THE JAPANESE COMMUNITIES OF CUMBERLAND, BRITISH COLUMBIA 1885-1942: PORTRAIT OF A PAST

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by

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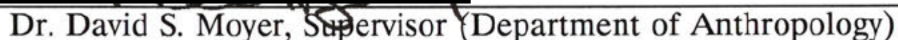

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ABSTRACT

This study is about a group of Japanese immigrants and their families who lived in Cumberland, a coal mining centre on Vancouver Island, during the first four decades of this century. Specifically, it is about a Japanese village society--people from many regions of rural Japan, most of whom were strangers to each other. While they had a common cultural background, in the new and foreign surroundings of the frontier mining town they forged a new social group. Their common cultural background, while constantly being modified by new experiences, was a unifying force in their adjustment to a new social environment.

This group of settlers includes the first immigrant generation, its second generation children, and the beginning of a third generation--grandchildren of the immigrants. The second and third generations, born in Canada, are Canadian citizens, although many of them were also registered in Japan by their parents and, thus, have held dual citizenship. The few first generation immigrants who are still alive are in their mid-eighties and nineties. Generally, their children have passed retirement age, having survived the Depression in their teen years and having passed several of the war years in government-established communities for those people of Japanese descent.

The Cumberland Museum and Historical Society's Glass Negative Project--a collection of 786 historic photographs representing a portion of the collective work of two, probably three, Japanese photographers, and spanning a period from 1913 to 1930--has provided a unique opportunity to work with the living subjects of these photographs in recreating the history of Japanese Cumberland. Combined with archival research and fieldwork in the Japanese Canadian community, the memories of aging informants have served to document the way of life of the Japanese people of pre-war Cumberland and have revealed some of the character of the two small, relatively isolated communities known as Number One and Number Five.

A picture emerges of the Japanese community of Cumberland and the Japanese communities of Cumberland: the former, perceived by those outside the community to be a homogeneous population and the latter, perceived by members of those communities to have specific and separate identities. While boundaries were created by the geographic relationship of the two Japanese communities and white Cumberland and affected communication and cultural exchange, internal political decisions regarding economic relationships and religious systems influenced the identity and created boundaries between the two Japanese communities.

Research shows that each village was characterized by strong internal solidarity and mutual support and, yet, was unique to itself: distinctiveness affected by physical distance, communication differences, internal and external economic relationships, and predominant religious beliefs. Common customs and language, despite dialectic differences, were enhanced by institutions such as the Japanese school and served to strengthen the boundaries between white and Japanese society.

As an exercise in salvage ethnography, this project provides a descriptive framework which not only provides new information for the historical record of the settlement of British Columbia but also contributes a body of data which should support further exploration of cultural identity amongst immigrant peoples.

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To the people of Number One and Number Five, Cumberland

OKAGE SAMA DE

Chapter I: INTRODUCTION

Among the most important issues of the latter half of the 20th century are a worldwide surge in national, racial, ethnic and class liberation movements together with related struggles for redefinition of individual and collective identities. Much of the momentum for these phenomena lies with the legacies of colonialism, imperialism, and worldwide capitalism, when indigenous peoples and huge numbers of immigrants were caught up in historical shifts over which they had little or no control and about which they understood even less.

Thirty years ago, in his discussion of ethnohistory and ethnic folklore, Dorson (1961:16-17) pointed out that

> ethnohistory employs the chronological and documentary method of conventional history but directs its attention to the ethnic groups ordinarily relegated to the shadows in the White man's view of history. Conventionally, American history begins not with the first inhabitants . . . but with the European White men who settled there in the 16th and 17th centuries. . . . The function of ethnohistory so conceived is to provide a documentary history of the concealed and officially inarticulate ethnic groups in American history. . . . [Nevertheless] Negro history and immigration history are still written largely from

> the point of view, and the source materials, of the dominant white majority.

While Michael Kearney (1986:332) has more recently suggested that "migration research is presently a 'hot' topic," he refers to dependency and modernization issues, particularly in light of United States immigration law and within the frameworks of world systems theory, functional equilibrium between city and countryside or internal colonialism (Kearney 1986:339-341). However, if the documented history of a society is lacking, then any analysis of that society may be found lacking. Stacey (1969:6) has observed that "hypotheses which are worth testing can only be developed in areas about which a good deal is known, i.e. where a great deal of empirical field data has already been collected. Before this stage most research is of an exploratory nature."

Ethnohistorical data on Japanese Cumberland has been sketchy, to say the least. From the records of published historians we know that the oriental mining population of Cumberland was affected by market fluctuations, anti-oriental legislation, union-management conflicts and the Great Depression of the 1930s, all of which took their toll on the coal industry of Cumberland. Chinese and Japanese miners--particularly Japanese--began to disperse to other sectors of the community. Many moved into the logging and

lumbering sector, while others turned to fishing. All Japanese were removed from their homes and their workplaces by the Canadian Government in the spring of 1942 (Isenor *et al.* 1987:290-91).

In communities like Cumberland where there was a dominant system of European attitudes, values and laws, the social enclaves inhabited by immigrant societies such as the Japanese, with their own language and value systems, have been generally ignored. Records of their history, as they exist, are coloured with prejudice and bias. Certainly, systematic ethnographic description has been largely non-existent.

Representative examples of ethnographic studies of immigrant societies in Canada are provided by John Bennett (1967) and Stephenson (1978), both of whom have described the closed societies of Hutterian colonies as well as studies (such as Miner 1939, Gold 1975) of rural French Canadian society. However, if one looks for specific examples of ethnographic description of immigrant Japanese society, there is little available for North America, let alone Canada. Embree's 1941 acculturation study of a Japanese coffee plantation community in Kona, Hawaii, provides, perhaps, the most complete and the most useful representation of such description. His study compares changes in the social organization and relations within a community

of coffee plantation workers with that of Suye Mura, a rural Japanese village where he and his wife (Smith and Wiswell 1982) had previously done extensive field work (Embree 1939). Other Japanese studies provide a useful point of departure: Japanese anthropologist Nakane (1967) discusses kinship and economic organization in rural Japan and Norbeck's (1954) ethnographic work in the Japanese fishing community of Takashima provides useful background information about rural Japan.

At this point, one must ask what, now, is the significance of writing the ethnohistory of this particular immigrant society. In setting out to answer this question, it should be remembered that the Japanese communities of Cumberland, once geographically and socially real, are now only something which occupy "mental and emotional space . . . in the thoughts, emotions and actions of Canadian Japanese today" (Evenden and Anderson 1972:42). As such, they remain a landscape which is uncharted--its detail locked within the memories of former inhabitants. In their description of Tashme,[1] Evenden and Anderson (1977:43) have suggested that to discover such a landscape one must "create from memories a 'contemporary mindscape' which reflects the

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[1] Tashme, a wartime "relocation centre" near Hope, British Columbia, was created specifically to house 2,300 Japanese Canadians who had been removed from their homes and communities on the west coast of British Columbia in 1942. When the war was over, it was razed.

collective experience of a settlement." To chart this landscape--this mindscape--is to provide a correction to history, while there are still people who remember how it was.

The Ethnohistory of Japanese Pioneers: A Contemporary Mindscape

In attempting to reconstruct reality from memory, Evenden and Anderson (1972:43) caution that memories have a particular reality that is "filtered by experience." The mindscape that exists is a fragile and subtle one, consisting of opinions, attitudes and recollections--every one coloured and shaped by historical events. This study, therefore, is an attempt to re-create the communities of Japanese Cumberland from the memories of some who were there.

This is not just a fascinating exercise in political correctness. It is an exercise in salvage ethnography. Much of its fascination lies in its comparatively shallow time depth--the earliest settlers arrived, as pioneers, on the west coast of Canada in the last two decades of the 19th century. They were young, in their late teens and early twenties. They sent for wives and established a second generation within ten to fifteen years (Sumida 1935; Hirabayashi 1976). Therefore, doing fieldwork in the Japanese Canadian

community today, involves dealing with aging persons, with a social structure which is, at best, three generations old. Before one can do field work in this environment, it is important to know and understand major historical events over the past century. Accordingly, one must consider a broad and varied body of literature written from widely divergent points of view. Through an examination of historical records, acculturation research, and ethnic group identity, one begins to have some understanding of today's Japanese Canadian community.

Literature Survey

Much of the written record dealing with oriental--both Japanese and Chinese--immigration to North America focuses on the history of an experience of oppression, discrimination and prejudice (Iyenaga and Sato 1921). Prior to World War II, Young and Reid (1938) provide one of the first major sources of early statistics on Japanese Canadians in Canada. The result of a study commissioned by the National Committee for the Mental Hygiene of Canada, their work documents many of the problems faced by the Japanese in Canada. Their intention was to examine "the Japanese question" (Young and Reid 1938:*xxx*) through an analysis of social, economic and political conditions

existing among Japanese Canadians in order to find solutions to the problems which seemed peculiar to oriental immigration. Part of their research is based on a field survey of a selected number of urban and rural Japanese communities in British Columbia which enlisted the assistance of a young economics graduate student (Sumida 1935) at the University of British Columbia. Young and Reid conclude that the problems between the small minority group of Japanese and the white majority is a clash of Japanese culture with Anglo-Canadian culture.

Since World War II, there has been a growing body of literature which addresses issues related to Japanese immigration to North America. During the war years, La Violette (1945, 1948) concluded several years of socio-psychological research on Japanese Canadians with a study of the impact and consequences of federal wartime policies of removal and relocation. Morris (1963) returns to pre-war years in an attempt to analyze anti-Japanese sentiment in British Columbia from 1890 to 1941, through examining articles, newspaper editorials and statements made during parliamentary debates. He concludes that prejudice was largely a result of economic conflict.

Ken Adachi (1976) is one of the first Japanese Canadians to publish a general history, advising his readers that his two aims in writing this

book are to expose the "demon" of racism and to set down the history of Japanese Canadians, from their first arrival,

> in the general context of the age, particularly against the background of the rattling of sabres in the Far East and the stresses generated by an immigrant group entering an unstable, volatile society which was then emerging from its pioneer stage (Adachi 1976:*iv*).

He admits, early in the work, that his "history" is not one in the usual sense. His intention is not simply to chronicle events, achievements and aspirations, but to discuss what can happen to a society when it loses its perspective on civil liberties (Adachi 1976:*v*). Working in the early 1970s, Adachi was hindered by wartime censorship and a thirty-year statute of limitation which did not allow access to government archival material of the war years. Nevertheless, his history, while largely descriptive and narrative, provides documentation of being a Japanese immigrant in Canada or, having been born Canadian, being a member of an unpopular minority group.

Ward (1978, 1982), unlike Morris, concludes that economic conflict was secondary to the social and psychological factors of racial tension. Further scholarship dealing with the fears and attitudes of "white" Canada during the first half of the 20th century is provided by Roy (1989). Daniels (1967, 1976, 1986) further explores the "frontier psychology" (1967:106) of the

west coast of North America. While these three scholars have provided an important contribution to the historiography of race relations, it should be noted that their research, like that of Adachi, is confined to English language sources. As such, this perspective, albeit important, is limited.

Thirty-five years after the end of World War II, Sunahara (1981) investigates the removal of Japanese Canadians from their homes and occupations. She traces the evolution of wartime public policy from its beginning in the political rhetoric of British Columbia politicians like Ian Mackenzie and Vancouver mayor J. W. Cornett, its growth and maturation in William Lyon MacKenzie King's government, and its implementation under the War Measures Act. Sunahara provides new information from archival sources on this period in Canadian history, not only through a meticulous examination of official documents which recorded the proceedings of conferences, private conversations, committee meetings and policy decisions, but also through many interviews with both Euro- and Japanese Canadians.

