporal, both of whom were French Canadian. As well, a soldier guarding Finance Minister Benson accidently shot himself.

# Korea

The U.N. Military Armistice Commission needed a sergeant clerk in Korea. I applied for the post and got it. While I was in Korea, military prisoners on Simildo Island overpowered and killed their guards, then crossed over to the mainland. They commandeered two buses and proceeded to Uijeongbu, just outside of Seoul, and demanded a meeting with then President Park Chung-hee. The Army and police were waiting for them at Weejonbo and killed all the prisoners. In another incident, the North Koreans captured the U.S. Navy ship Pueblo. Propaganda leaflets were always floating down from balloons released from North Korea.

On one occasion I was invited by the U.S. military to the U.N. Soldier Appreciation Day. I was surprised to be seated with five-star General John McChaelus at the head table. The official photographer took a photo and I received a copy. One of these days it will go to the Nikkei National Museum.

On my way home from Korea, I had a two-week holiday, which I spent at my father's home. I had hoped to meet him in Tokyo on my way to Korea, but the shock of meeting me after all these years was too much for him and he passed away from a heart attack the day before I arrived in Tokyo.

# Service in Cyprus

On returning to Canada I was posted to CFB Chilliwack transportation section as chief clerk, then received a six-month assignment in Cyprus. The job was as chief clerk at the U.N. military police headquarters in Nicosia. The unit was headed by a Canadian major (in charge of security), a Danish captain (security) and a Canadian officer (administration). The military police came from different countries.

In addition to the headquarters, there were four detachments in Cyprus with peacekeepers from Canada, England, Austria, Sweden, and Finland. During the conflict, the M.P. lost two Austrian military police. As well, the Turkish Air Force dropped a napalm bomb on a Greek convoy, and the guys at the end got hit by the bomb. A Canadian captain was also killed at Ledra Palace, which was the garrison for the Canadian U.N. troops in Cyprus.

### Return to Canada

Back in Canada, I decided that maybe it was time to move on. I took my discharge and moved into a job with the federal penitentiary service, where I spent 10 years. I enjoyed handling weapons and went on every shooting space that became available. I achieved the level of marksman with the revolver and once entered a regional competition. When I was ready to retire, I combined both services for a total of 35 years' pension.

After I retired, I went to visit my sister Aguri, who was living in Dad's home in Japan. As eldest son, all that Dad owned was now mine, but I gave up my rights and title to everything to her. I felt it was the least I could do to thank her for looking after Mom and Dad.

I enjoy bar fishing the Fraser River and the Chilliwack and Vedder Rivers, but my favourite is Glimpse Lake. I have been going to that lake for over 25 years. When I first started going there were only a few shacks; now there are two lodges and many cottages. Back in the '50s there were brown trout; now there are only rainbow trout, which are stocked very year. The loons competed with the fishermen to see who would win the fish – they took them right off your line. It is so relaxing on the lake in the early morning to see the haze drifting about, the loons singing with the morning sun slowly rising.

I also love to hunt and have made many trips to Pemberton for deer. I climbed the steep mountains and always got my two deer there. I've hunted for moose up in the Clinton area, not always successfully. Back in the '50s I used to hunt pheasants in Richmond and Surrey, when it was all farmland. I also hunted for ducks.

I purchased a motor home to travel and mostly to get to the lake for fishing. I made a total of three trips to Japan and many trips to Hawaii, as I loved it there. In the fall I foraged for *matsutake* with Henry Tanaka. We were pretty successful at picking those mushrooms.

I look back at what we Japanese Canadians went through. The government made some of us into paupers by taking away our land, homes, and possessions, and disposing of them at rock bottom prices. I know the government took from my father the Victory Bonds he had purchased for the war effort. We have rebounded and we have shown patriotism in the service of our country, some with our lives.

I am now confined to a walker since an operation on my knee did not go very well. I manage to go shopping on my own. I have a little baby who keeps me company: her name is Smokey, a 12-year-old bichon frise, but even she is getting old. My nephew takes me out to lunch every weekend, and for this I am forever grateful.

Thank you to those who took time to read my little bit of history.

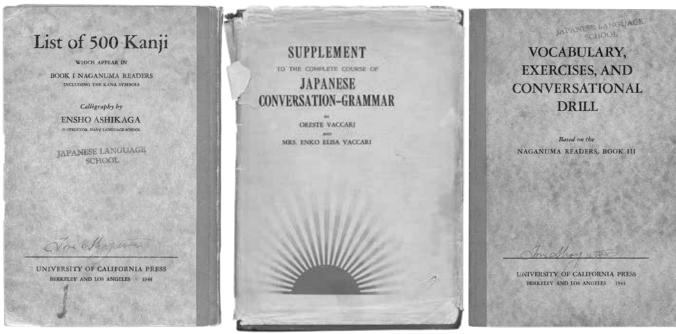






# Treasures from the Collection





# Thomas Shoyama and the S-20 Language School Books by Nathan Yeo

Born on September 24th, 1916, in Kamloops, B.C., Thomas Kunito Shoyama would become a key figure in shaping Nikkei history prior to, during, and after the Second World War. From 1939 to 1945, Shoyama served as the editor of *The New Canadian*, a Japanese Canadian newspaper that served as the voice for Japanese Canadians throughout the war years. Despite the bitter treatment that Japanese Canadians had to endure, Shoyama never wavered in his belief that he was first and foremost a Canadian.

Thomas Shoyama was among a group of Japanese Canadian men who offered their services to the Canadian Army. However, even their acceptance into the Army would prove to be a struggle, and they had to battle for their right to serve as Canadians.

On December 5th, 1941, in a meeting with Lieutenant-Colonel B.R. Mullaly, Shoyama fought ferociously to convince the colonel to allow Japanese Canadians to enlist with the Joint Services Committee of the Pacific Coast. He won the colonel over, but two days later the bombs fell on Pearl Harbor. Resisting the discrimination of his time, Shoyama continued to meet with representatives from the Canadian Armed Forces and members of government, vehemently defending Japanese Canadians' loyalty to Canada. In 1945, Shoyama was finally enlisted in the Canadian Army.

In the Army, Shoyama and his Japanese Canadian comrades were assigned to do intelligence work. As many of them, like Shoyama, knew barely any Japanese, they first had to go through months of Japanese training at the S-20 Japanese Language School. Every day, the men got up early, and studied late into the night, learning the language of their parents and grandparents. They learned to interpret, translate, and even interrogate in Japanese – skills that would allow them to perform special mission work and translate intercepted messages to Japan.

In total, Shoyama mastered 18 different Japanese language and grammar textbooks, all of which are now housed in the Thomas Shoyama collection found in the Nikkei National Museum. The books exemplify the arduous efforts Shoyama and other Japanese Canadians had to make – from attaining the right to enlist to learning a new language – all in order to serve their country.