As well, during the past four decades, social scientists have turned much of their interest to ethnic group identity, particularly in Canada and the United States--countries where society is composed of many ethnic

groups.[2] Beginning in the 1930s, American anthropologists were increasingly concerned with acculturation among North American aboriginal societies (Redfield, Linton and Herskovits (1936), Herskovits (1937, 1941, 1958), and Linton (1940), and then with acculturation in the broader context of American society (Dorhrenwend and Smith (1957), Van Den Berghe (1967, 1970), Berry and Annis (1974)).

Since World War II, the acculturation and assimilation of Japanese Americans and Canadians has been the focus of much attention. Lyman (1962, 1977), Maykovitch (1972), Connor (1977), Montero (1980) and others have explored the rapid post-war acculturation and economic success of Japanese Americans--an ethnic minority which has become "a model minority" (Peterson 1966:20). It is in the past two decades that both Americans and Canadians of Japanese ancestry have begun to explore their own history--drawing on their own experience and that of others. Horinouchi (1967) looks at education as a mechanism for acculturation and Ogawa (1971) examines stereotyping. Kitano (1969), an American **nisei** sociologist, provides perhaps the most comprehensive and extensive study of acculturation, drawing upon the

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[2] Some of the relevant literature which discusses ethnic identity and diversity includes Spicer 1975), Despres (1975), Holloman and Arutinov (1978), Goldstein and Bienvenue (1980), Anderson and Frideres (1981), Royce (1982), McCready (1983), Horowitz (1985), Hechter (1986) and Auger *et al* (1987). Multiculturalism in Canada and attitudes towards visible minority groups are examined by Berry, Kalin and Taylor (1977), Aoki, Dahlie and Werner (1978), and Ujimoto and Hirabayashi (1980).

anecdotal and experiential contributions of friends and relatives. In Canada, scholars such as Suzuki (1976), Aoki (1978), and Hirabayashi (1976) explore their own ethnicity.

In Hawaii, to commemorate the centennial of the first arrival of government contracted Japanese workers in 1885, several books have been published since 1985. Notably, Odo and Sinoto (1985) have provided a fine pictorial history which documents the process of culture change and adaptation. Yukiko Kimura (1988), a Japanese anthropologist, details the experiences of early immigrants from Japan through the use of observations, memoirs and personal stories. Hazama and Komeiji (1986), in an attempt to explore their own heritage, provide another moving history of the first Japanese labourers in Hawaii and their descendants.

The story of Canada's Japanese immigrants is told in many ways. Whereas MacInnes (1927) is representative of contemporary rhetoric regarding oriental immigrants, Yamashita (1942) provides a less biased account of the Japanese experience in his essay on the history of the Japanese in British Columbia and their occupations. Sugimoto (1966) discusses immigration in the context of the race riots of 1907 and 1908 while, more recently, Keeble (1981) has examined early immigration policy as a vehicle for settling the province of

British Columbia. Much of the early history is in Japanese and is not generally available to non-Japanese speaking readers. Nakayama (1921a, 1921b) has compiled a major work which provides, in two volumes, a broad picture of life in Canada prior to 1920 along with 200 short biographies of Japanese settlers. Works by others, such as Kazuo Ito (1973), have been translated. Ito has chronicled the history of selected Japanese pioneers in the Pacific northwest through short personal accounts. Gordon Nakayama (1984) provides another collection of short biographies; Nakano (1980) and Miyasaki (1973) have published their memoirs.

In 1977, the centennial of the arrival of the first Japanese in Canada was celebrated. In commemoration of this event, Takata (1983) and the Japanese-Canadian Centennial Project Committee (1977), through interviews with hundreds of **issei** and their descendants, have identified many notable pioneers and their accomplishments.

A glimpse of history through yet another window is offered by Kitagawa (1985). Compiled and edited by Roy Miki, this volume is a collection of letters written between December 1941 and June 1942 by Muriel Kitagawa, a Vancouver journalist, to her brother. Miki augments the correspondence with selections from Kitagawa's private notebooks, her contributions to

newspapers such as the **New Canadian**, and an uncompleted autobiographical manuscript.

Other rich sources of information are books such as Knight and Koizumi's (1976) biography of fisherman Yoshida Ryuichi, Marlatt's (1975) aural history of the town of Steveston, and novels by authors like Kogawa (1981). In Japanese, Hayashi (1974) and Tsurumi (1962) provide descriptive accounts of the lives of Steveston fishermen. Morita (1986) describes early days on Vancouver's Powell Street--the area known by many as "Little Tokyo"--and Kudo (1983a, 1938b, 1986) writes of pioneer women in British Columbia in an emotional and impressionistic way.

In other parts of Canada, sociologist Makabe (1976, 1982) has examined ethnic group identity among Japanese Canadians in metropolitan Toronto. Based on this early research, she has subsequently published, in Japanese, the stories of five **issei** women who came to Canada as picture brides (1982). Canadian geographer Kobayashi (1983, 1986, 1988; Kobayashi and Jackson 1990) has focused on aspects of emigration and labour. Her doctoral dissertation explores change in the Japanese town of Kaideima in Hikone-city, where, as a result of a number of natural disasters in the late 1890s, many people emigrated to Canada. Ito (1984) gives us a comprehensive account of

military service in both world wars by Japanese Canadians, describing how two generations fought prejudice and discrimination at home before they could volunteer to fight for their country. Most recently, Ayukawa (1990) has added to the literature with the translation of a woman's diary which she discovered in Special Collections of the main library of the University of British Columbia.

There are many general histories of the early years of "building British Columbia" (Bennett 1937, Swanson 1960, Gunn 1968, Robin 1972, Paterson 1977), histories of the mining industry on Vancouver Island (Audain 1955, Orr 1968, Ramsay 1968, Taylor 1978, Johnstone 1980), and chronicles of the frontier life in the Comox Valley on Vancouver Island (Hughes 1962, Norcross 1969, Paterson 1975, Isenor *et al* 1987). However, despite the contributions Japanese Canadians have made to the development of British Columbia, these books show a strong ethnocentric bias and provide scant information, if any, on Japanese labourers or settlers.

Similarly, although many Japanese converted to Christianity, histories of the Anglican and United Churches in British Columbia (Peake 1959, Anderson *et al* 1983) have little information on the subject. Ward (1925) offers an ethnocentric overview of oriental missions before 1930 and historian Ward (1974), while suggesting that the protestant clergy in British Columbia

responded to Japanese immigrants in an humanitarian way, concludes that they, too, were affected by the prevailing prejudice of the time and did not believe that the Japanese would make a significant cultural contribution to Canadian society. Nevertheless, historical insight into the development of religious systems among Japanese Canadians can be found in Osterhout (1929); while Mitsui (1964), Izumi (1983), and Mullins (1984) provide discussions of the development of both the Japanese United Church and the Buddhist church in Canada.

To return momentarily to Evenden and Anderson's (1972) notion of a "contemporary mindscape," one must not overlook the data which can be provided by the historical photograph and the place photographs may have in the recreative history of a society. In the case of the Cumberland Japanese, there is a unique opportunity to work with a body of early photographs while many of the subjects of the photographs are still living.

The Chinese proverb says "A picture is worth more than a thousand words." Nevertheless, a photograph, representing a moment frozen, is most likely mute until someone puts context or narrative with it. In a family, usually the "someone" is a person who is present at the time the photograph was taken--the photographer, the subject, or perhaps, an onlooker. From time

to time, the narrative is a remembered story, passed on by a member of an older generation. It is only the narrator, not the photograph, which can enlighten the viewer as to what went before or after the taking of the picture:

> . . . in snapshots the external world is always implied: we continually recognize that a person's entrance is an exit from somewhere else, and vice versa. Snapshots assert that we continue to live even when we are stopped in a picture (Gordon 1987:176).

The personal experience narrative, therefore, can become hearsay or oral tradition when it is told by someone who has not witnessed or experienced the event themselves (Vansina 1961:20). Greenhill points out "often narratives associated with events in photographs are primarily personal experience and may not survive more than one or two generations" (1981:123).

Photographs as a Source of Anthropological Data

Within Euroamerican culture, still photographs are considered to be an important aspect of recording history.[3] Anthropologists have used

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[3] There are several recent histories on the development of photography--notably, Coke (1975), de Brigard (1975), Gordon (1978), Greenhill and Birrell (1979) and Gilbert (1980). Mattison (1982) provides an annotated, select bibliography (current to March 1981) of 19th century photographers in British Columbia in the winter issue of **B. C. Studies**--a special issue devoted to an interdisciplinary review of photography in British Columbia from 1858-1914. Not surprisingly, the Japanese photographers of Cumberland escape mention.

cameras in their fieldwork since before the turn of the century, both to record information and to illustrate findings. Despite this, only a handful of studies in cultural anthropology have given primary emphasis to photographic data (for example, Bateson and Mead 1942; Verger 1937, 1950; Collier and Buitron 1949; Mead 1956; Blackman 1973, 1981; Greenhill 1981; and Wyatt 1989). A few, notably Mead (1963), Byers (1964), Orhn and Bell (1975), Bellman and Jules-Rosette (1977), Peacock (1986) and Collier and Collier (1986), have looked at the nature of photography and have proposed some methodologies for the use and analysis of photographic data and for overcoming problems inherent to this medium. Recently, Wyatt (1989), in her work with pioneer photographers Winter and Pond, has demonstrated through content analysis of still photographs how culture contact has affected the lives and values of Indians in southeast Alaska.

While, for many years, photographs have provided an illustrative mechanism to both historian and social scientist, within an anthropological context many photographic documents have been considered to have limited value since they are the product of members outside the culture being photographed--amateur ethnographers, missionaries, government agents, and so on--in effect, agents of culture change (Blackman 1973:87). Blackman (1973:99) questions this inherent bias:

> Why was the particular subject matter selected for photography? What was the role of the photographer--a professional, photographic views to sell, member of a scientific expedition charged to photograph certain things, tourist anxious to photograph the disappearing Indian? How knowledgeable of Haida culture was the photographer and to what extent, if any, did he participate in it?

Davison (1982), however, advises that historical photographs should have some sense of presence as primary source documents. While he, too, recognizes that many photographs are "violations of historical evidence" (1982:18), he also concludes that

> the real potential of historical photographs for researchers and historians [is] their ability to amplify our knowledge of the past. . . . Captured within the "mirror with a memory" is frequently a faithful reflection of the individual and interpersonal dynamics of an entire society, focused intensely into one visual image no bigger than a postcard (1982:34).

In summary, while interviews and use of extant photographs will contribute much toward charting an ethnographic description of Japanese Cumberland, available historical documents in archives, libraries and museums cannot be ignored. The eclecticism of ethnohistorical research lies in a variety of data-collecting techniques for gathering, preparing and analyzing both oral and written history--including the sort of data used by physical anthropologists, historical linguists, archaeologists, and ethnographers (Sturtevant 1966:8,

Trigger 1982:10). Lurie (1961:87) believes that ethnohistory enriches the ethnological literature and that "the most productive technique rests in the opportunity to go back and forth from field to library" resorting to documents to help fill gaps and pin down times and places. Still, she (1961:89) cautions "ethnohistory . . . has certain limitations; there is a finite number of useful documents, and . . . they are not an endless resource."

The written record is the same for the anthropologist and the historian. In libraries and archives one can find government documentation of social events and the vital statistics of populations, church records, newspapers, magazines, personal journals, manuscripts and diaries. All of these are subject to their own particular biases and distortion and will vary in terms of their completeness of record (Pelto 1970:134). Lurie (1961:84) and others are quick to point out that much of the information in historical sources was usually recorded by interested but untrained "outsiders"--travellers, missionaries and amateur historians--whose ways were foreign to the group or events they described. Thus, "official" sources of data on the affairs of a minority group as prepared by members of the dominant culture reflect the values of the latter culture.

Accordingly, the ethnohistorian who seeks to recreate an

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ethnographic description through historical evidence needs to be sensitized to the bias of an ethnocentric observer and to search for all available records and manuscripts in order to verify information, to "correct" the biases, errors and omissions of colonial history through anthropological evidence, and to chart the mindscape of a past such as that of Cumberland.

Chapter II: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Methodologically, research in identity maintenance, culture change and acculturation requires a starting point or base-line from which change can be measured. Reconstruction of such a position might draw on interviews, interpretation of folklore, available written documents--such as diaries, letters and journals--and the like. Successful *ethnohistorical* reconstruction generally combines archival research with fieldwork, the latter usually taking the form of *memory ethnography* or *upstreaming*--a process whereby aging residents of the community are questioned about the time when their culture was in a "purer" state (Sturtevant 1966; Carmack 1972).

Ethnohistorical research on this project commenced in August 1989 with fieldwork conducted in various communities over a two-year period. Prior to that, more than a year was spent establishing contacts, identifying problems and doing exploratory investigation. I went to gatherings and meetings of the Japanese Canadian community and engaged in informal conversations with a number of persons.

Data Collection

In order to successfully complete this study, I decided that several different strategies of data collection were required. The guide for initial collection of data was a questionnaire (Appendix 1) which functioned as an interview protocol and which provided the structure for a series of both formal and informal interviews. Used in conjunction with and based largely on a group of photographs which were used as a methodological tool, this permitted the gathering of a broad band of potentially relevant data and allowed a narrower focus toward more specific aspects of community and family life.

Interviews comprised the principal source of information. They were intensive, qualitative and largely unstructured. Normally, most formal interviews were approximately ninety minutes to two hours long and took place in the home of the person being interviewed. Several persons did not consent to a formal interview, but were willing to answer a few questions during a telephone conversation. Interviews with former residents and descendants of Japanese Cumberland who now live in Toronto, Winnipeg and the interior of British Columbia were begun in August 1989 and completed in

April 1991. Although former residents are living in other parts of Canada, the United States and Japan, financial constraints did not allow me to consider including these people in my study.

All but one of the interviews were conducted in English, although most interviews occurred in a mixture of Japanese and English. When respondents discovered that I had some Japanese language speaking ability, they would switch back and forth between two languages. Interviews were tape-recorded with prior consent; only one person asked that a tape recorder not be used. I personally transcribed and translated the tapes.

Interviews were conducted in as informal a manner as possible and respondents were encouraged to elaborate on their responses to questions. When necessary, probing techniques were used. Once it was explained that the objective of the study was to recreate a pre-war life experience and was not concerned with war-time experiences, most respondents answered questions freely. Many respondents were initially anxious--not sure that they would have clear memories of "childhood times." However, at the conclusion of an interview, most would express surprise that they had remembered as much as they had and, further, that they had had an enjoyable experience.

Persons who were interviewed were given the option of being named in the research or remaining anonymous and were asked to sign a consent form. That I was a stranger in their community has probably assured respondents of the anonymous nature of the data-gathering process and to a freer expression of personal viewpoint. While all respondents were polite and cooperative, some were particularly friendly, open and sociable. I am especially grateful to these people.

The historical photographs extended and enriched the interview experience. These proved particularly useful as memory aids for elderly subjects. To validate the information received from persons interviewed, I turned to the libraries, special collections and archives of the University of Victoria, the University of British Columbia, the University of Toronto, the British Columbia Provincial Archives and the archives of the British Columbia Telephone Company. Company records, county court records, church records, newspapers, maps, directories--all provided a great deal of historical information.

The Sample

On April 12, 1942, 585 persons of Japanese descent, living in communities located within a fifteen mile radius of Cumberland, were removed to Vancouver:

TABLE 1: JAPANESE-CANADIAN POPULATION, CUMBERLAND AREA AT APRIL 9, 1942[4]

COMMUNITY	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Cumberland Number One	73	61	134
Number Five & Town	82	72	154
Fanny Bay	66	55	121
Royston	60	68	128
Courtenay & Headquarters	21	14	35
Union Bay	8	5	13
TOTAL	310	275	585

The sample for the study includes twenty-six persons, representing ten of thirty-one households in Cumberland Number One, twelve of twenty-seven households in Number Five, and one of the four households which represented "Town" [those who lived and worked in downtown Cumberland]. Included in those interviewed are members of three families who lived in the Cumberland area prior to 1934 and three representatives of

[4] Ono, Yoshio. Papers. University of British Columbia, Vancouver. Hereinafter referred to as "Ono Papers".

households in the Royston area. Of the twenty-six persons interviewed, the seventeen women ranged in age from sixty-two to ninety-five years (on average, seventy-one years old); the nine men ranged in age from sixty-nine to eighty-five years (on average, seventy-three years old).

Initially, thirty-five persons were approached. Of those, eleven did not consent to be interviewed because they were "too busy and couldn't find the time for an interview" or because they "didn't want to be involved in the project"--the latter for a variety of reasons. Of those interviewed, it is coincidental that 50% were living in the Cumberland area at the time of evacuation; 50% had moved to other communities in British Columbia.

This study focuses upon the populations of Cumberland Number One and Cumberland Number Five, although there is a recognized interaction with communities at Royston, Union Bay, Fanny Bay and Courtenay. Further, the study has been limited by the sample size--the twenty-six individuals interviewed may not constitute a representative sample of the pre-war "Japanese" population of the area.

Early in the survey process it became apparent that members of the **nisei** community I was attempting to contact are a close knit group of

good friends and kin. I assumed that this structure would have a networking aspect to it and, therefore, used a *snowballing* technique to ask for referrals. Several persons, when I first approached them, confirmed the source of reference. The fact that the referral had come from a friend or relative may have been instrumental in their decision to be interviewed. Most people granted interviews reluctantly.

While the population being sampled included all the families who lived in the Cumberland-Comox area at some time during 1900-1942, the whereabouts of all families is not known. I began, therefore, with a list of former residents who had returned to visit the Cumberland Museum and who had signed the visitors' book and included their addresses. A search of Museum files produced the addresses of several more people who had been in correspondence with the Museum. When I approached the Vancouver Island Japanese Canadian Society for their support, I was given several more names of persons to contact. I endeavoured to contact the eldest family member, whenever possible.

Employing opportunistic sampling procedures,[5] I began my

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[5] It should be noted that other sampling techniques, such as random sampling, would have produced few or no interviews. Each person interviewed had to be established through a contact.

research by travelling through the interior of British Columbia, initially approaching people by telephone. After explaining the parameters of my research, I requested an interview. Some persons were willing to be interviewed and some were not. Those who were interviewed usually provided a verbal introduction to another potential candidate. Sometimes this approach was successful, sometimes it was not. Opportunistic sampling will often reveal the "well-informed" or "expert"--the one person in a community who is considered by many to be able to provide the best information available. With the Cumberland Japanese, this process manifested itself through group consensus. For example, initially I had no luck with a particular group of people in the Toronto area. Each person I contacted suggested that I speak to a Mrs. X, who, in their opinion, was the best person to represent that community. I could not discover by what criteria this decision had been reached. Was this person the most articulate, the most knowledgeable? Much later, after a great deal of archival research, I inferred that this woman had been well-known and respected, as a child and a teenager, for her speaking skills.

Reliability of memory recall in an aging community was of some concern. Many people appeared to be genuinely helpful and informative, although after several interviews it was apparent that some people were

deliberately selective in the information they chose to impart. One woman said openly at the beginning of an interview, "My son has always advised me not to tell everything. Keep some things back." Further, on occasion, someone would forget a detail and, later, tell me that they had checked with a friend for the missing information.

Who was being interviewed also created a filtering process. Two men together might sit and recall the names of Eurocanadian female classmates in old school photographs and exchange information regarding who had married whom and how many children there were. The same two men may not have offered the same information if women other than myself had been present. Often when I interviewed a woman alone, or two women together, a husband hovered in the background. While I could appreciate his curiosity regarding the project, I was also conscious that his presence was probably an information filter. In a group of more than two, often verbal and non-verbal "permission cues" would pass between people when some topics were being explored. Certainly, in one interview where there were several people present, whispered cross conversations occurred in Japanese, and women would excuse themselves to help in the kitchen--again, manipulating the flow of information. This problem could be addressed only through repeated questioning of others and confirmation of details.

Representativeness and variability within the sample were both also problematic. Generally, the families in the Cumberland Japanese villages were large, with several children. While people were dispersed throughout Canada in the 1940s, social networks through kinship links remain strong. Often I was referred to another person by one, only to discover at a point during a subsequent interview that the two were related either directly or by marriage. For example, six of the twenty-seven households in Number Five village, representing thirty persons at April 1942 (25% of the village population), are related by marriage. Such a close-knit network cannot help but present a certain bias.

As well, socioeconomic, real or perceived, status within the community may have had some effect on the interview process. Certainly, several persons declined to be interviewed because "I was nothing. Just a millworker. There was nothing interesting about my life" or "I don't speak much English and I am only a housewife. Talk to . . . ."

While most of the people interviewed are retired now, they speak with pride of their children who have gone to university and who are doctors, engineers, and teachers. Several people agreed that this is one of the positive things resulting from wartime events in the 1940s. Moving to other

parts of Canada has given them and their families economic opportunity that was not available to them in British Columbia.

Further Constraints and Barriers

While the process of searching for and interviewing former community members can go on indefinitely, this is an exercise in salvage ethnography and I felt some urgency in completing the research for this project. In this elderly community, every week there is news of deterioration--a stroke, or cancer, a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease, a death. Since this project began, two of the people I interviewed have died so there has been little opportunity to know people on anything but a superficial level. The best strategy seemed to be to pursue interviews with those who were most accessible, and then to use this group to access a wider circle of friends and relations. Curiously, this approach resulted in my not interviewing anyone who currently lives on Vancouver Island or in the Greater Vancouver area.

Even if an interview was granted, I found other barriers to communication. Displacement, removal and wrongful detainment is "scarred into the souls of every Japanese who went through it" (Suzuki 1976:9-10) and

has created an anger and distrust of varying intensity toward white Canada. I am not Japanese and so there is a range of behavioural reaction to my involvement with this community--from polite interest and curiosity to enthusiasm to distrust and disbelief. That I can speak some Japanese has been a help, although many people complain that the Japanese language that they learned and still speak is, effectively, rooted in 19th century Japan and has little relationship to the language that is spoken in Japan today (the language I am learning). The **nisei** community with which I am working remains sensitized to public opinion and generally prefers to look inward to its family and old friends.

Photographs as Primary Research Documents

Just as language learning--learning to speak and to listen--is a basic sensory requirement for the ethnographer, so is observation learning--learning to see with visual accuracy. For the modern ethnographer, the camera becomes another eye, a way of recording complex information with a low scale of abstraction, specifically and selectively (Collier and Collier 1986:7-10). The camera sees and remembers material reality.

As previously mentioned, some ethnographers, particularly Margaret Mead and her co-authors, have used cameras to record detail and to illustrate their works (for example, one can refer to the works of Mead 1956, 1963; Mead and McGregor 1951; Mead and Byers 1967; Bateson and Mead 1942). Photographs as visual essays in order to portray a culture have been used by yet other anthropologists, notably Collier and Buitron (1949) in their study of Otavalo weaving culture in Ecuador and Verger's (1950) study of Peruvian indian society. Blackman (1973) has applied still photographs to her photogrammetric study of northern and Kaigani Haida settlements and material culture. Wyatt (1989) has also used content analysis of still photographs to glean evidence of culture change among the Indians of southeast Alaska. However, little other organized research has been done using still photographs. In 1964, Byers (1964:78), in researching synchrony in nonverbal communication, observed "there is, as yet, almost no photographic equivalent of a literacy with which to handle photographic observational materials systematically and communicatively." Twenty years later, Collier and Collier (1986:13) have written:

> Certainly the overload of photographic information presents problems for controlled analysis. Quoting an anthropologist, "Photographs are just more raw realism. They contain everything. We have worked out ways of digesting verbal data, but what can we do with photographs?" Indeed, . . . if researchers are without reliable keys to photographic content, if they do not know what is positive evidence and what is intangible and strictly impressionistic, anthropology will not be

> able to use photographs as data, and there will be no way of moving from raw photographic imagery to the synthesized statement.

If ethnographers have problems with using still photography in the field, it is easy to infer that still photographs from the past have held little interest for anthropologists. And yet, historical photographs should have some meaning, some value as primary source documents; most ethnohistorians are comfortable with basing their research on evidence from memory ethnography, oral traditions, comparative ethnology, museum collections, early illustrations and primary historical documents from the time in question. Where there is a relevant collection of historic photographs, it cannot be ignored. It was the discovery of such a collection which initiated this study.

The Photographs and Photographers of Japanese Cumberland

Several years ago, the Cumberland Museum and Historical Society acquired several cardboard boxes of glass negative plates. When copy negatives and prints were made,[6] it was discovered that the 786 five-by-seven

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[6] A grant in 1985 from the British Columbia Heritage Trust, supplemented with donations from the community, enabled the Museum to produce copy negatives and prints of the plates. In subsequent years, the Museum has worked at identifying the subjects of the photographs. However, this process is slow and haphazard as it is done mainly by casual visitors, generally

inch glass negatives, which came to be known locally as the Glass Negative Project, represented a portion of the collective work of two, probably three, local photographers, spanning a period from 1913 to 1930.

The subject matter of the collection is comprised of about 60% former Japanese residents, 20% Caucasian residents of Cumberland, 10% former Chinese residents, and approximately 10% local scenery--mining, street scenes, etc. The great majority of the photographs are studio portraits. The collection is not complete; survival of the glass plate negatives has been haphazard. Furthermore, visitors to the Museum remember sitting for portraits in the past and have not been able to find what they recall. Finally, there is some evidence that the surviving plates are, in fact, discards. Many of these negatives have not been retouched--proof that they had been rejected by the photographer (K. Hayashi:89.11.09).

A remarkable feature of the collection is that the photographers were Japanese and their Japanese subjects were people who lived in the community, people that they knew and interacted with on a daily basis. Therefore, one probably does not find the inherent biases that photographs taken by a Caucasian photographer from outside the community

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former residents, to the Museum.

might have exhibited.

The Photographers

The photographs of the Glass Negative Project are known to be the work of three professional photographers, Mr. Senjiro Hayashi and his apprentices, Mr. Kitamura and Mr. "Take" Matsubuchi, who operated a photography studio located on the top floor of the Willard Building on the corner of Dunsmuir Avenue and Third Street in downtown Cumberland. Hayashi opened the studio in 1911 and operated it until 1927. Matsubuchi took over the operation of the studio in that year and managed it until April 1942.

Senjiro Hayashi was born into a family of potters on July 22, 1880 in Oroshi-Chō, Toki-Gun, in Gifu-ken, [Honshu], Japan. He came to Canada as "a curious visitor" (K. Hayashi, correspondence 86.02.04) in 1903 and settled in Vancouver. There he studied photography from books and apprenticed with a Mr. Fujiwara who had a photography studio. After a visit to Cumberland in early 1911, he moved to that town soon after as he saw "a good prospect for a photography business" (Hayashi: 1986). Initially, he established his studio in Number One village but, in 1912, he moved to

Number Five village. By 1913, he had acquired studio space on the top floor of the Willard Building in downtown Cumberland. In 1927, Hayashi sold the business to Take Matsubuchi and moved his family to Mission City, where, on November 20, 1936, at the age of fifty-six, he died.

Tokitaro Takeshima ("Take") Matsubuchi was born on March 7, 1890 in Tsukusho-gun, Fukuoka-ken, on the southern island of Kyushu in Japan. He emigrated to Canada in his late teens, landing in Vancouver where he lived with his mother's sister. He also studied photography, showing an aptitude for retouching. He continued his studies with Senjiro Hayashi in Cumberland and assisted in establishing the studio in the Willard Building. The Eastman Kodak camera that they used is still the property of Take's wife, Mrs. Shizuko Matsubuchi. Matsubuchi operated the studio until the 1930s, when the Depression forced the business to close. Matsubuchi took a variety of jobs to support his family of ten, continuing to take photographs of friends and neighbours. In 1942, he took the required alien registration and passport photographs "for people from miles around" (F. Ono: 89.08.29). Matsubuchi died on May 29, 1974, in Montreal, at the age of eighty-four.

There is an advertisement in the Cumberland **Islander** for June 14, 1919 which advises that Mr. Kitamura's studio "is now open for

Business in the Willard Block. . . . Photographs taken every Day. First class work guaranteed. . . . Enlarging a specialty. Films developed for Amateurs." Nothing further is known of Mr. Kitamura, who apparently lived in Number Five village for only a brief time.

The Cumberland Photographs as Sources of Anthropological Data

The photographs, while having intrinsic value as primary research documents, provided a distinctive methodological tool. They came from the Glass Negative Project collection, an excellent representative selection of which is part of a permanent display at the Cumberland Museum. From the Museum files, I selected 100 photographs and mounted copies of them--in no particular order--in a photograph album. This album was an integral part of each interview. In terms of fieldwork, this process had somewhat the same effect as the family photograph album--an opportunity for people to gather around and comment. Collier and Collier (1986:99) explain:

> . . . photographs can be communication bridges between strangers that can become pathways into unfamiliar, unforeseen environments and subjects. The informational character of photographic imagery makes this process possible. They can function as starting and reference points for discussions of the familiar and the unknown, and their literal content can almost always be read within and across cultural boundaries.

The photograph album became a moderator--a third party which directed the flow of conversation and became part of the interview process. The photographs served to sharpen memories, became the subject of questions and, generally, elicited a flow of information. As Collier and Collier (1986:106-107) point out:

> . . . the facts are in the pictures; informants do not have to feel they are divulging confidences. All they are doing is getting the history in order and the names straight. . . . Photographic interviewing offers a detachment that allows the maximum free association possible within structured interviewing.

I was primarily interested in the photographs portraying the Japanese community; however, I did some work with photographs portraying non-Japanese subjects, for comparison purposes. Photographs from the Glass Negative Project were supplemented by a small number of additional photographs loaned or given to me. These photographs, too, proved to be useful in the memory ethnography process and provided worthwhile information about the community.

Although the photographic sample used in this study has several shortcomings, the "outsider point of view" is not one. However, little behavioural data is recorded for ethnohistorical research and the random survival of the glass plate negatives has resulted in a certain paucity of

information. The preponderance of studio portraits, while providing some anthropological data regarding material culture, is limited in value. Following stylistic conventions for studio portraits of the times, these portraits give an indication of economic status, for example, which is not supported by evidence from other sources. Lurie (1961:90-91), who has discussed at some length the value of photographic material, suggests that despite their inherent limitations such collections are nevertheless notable because ". . . portraits were neither taken nor assembled for anthropological purposes. . . . The pictures represent [people] as they wished themselves to remembered by their families." She goes on to note that

> relatively recent pictorial records can sometimes be as valuable for acculturation study . . ; [a] little appreciated source of data lies in the negative files of photographers who have worked in a given area over a long period of years (Lurie 1961:86).

Despite the wealth of data produced from the opportunity to travel "back and forth from field to library" (Lurie 1961:87), gaps remain, there is an inherent thinness and inferences have to be made. Published descriptions of Japanese society in Cumberland during the early decades of this century tend to illustrate some of the shortcomings of historical research: while based upon written records such as documents from the mining company which was the town's major employer, newspaper articles, and other local histories, it has

been written by and reflects the values of non-Japanese historians. A further limitation is imposed by the people themselves. Today's youngest survivors of Japanese Cumberland were babies at the outbreak of World War II--they are now in their early fifties, and have few memories that are relevant to the research. Their older siblings--those who were in their teen years or who were of marriageable age and are now in their seventies--have memories of growing up during the twenties and thirties and may also reminisce about their parents' and, in some cases, their grandparents' experiences.

Missing from the record are the memories of the parents of these two groups--the householders. It is this group which, if still alive, are in their eighties and nineties and it is this group which might have provided valuable insight into household economics, relationships within family groups, and traditional customs and attitudes. Regrettably, no-one from this group was interviewed--most commonly because they were either too frail or because they were just not accessible to me. While their children could often describe events and circumstances, the reason why things happened or why things were done the way they were done was not always known:

> Grandmother told me so many stories. That's how I remember. All the stories. And mother, she used to tell me,

too (110:90.02.21).[7]

I don't know about the **issei** parents' life. You obeyed. Didn't ask questions. I never asked any questions (251:90.02.19).

What we remember, usually when we remember, we only remember the good parts. Especially our childhood. That's what we were. We were children, not knowing any of the problems that existed. And, by the time we realized, we had left there. And, when you look back, we are looking back through different eyes because we have come through a great deal and we have a different perspective now of what went on. Some things we never stopped to ask. We were there and that was that (273:89.11.09).

One further issue to be addressed is the way I have presented my findings. I have deliberately chosen the convention of the "ethnographic present" even though Japanese Cumberland is now, in the case of Number One, only an uneven, grassy field behind an abandoned slag heap, and, in the case of Number Five, a few houses on what is now known as Maple Street. One can find broken crockery, rusty pots and bedsprings in the field and, if one searches, one can find the railway bed that runs behind Number Five. There is little else. Nevertheless, this community is alive in the memories of the people whose parents built it. Therefore, I have chosen to let the people themselves speak and have sought to provide historical context and corroboration where

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[7] All informants have been given random numbers as identifiers. Informants who are not concerned with anonymity have been named in the text, where appropriate. Where an informant has been quoted from an interview the informant number, followed by the date of the interview, is recorded.

such observations are useful or necessary for clarification or where verification of a reminiscence is of value. Further, no data is presented which has not been corroborated between the persons interviewed or between interviewee and documentary sources. Data that could not be verified has not been used. Similarly, information gleaned solely from secondary sources has not been included unless it adds to some specific aspect of the ethnography.

Chapter III: IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT

Background

In 1869, the four prospectors who established the Union Company discovered coal four miles inland from Comox Bay and eleven miles from Baynes Sound in a valley of the Beaufort Mountains. The company and its prospect were purchased in 1883 by Robert Dunsmuir who incorporated the Union Colliery Company of British Columbia, Limited, to work the coal seams. The mining camp, known as Union, became the town of Cumberland. By the turn of the century, Cumberland--with an area population of about 3,000--had become one of the largest and most prosperous communities on the coast of British Columbia.

The region, supported by a mining industry which had produced over 69,000 tons of coal in 1890, its third year of operation (Isenor *et al* 1987:257), attracted numerous settlers. In 1894, the town site of Cumberland was laid out adjacent to the mining camp and, in 1897, was incorporated as a city. The editor of the Cumberland **Weekly News** for the week of April 13,

1897 notes that the city

> . . . has one large department store besides two general stores, four large hotels, two saw mills, two merchant tailoring establishments, various shops, such as dry goods, tin and hardware, metal, harness and saddlery, livery, jewlery [sic], stationery, bakeries and barbershops, photograph gallery, a graded school, four churches, and a newspaper.

While this description provides an image of prosperous civilization, perusal of newspapers of the time and of archival photographs can conjure up a picture of a frontier town of contradictions, a town that was carved out of forest wilderness. The Collieries was a paternalistic employer, providing housing and schools and company stores which would provide an immigrant family with anything it needed to start life in the community--iron pots and pans, tin lunch pails, bedsteads, and washtubs. Everything was on credit; a man could be in debt for as long as he lived and worked. Housing for miners who were not Chinese or Japanese was built by Dunsmuir Collieries and laid out in rows behind Dunsmuir Avenue--the main thoroughfare. The streets were dusty in summer, awash with mud at any other time of the year, for

> . . .it rains in the Comox Valley. During the short winter season rain descends in curtains, in sheets, in blankets. Sometimes the wind blows while rain is falling, lashing the countryside, smashing trees, finding leaky roofs, and making it dangerous in the woods. . . (**Comox District Free Press** February 1, 1934).

Most of the commerce was on Dunsmuir Avenue. Pedestrians crossing this street from boardwalk to boardwalk struggled with the traffic of delivery wagons, carriages and hired saddle horses, wandering livestock, stray dogs, and mud. Behind the boardwalks and storefronts which offered glimpses of French millinery, saddles, grand pianos, boots, sides of bacon and tin bathtubs, there were the miners' cottages with cedar stumps higher than a man's head towering among them. Behind them, were the shacks and shanty towns of itinerant workers and the coal mine headworks; and, then, the forest. Oldtimers remember the sounds of mine whistles and the smells of coal and wood smoke, outhouse effluvium and swamp mud.

As the community grew, the population divided itself along ethnic lines--most of the families had British or American roots. They lived in the centre of town; Italian families clustered together in Union Camp (also known as "Camp," or West Cumberland). Presbyterian Scots settled near their church in the southwestern corner of the new town of Cumberland and other small communities came to be known by English-speaking inhabitants as Chinatown, Coontown and Japtown.[8]

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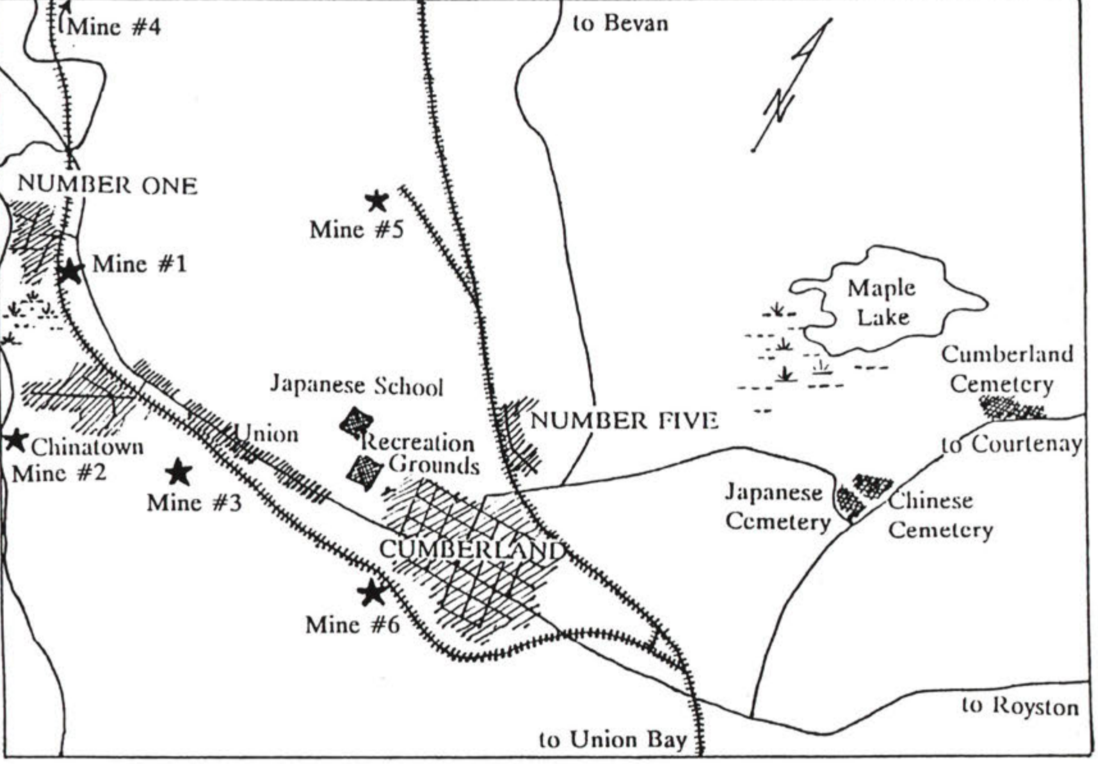
[8] While local historians now claim "the separate communities were termed 'Japtowns' but this was more a shorthand rather than derogatory term" (Isenor *et al* 1987:290), former residents of Japanese descent have requested that this term be excised from any historical references made by the Cumberland museum and local tourist publications. Accordingly, this study refers--perhaps, more accurately--to Number One and Number Five villages.
I have not found any similar reaction to the term "Coontown" for the black community.



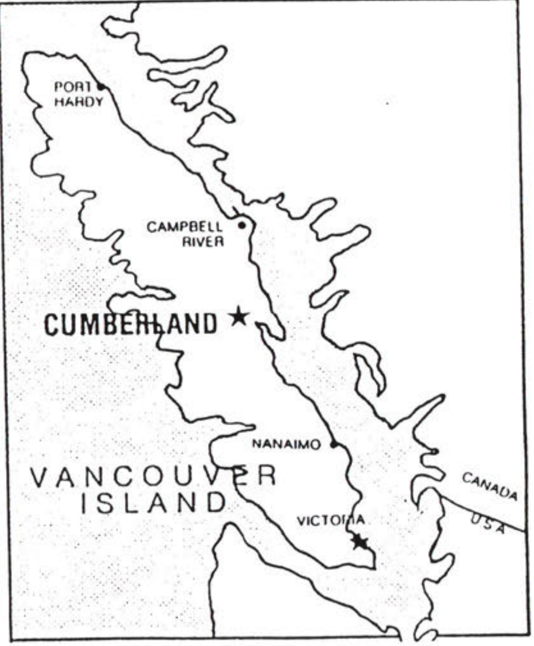


FIGURE 1: Cumberland and area

Contract labourers were settled near their work sites by the Company--Number Five Japanese village near Number Five mine shaft and Number One village near the slope to Number One tunnel (Figure 1). "Coontown," a small group of black American miners, and Chinatown were near Number Two tunnel slope.[9] These communities, while not formally segregated, functioned as "self-enclosed congeries" (Adachi 1976:109).

Both Chinese and Japanese labour was used by the Dunsmuir Collieries. Early Collieries records show that passage money was advanced to Japanese miners as early as 1890 and Nakayama, the Japanese historian, reports that the first contract labourers came from Japan to Cumberland in 1889 (Nakayama 1921a:np, as cited by Sumida 1935:26), supplied by companies like the Kobe Immigration Supply Company and the **Meiji Iminkaisha**. Sumida (1935:26) suggests that, by 1901, more than 500 Japanese immigrants were working in the Cumberland coal mines. The Japanese settlement at Cumberland is considered to be one of the oldest in British Columbia (Sumida 1935:353).

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[9] The Comox Basin coal deposit consisted of five deep sandstone seams interlayered with shale, and was mined in eight different locations. To mine the coal, the Collieries either sank sloping tunnels which angled down to the coal deposits or, in the case of deeper deposits, sunk shafts. The shaft for Number Five Mine was over 600 feet deep, while tunnel slopes could run to over a mile (as in Number Four Mine). Number Four, which produced coal for almost 50 years and Number Five Mines were among the largest coal mines on the Pacific Coast (Isenor *et al* 1987:257-264). It is these two mines which employed primarily Asian labour. Lai (1988) offers a history of the Chinese community in Cumberland.

By 1909, the practice of importing contract labour had been abandoned by the Canadian government--largely as a result of the race riots of 1907-08 (Sumida 1935:355). By this time, however, a community of Japanese immigrants had established itself in the Comox Valley.

Early Immigration

The early years of immigration to and settlement in Canada by Japanese are recorded by only a handful of historians. Roy (1989), for example, gives a comprehensive historical account of Asian emigration to Canada. Although the first Japanese came to Hawaii as early as 1868 as contract labour for the sugar plantations (Moriyama 1985:1), labour migration from Japan to Canada did not occur substantially until after 1885. It is estimated that over 4,000 workers recruited by labour contractors migrated between 1894 and 1908 (Moriyama 1985:153).

It is well documented that, during the latter half of the 19th century, internal politics of the Japanese Meiji regime (1867-1912) were promoting broad social reforms which had far-reaching consequences for rural populations and which drove Japan into the world of modern nation-states.

Military conscription had been introduced by 1873 (Takata 1983:13); primary education was compulsory. A civil code "required impartable inheritance and recommended primogenitorial succession to the headship of the family" (Smith 1983:34). By the 1880s, the price of rice had dropped and farmers were unable to pay rent and taxes (Hazama and Komeiji 1986:16). If a son was not the eldest, his share of the family property would be meagre. Joining the military or the church might be among the only other career options for a younger son.

When, in 1885, a centuries-old ban on emigration was lifted (Moriyama 1985:1; Kitano 1976:14), passports became available for travel overseas. Young Japanese men left their ancestral villages to seek work in the sugar plantations of Hawaii and adventure in North America. Canada, as an emigration destination, was a reasonable alternative to Japan's poverty, heavy taxation, overpopulation, army conscription and low living standards. They looked for economic opportunity, freedom of individual action, and adventure. Although the reasons for early emigration from Europe are comparable, these early Japanese immigrants also looked upon emigration as a way to find opportunity to increase personal wealth, prestige and power. It was their intent to return to their ancestral villages having made a quick fortune (Takata 1983:13-15). Harold Hirose (90.11.08), a former resident, recalls

> My parents come from Hiroshima, in the outskirts. From a valley just like Vancouver Island, with mountains, rivers. . . .

> My dad was the fourth son, I think, and when he was 18 he went to **heidagensa** [military conscription]--you are called up to serve in the army for three years. So, when he went he was told that there are two ways of being loyal to your country. You can join the army and serve your term like everybody else. Or there's a place called America, the land of opportunity, and Japan is a very poor country. So my dad said "well, I think I can go to America for a couple of years and make some money and send it back to home." And so he came to Portland, Oregon, in 1898 and . . . ended up in Cumberland.

Most came, not as a free agent like Hirose's father, but as contract labourers to industries such as mining. Kimura (1988:5) notes that contract immigrants were counselled to work faithfully, to save their money, and to return home. An announcement by Miki Nabeshima, governor of Hiroshima Prefecture, issued on October 3, 1893, is typical of such instruction:

> You, **dekasegi** emigrants, who are now leaving your most beloved parents, wives, and children behind, are going to cross 3,000 miles of ocean to that far-away foreign country with the sole purpose of earning and saving money in order to return home some day to live comfortably (Kawazoe 1968:np, as cited by Kimura 1988:5).

They came, then, to the west coast of North America as temporary residents--not as colonists with the intent to spread their culture in a foreign land, nor with the intent of being absorbed into western society. As Lyman (1977:14) points out, their experience was "bracketed" by their goal--"the unique character of their immigration required them to *adapt* America and its

ways to their own purposes rather than *adopt* it to the exclusion and surrender of their own values." They settled, as immigrant-pioneers, on the west coast, rather than migrating to other parts of Canada--because there was always an intention to return to Japan (Adachi 1976:17). Sumida (1935:75) writes,

> they came, confident that the riches of British Columbia would be easy to obtain, and that a few years of diligent toil would make them wealthy. . . . While this may seem an exaggeration, [I], as a boy in Japan, heard many stories of trees with golden leaves growing in Canada.

Japanese immigrants to the west coast of North America appear to have arrived in two groups. The first immigrants, recruited by the Japanese government (Kimura 1988:5) to work in Hawaiian sugar plantations, were from farming families and villages in rural Hiroshima--one of the largest emigration prefectures (Kimura 1988:131). Many of them did not stay in Hawaii, but continued on to North America. A woman from Number Five (101:89.08.29) says,

> My grandfather came first. His family were from Hiroshima and did farming. He didn't like the rice patch and so he ran away from there. First he went to Hawaii, but there was nothing much in Hawaii. So, he came to Cumberland.

Her cousin (119:89.11.09) adds, "He called so many of his friends. They all come from the same Hiroshima and her grandfather came out first and called our parents out." These families settled in and around

Number Five village. The second group of immigrants were labourers contracted to work in the coal mines. Many of these men were from the mining communities of Fukuoka and Kumamoto on the south island of Kyushu. These men settled, for the most part, in Number One village. A miner's daughter (260:89.08.27) said that her father had come from Kumamoto in 1910, to be a miner, with about sixty other men.

Yobiyose: The Summoned

Immigrants who appreciated the forests and rugged shorelines of the west coast and who found freedom and opportunity on the pioneer frontier wrote to relatives and friends in Japan and persuaded them to emigrate. The twenty year period following 1905, where there was the greatest influx of Japanese immigrants, is known as the **Yobiyose Jidai.** It is during this time that men sent for wives and children and invited sons and brothers and friends to come to Canada. This second influx of immigrants is known as **yobiyose**--the summoned.

> Father *brought* people. In those days, well, you've heard of the **yobiyose**. A lot of people used to sponsor relatives. That's what my dad did. Friends, he used to "call" them (122:90.11.08).

Someone else tells me, "grandfather called so many of his friends and relatives.

His [referring to another person in the room] brother, our uncle, her father. Grandfather called them all" (110:89.11.09).

Unlike the Chinese, Japanese were legally able to emigrate as families so a Japanese immigrant, once established, could send for his wife and children. One woman recalls,

> [The men] came out first and made money to send to Japan. They sent the money to bring their children over. My husband's father came out by himself and was working and said to his wife, "when I get enough money I'll send the money to you and then you come with the children." But, he didn't have enough, so he was just able to bring one child. And, there was two boys. He was supposed to bring the younger one but the older one wanted to come and the younger one had to stay back. After a while, they sent more money and then the younger one came. But, at first, one was left behind (262:90.11.15).

Those who could save enough money, returned to Japan to marry.

> My father was called out by a friend. Few years later he went back to Japan and married my mother. She came back with them and they settled in Cumberland. His friend called him (252:90.02.19).

Fumi Matsubuchi Ono recollects (89.08.29), "In 1896, when my grandfather came, he bought enough land, he made a house, then he went home to fetch his bride."

Elsewhere it has been observed that many immigrants came to Canada as young single males in their late teens and early twenties (Sumida

1935:61), believing that they would stay for a brief time, amass a fortune and return home as rich men. When they realized that they would be unable to save enough money to return home, they would send for a bride from their home village or town. She would then emigrate to Canada as a married woman.

An eligible bride was chosen by an immigrant's parents or close relatives and photographs were exchanged. If the proposition was acceptable, a wedding ceremony--with the groom *in absentia*--would take place at the village shrine or in front of the home shrine within the groom's parent's house. Close relatives of each family would attend the ceremony, which would be followed by the registration of the marriage in the village office in the family **koseki** [family register]. The groom would then arrange passage to Canada for his bride. These women were known as **shakonsai** [picture brides].

Both men and women, laugh and tell stories of how their grandmothers, often in their late teens, arrived at the dock in Vancouver or Victoria, a photograph in hand, trying to find a husband they had never seen. Often the photograph in hand was not that of the man they had married--he having borrowed a photograph of a friend more physically attractive, or having sent a picture of himself as a younger man. Occupational status, as well as

physical looks, was also falsified. Men were reluctant to admit that they were miners and common labourers.

Sometimes a bride was abandoned before she ever saw her husband. The men, too, would survey the young women as they gathered on the dock and if a man did not like the look of his bride he would quietly slip away, leaving her to find passage back to Japan or to find some kind of employment. The women who found their spouses also found a frontier life that was characterised by hardship and an unfamiliar social environment. With tenacity and courage, without the support of friends and family, these pioneer women built a life for their husbands and children. With children came families and families created a need for schooling and other aspects of social life.

Village Streetscape

People describe a life that was "in many respects, like having a Japanese village transplanted to Canada. The women stayed home, worked in the garden, in the house" (129:90.11.14) and recall that contact between the two small villages of Number One and Number Five and the Eurocanadian community of Cumberland is limited--children go to the public school in town

and miners and loggers work side by side with people from the town. Wives rarely leave the village.

Early homes for the miners are little more than unpainted shacks of one or two rooms, built of rough lumber which may or may not have been scavenged. For an annual rent of one dollar, the Dunsmuir Collieries Company provides either the dwelling or the land to build on. Cabins are built on an individual basis, on unplanned streets. They have rough exterior siding, fir floors, small windows and tin chimneys.

In the older community of Number One, the houses, clustered on only a few acres bounded by swamp, railway tracks and the abandoned slag heaps of Number One mine, are connected by a network of narrow alleyways, boardwalks and dirt paths (Figure 2). In the newer community of Number Five which has been carved out of swampy cedar and hemlock forest, the arrangement of houses can be said to be more spacious. They are set in a row on either side of a dirt road which runs through the centre of the village (Figure 3). This is because a fire in 1927 has destroyed half the village and families have, when rebuilding their homes, considered land use. As well, they

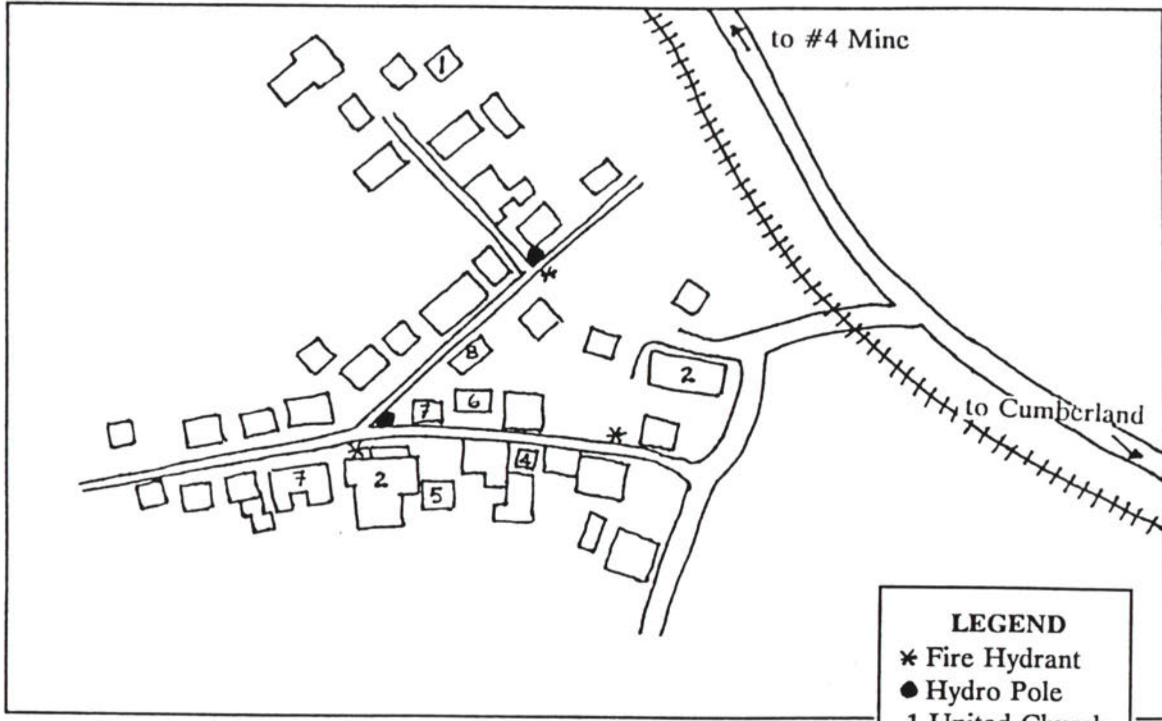

Figure 2: Number One Village, c. 1930

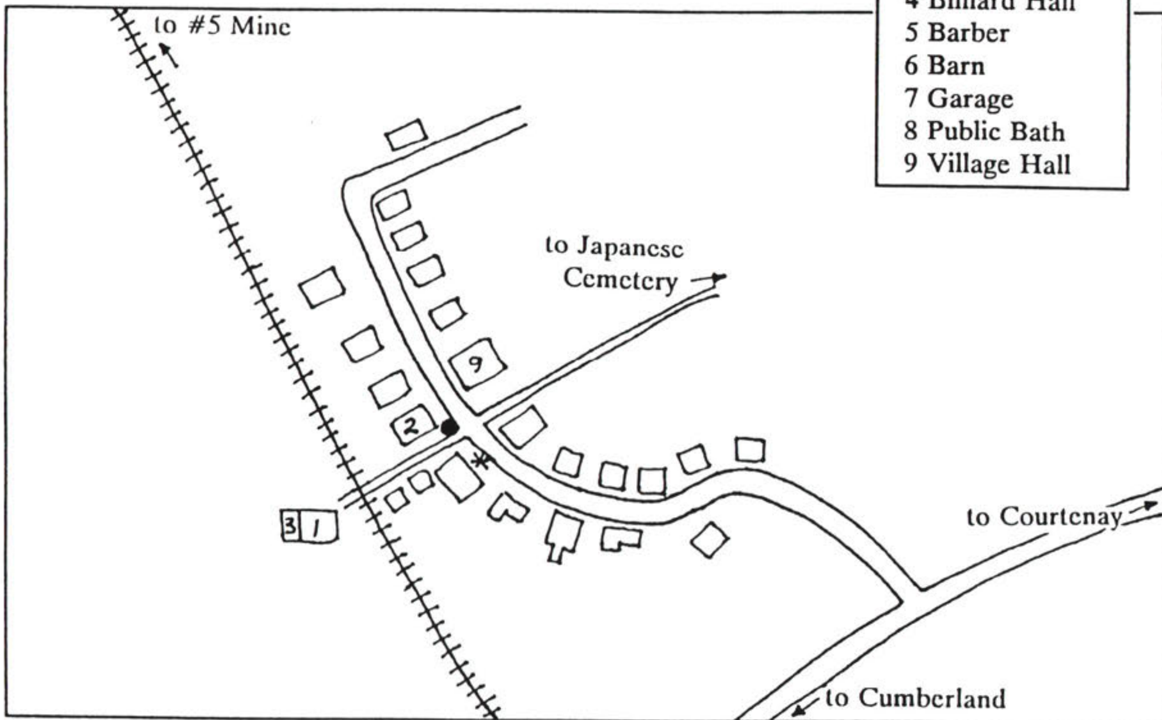

Figure 3: Number Five Village, c. 1930

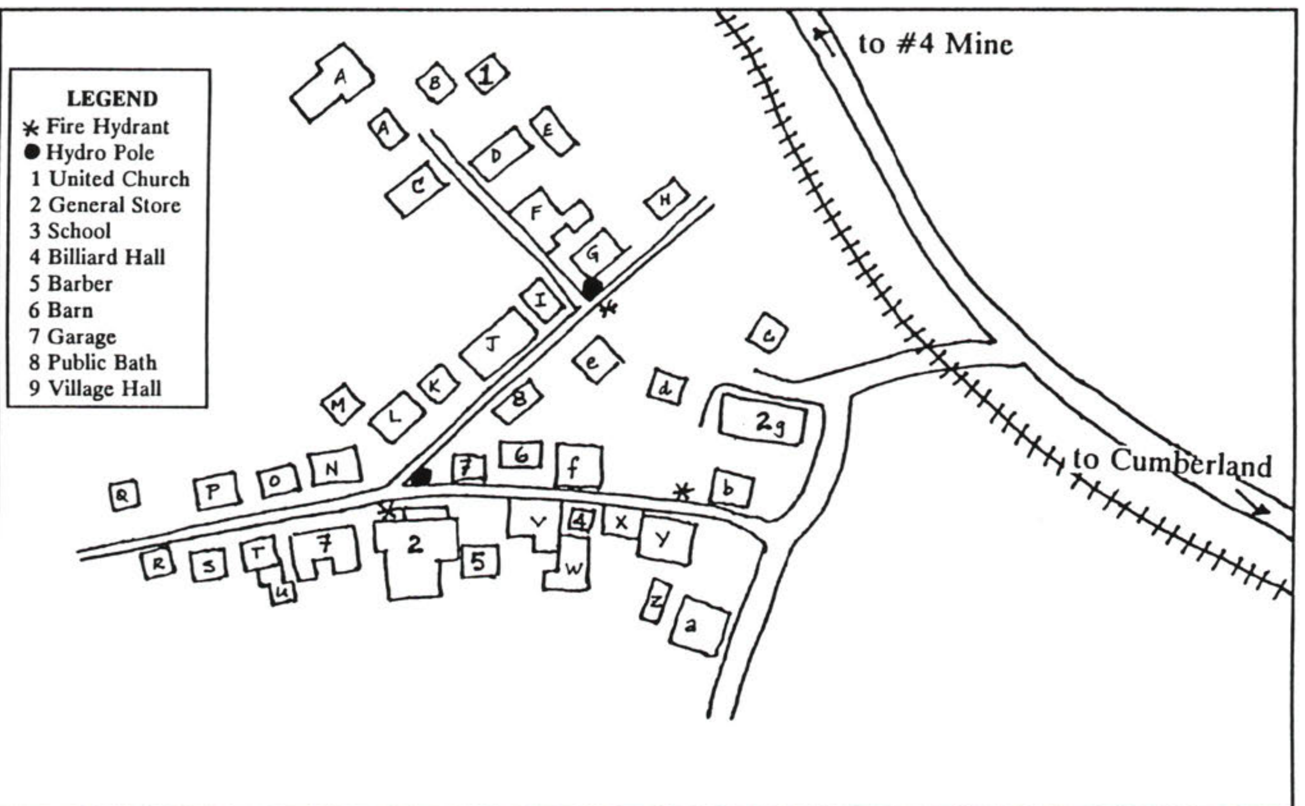

Figure 4: Number One Village, c. 1930

RESIDENT FAMILIES

A. SAITO	J. KISHIMOTO/YOSHIDA	S. YAMADA	Z. YANAGI
B. OYAMA	K. TAKENAKA	T. YAMANAKA	a. TSURUOKA
C. KIMOTO	L. KIYONAGA	U. ODA	b. SUYAMA
D. NAKAUCHI	M. ANPI	2. IWASA	c. HACHISUKA
E. YANO	N. KAJIYAMA	5. YANO	d. MATSUNAGA
F. ASAO	O. D. DOI	V. KIYONO	e. KIYONAGA
G. TEHARA	P. F. DOI	W. ODA	f. YOSHIKUNI
H. MARUYA	Q. NARAZAKI	X. OKUDA	g. NAKANO
I. WANI	R. YAMADA	Y. KUMABE	

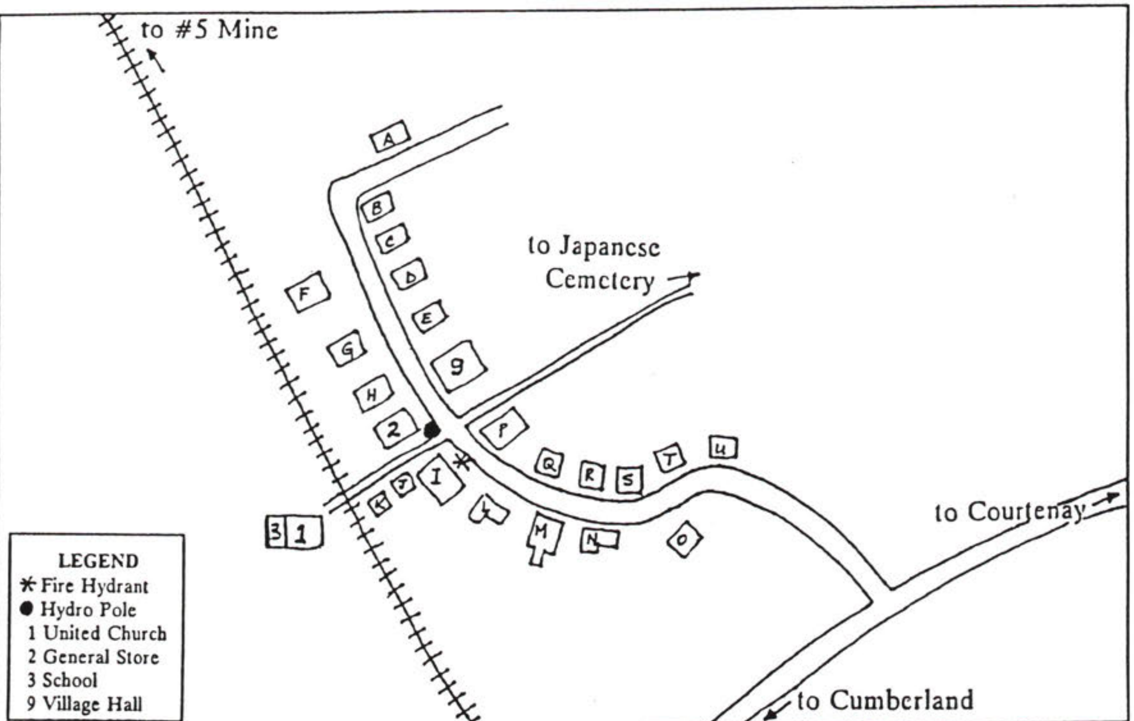

Figure 5: Number Five Village

RESIDENT FAMILIES

A. UCHIDA/IKEGAMI	2. MATSUBUCHI	O. KAGA
B. TATEYAMA	I. NAKANO	P. Y. OBARA
C. FUJIMOTO	J. YANO	Q. T. OBARA
D. SUGINOMORI	K. J. SORA	R. YAGUCHI
E. TERADA	1. OGAKI	S. ARAKI
F. HAYASHI/OGAKI	L. IIDA	T. HARADA
G. MATSUKURA/KUMANO	M. YAMAMOTO/HIROSE	U. KATO
H. K. SORA	N. KAWAGUCHI	

use a better grade of construction materials and build brick chimneys.[10] Most properties in both villages are bounded by fences.[11] Each household has a small, fenced vegetable patch, either adjacent to the house or located nearby, and one or two fruit trees.

Company houses are commonly known as "two by four" houses (Sumida 1935:209). They are small single-storey houses, with a kitchen, a front parlour and one or two bedrooms. Some homes have verandas and, as families grow, rooms are added. Wealthier families build homes with an upper storey which accommodates one or two bedrooms. A lean-to near the kitchen serves as a root cellar and as storage for coal and firewood. There is no sewage system. Close by each house there is a pit toilet, usually a bath house and, sometimes, a hen house. The bath house is an important outbuilding and most households have one. However, both Number One and Number Five villages also have a public bathhouse. Ken Hayashi (89.11.09) explains:

> In the early days, they were all single men and they had to have baths, especially the miners [who] were covered with black. The Japanese are noted for these baths. Even if you are not working, you still take your bath every night. That's the ritual. . . . Anyway, they had this public bath. Men came home from work at three o'clock, half past three. So if the

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[10] Of the houses still standing on what is now known as Maple Street, all but one are occupied.

[11] Figures 4 and 5 map household names for each village. Two names listed indicate that a dwelling was occupied, at various times, by one or the other family.

> women go there earlier, before noon, they could have their bath. Only a few women were involved anyway, so it was all right. . . . Then, when the picture brides started coming around, these women, their husbands started building small bath [*sic*] near their own house. Eventually, every household had a bath and there was no use for the public bath. That was Number Five. In Number One, for some reason, individuals didn't build small bathhouses for themselves, so the public bath endured until about 1936. . . .

A resident of Number One (273:89.11.09) adds,

> When there were quite a number of men working in the mines and many people who were single, there was a public bath. I remember all the men coming home from work dirty and going there, and coming out looking like different people. But, if there was a family, there was an **ofuro** [family bathhouse].

In each village there is a rooming house for single men; families might also take in a single man as a boarder. As well, there is a school for teaching primary and elementary grades in Japanese language. In Number One village, the school also serves as a community hall. From 1928, Number Five has a separate community hall which is used for village gatherings, celebrations, and community-organized entertainments such as New Year celebrations and the emperor's birthday.

From the 1920s, the company provides electricity and cold running water for a nominal rent although, in Number One, several homes draw their water from wells. A woman who lived in Number One remembers,

"we didn't all have running water. Some had wells and had to pump it out" (251:90.02.19). Several people remember using kerosene lamps before the arrival of electricity. "Electricity came later, because I can remember using the lamps. We would have to clean the mantle, and the glass" (251:90.02.19) and a former resident of Number One recalls:

> We had two street lights. When it gets dark, there was this great big switch--we had to put it on. Somebody was in charge. I guess that late at night maybe it was turned off (252:90.02.19).

Miners, whose houses are built on company land, pay no taxes and, prior to the real estate slump in 1913, some enterprising entrepreneurs are able to buy farming land or property in town. In his 1935 survey, Sumida (1935:359), citing Nakayama (1921a:897), has observed "expenditures for house rent we note is practically nil. . . . In 1919, the total value of real estate held by 72 Japanese in Cumberland was $69,500, and each paid an average of $14.29 in property taxes."

As in rural Japanese communities, Number One village has a **bangi**--a slab of wood made, in this case, from a railway tie, which is hung centrally and beaten with a mallet when village people are to be called together. Although it is used primarily to announce a fire, it can also be used to call people together for a meeting or for some occasion for co-operative

labour. Village people determine the reason for the summons by the number of beats used and the speed with which the **bangi** is pounded. Among the people interviewed there is disagreement as to whether the **bangi** was hung near Wani's house, which is one main intersection of paths, or near Kiyonaga's house, which is the other main intersection of paths. In Japan, it would be hung near the home of the **nushidōri** [the elected village official who acts as a kind of caretaker of village affairs]. There is no evidence that village Cumberland[12] has a "head" man. However, each village has one man who takes care of a variety of problems pertaining to immigrants, ranging from personal and family problems, remittances to Japan, disputes, consultations with immigration officials, to obtaining family records and ensuring that bureaucratic consular forms are correctly completed.

Immigrant Japanese establish a village life in Cumberland that is based familiarly in the life they had left behind. Their families are often large--with as many as ten or twelve children under one roof. The father, or in some cases grandfather, rules the household with a firmly authoritarian hand--"grandfather was so strict. He was **kowakatta** [forbidding, fearful]" (110:89.11.09). While oldtimers remember the prosperity of the early days of

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[12] This is not to say that it did not exist; the people interviewed did not seem to be aware of this function.

the mining town, many recall the Depression years and the lack of economic security.

Chapter IV: SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND FAMILY LIFE

The Family Unit, or Household

In both Number One and Number Five, the primary social unit is the household. The term "household", as used here, is the American census definition of household (Johnson 1964:869) which corresponds best to the Japanese concept of **shotai**--a group which is legally "defined in terms of sharing a common budget" (Dore 1958:438). Furthermore, of relevance to this study, it should be noted that "household" has been used by some anthropologists (notably, Embree 1939; Nakane 1967; and Norbeck 1954) instead of "family," to emphasize the economic and residential aspects of the Japanese family group.

In village Cumberland, in most cases, household members are a nuclear family--a man, his wife, and their unmarried children. Some households include boarders--relatives newly arrived from Japan, or friends of relatives, or, as in the case of the school teacher's residence in Number Five,

children of families from outside the Comox district who are attending the Japanese school. Farming households in nearby Royston and Courtenay can include farm labour, generally one or two men whose immigration from Japan has been sponsored by the household head. As sons begin to marry in the 1930s, new wives often live with their husband's family until a separate home is built. Although this conforms to the pattern of residence in rural, contemporary Japan, it is invariably an economic necessity during the depressed thirties in North America. Only a few households consist of more than two generations. However, brothers who emigrate together, or a younger brother who has been "called" by his older sibling, generally choose to live in the same community.

As in Japan, the head of the household, normally the father of a family, controls the household property, manages any land holdings and represents the household externally. The rules of succession to household head which prevail in Japan are found in the Cumberland communities. Nakane (1967:4) has observed

> *. . . the head should be succeeded by the "son," not by any other kind of kinsman.* However, the successor is not necessarily the real son; any male (whether he be kin to the head or not) can be "the son" provided that the necessary legal procedure has taken place for him to become a member of the household by the relationship commonly expressed as "adopted son" or

"adopted son-in-law".[13]

Adoption

As perpetuating the family name has always been very important in Japanese society, it is not surprising that adoption occurs in Japanese Cumberland, although perhaps not as frequently as in Japan. Most often, adoption occurs where a family has daughters and no sons, or where the only son in a family dies before marriage. In such cases, the family adopts a son-in-law. Where a son-in-law is adopted, the adoption is registered with the Japanese Consulate in Vancouver. That office undertakes to transmit the information to Japan so that it can be inscribed in the **koseki** of the young man's adoptive father's family. His name is then removed from the **koseki** of his natal family. In agreeing to take his new wife's family name, the husband assumes a position in the household as if he were a real son, giving up any rights he might have had in his natal household. His future obligations to his bride's father and family become those of an eldest son towards his own father and family. Rights of succession and inheritance, continuity of the family and residence are exchanged for labour, the promise of male heirs and the assurance of future support for aging parents in their latter years. Kazuko

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[13] Nakane (1967:5) also notes that a second rule of succession is that *it should be by one son only; never by two or more sons jointly.*

Iwasa Umemoto (89.11.09) explains:

> Hatsumi was a very good friend of ours and she had a sister and a brother and the brother died. So her parents were very old-fashioned and they wanted their **atotori** [heir, successor] so they wanted a **yōshi** [adopted son]. But, the **nisei**, very very few of them were willing to go as **yōshi** because they didn't really conform to that type of life and because they were in Canada they didn't want that. But Walter [a friend of her brother] went. So he took her name.[14]

Less common, but nonetheless practised, is the adoption of a male child--also known as **yōshi**--where there is no male heir. In such cases, a man looks to his own kin preferably--such as a cousin, younger brother, or his wife's relations--for the younger of several sons. Poverty in the natal household is often a factor when a child is allowed to be adopted out. There is no particular ceremony of adoption but, as in the case of the adopted son-in-law, the change of family name is registered. A farmer's daughter remembers how she came to have a younger brother when she was a girl:

> . . . my younger brother, who was adopted, [is actually] my husband's brother. My dad registered . . . him as his own. My husband's mother--the child's mother and father's cousin--

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[14] Nakane (1967) observes that, in rural Japan, generally one of two principles were followed in terms of property and household succession: if the first-born child was a daughter, then her husband became the successor to the household, even if a real son was born after. In other words, the son-in-law would have the right of succession. Alternatively, the eldest son would automatically inherit. If he died, then a son-in-law would provide the other option.

In this case, the eldest child in the Miyahara family, a son, had died and the elder of the two daughters had become heir. Walter, in agreeing to marry Hatsumi, agreed to take her family name, relinquishing his own. In this way, as adopted son-in-law, he became a member of the household and, thus, successor.

> didn't know any different. Because she told me, "your dad came back and said, 'Oh, I registered your child.' I said, 'thank you very much. That's kind of you.' I didn't know that he'd been registered as a Maruya. . . ." It was not unusual for families--I had an older brother, my father wanted more sons--families to give away kids in that way. And she [the cousin] ended up having ten children. She had two in the house then, and this, my brother, would have been the third here in Canada. So, it was illegal and I am sure wrong, but my dad really forced her hand to let him adopt. We were related so it was, it is done. This is not unusual in Japan. But that's the way he did it. . . . If you need a child . . . (321:90.11.15).

It is most common for a son to be adopted; however, a daughter may be adopted, as well. Occasionally, a family with several daughters offers a daughter for adoption.

> . . . we were offered a daughter, too. They said, "if the next one's a girl you can have her." And they had the third daughter in her arms that day they said it. . . . You will find many people whose name is different from the siblings because they have taken, they have been adopted by another family. And that's quite common. . . . I'm aware that this had gone on all around us (321:90.11.15).

Kinship and Social Structure

The established practice of adoption, as a method to ensure the maintenance of a family line, poses some problems for scholars who have considered Japanese kinship systems. Nakane (1967:170) argues

> membership of a descent group should be confined to that acquired by birth; under this rule individuals could not acquire it by marriage, nor by economic and/or residential arrangement. A descent group may allow in an adoptive or some other non-kin member, but this is considered very exceptional; but in Japan adoptions or the establishment of a fictive kinship relation is not considered "exceptional", but rather as a well-established practice. . . . Japanese society lacks not only a unilineal descent system but also lacks any kind of principle upon which to form a descent group with its own function that takes precedence over local economic factors. . . . With a background of such a limited function for kinship, the units of household, local group and village have played significant roles in the formation of social organization.

Kitaoji (1971) in his study of the structure of the Japanese family has concluded that positional terminology, physical and social kin relations, fosterage and adoption may be more practical concepts, among others, to consider when attempting to understand the logic of Japanese kinship and family organization" (Kitaoji 1971:1054), even though there are "patrilineal elements [which] are provided by the traditional extended family [and] bilateral elements [belonging] to a modern nuclear family" (Kitaoji 1971:1036).

In village Cumberland, the separate communities each function as a group of interacting family units rather than assemblages of individual families. Within each family unit, generational distinctions are made which identify a unique character structure and family position for each group: **issei** refers to the first generation immigrant who was born in Japan; **nisei** refers to

the second generation, born in Canada or the United States to **issei** parents; and **sansei** refers to the third generation, born in Canada or the United States to **nisei** parents. Another term, relevant to this study is **kibei** which describes those who were born in Canada to **issei** parents but who were sent to their grandparents in Japan to be educated. This group, although having a better understanding of both cultures, tend to have a greater empathy for Japanese--that is, **issei**--culture than their cohort, the **nisei**. The term **nikkei** is a collective term which refers to all generations.[15]

Nakane (1967: 20-21) has observed that authority in the Japanese household

> derives from [the father] being head of the *household* (the residential and economic group), rather than from his being the *father*, the head of the *family* (kin group). . . . This is very different from the father's status in a society where the descent factor plays an important role.

While "family" is normally used to refer to direct descendants, usually within the same household, the extent of a family includes all relatives, including direct descendants and collateral kin. Both affines and cognates are held in the same regard; that is to say, they are of almost equal consequence.

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[15] While these generational terms are important to the generations they describe, scholars like Kitano (1976:5) feel that they are diminishing in importance as new immigrants arrive from Japan (themselves, **issei**) and subsequent generations are born to the original immigrant families (the **yonsei**, or fourth generation).

As well, the **baishakunin** [marriage go-between],[16] usually a close family friend, has a fictive kin relationship with a young married couple and their respective families. The concept of the household, as does generational ideology, overshadows any differentiation. This is reflected in the terms by which people address each other.

General kin terms[17]--describing a range of close kin relationships, rather than personal names--are used for most persons, whether they are related or unrelated and whether they are a father's or a mother's kin. Use of these terms depends upon the relationship of a person to children. Hence, depending upon the age of the speaker, all members of the community who are older, whether they are strangers or familiar acquaintances, are ordinarily addressed as **ojīsan** [grandfather], **obāsan** [grandmother], **obasan** [aunt, auntie], **ojisan** [uncle], **onīsan** [elder brother] and **onēsan** [elder sister]. The terms **ojīsan** and **obāsan** which may mean, respectively, "old man" and "old woman" can be used, in a general sense, to refer to or to address elderly strangers. When referring to a sibling a person may often use a personal name together with a kin term --"**K onīsan**" [elder brother K.] (262:90.11.15). There

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[16] See Chapter IV, page 94.

[17] These follow Eskimo cousin terminology.

is no one term for "brother" or "sister", as one category. Siblings are differentiated by their order of birth--a woman defines herself "I was third sister" (110:89.11.09).

Names and Naming

It is the practice in Japan to give a family name (or, surname) first, then a personal name. In Cumberland, early immigrants refer to themselves accordingly. However, progressive members of both Number One and Number Five villages quickly assume the western convention of personal name first, surname last. Children, once they begin to attend the public school in town, may choose to adopt an English name. Sometimes, an English name is given to a child by a school teacher who finds the Japanese name difficult to pronounce or to spell. One man, who began school in Vancouver, told me (325:89.08.26), "I was given my English name when I was eight years old. A young English girl came to teach us English. She gave everyone in the class an English name and that's how I came to have this name."

Nisei parents may choose to give a child both an English name and a Japanese name, so that the child can use a Japanese name if he or she goes to Japan. By 1940, some parents are giving their children English

personal names (Ono Papers). In some families, siblings will be given names where the first syllable or two is the same, such as Mitsuharu and Mitsunori, Shori and Shoji, Matsuo and Matsuko, and so on.

The Japanese of Cumberland, particularly the **nisei** males, have adopted, or become part of, a longstanding local custom of nicknaming. Masato Sora, who is known widely by the name "Stoney", says "Cumberland is notorious for nicknames. Everyone, well not everyone, but lots, has a nickname. It sort of binds us together" (89.11.09). Ted Aida, a friend, explains further, "I was known as Ted, before I even went to school. And several other names besides that! A lot of people don't know me by Ted. Only by Du, or Duvalle. They will say, 'Duvalle, who's that? Oh, I know Du!' But they don't know Ted" (90.11.09). Another man tells me, "We called Mr. Matsubuchi 'Take', but the Italians called him 'Pat'. I never knew why" (325:89.08.26).

Cooperation and Exchange

In rural Japan, the household is a multi-generational one and a rural community may consist of several groups of kin and fictive kin. For example, where one household has large landholdings and few kin, a

genealogically unrelated household might be incorporated into the first, largely for economic benefit and with the mutual obligations which bound conventional kinship relations (Norbeck 1965:4-5). As in rural Japan, social organization in village Cumberland provides a mechanism for co-operation and exchange. Embree (1941:98) has observed "in any social organization, kin relationships, real or fictitious, are among the most important" and so, it is these relationships, combined with village settlement, which foster the development of close-knit, highly cooperative and tightly controlled communities.

In comparison to the multi-generational Japanese household, households in village Cumberland generally lack a grandparental generation. As well, although several households may be related through patrilines, interhousehold relationships tend to be stronger between neighbours than they would be in a village in Japan. Accordingly, while the extended kin group of a family in Japan that performs an important function at major life events--such as naming ceremonies, marriages and funerals--in village Cumberland, the functions of the extended kin group are performed by kin substitutes, or neighbours:

> Two or three families get together in bunch. Not the whole community as one. No, no. But, two neighbours, three neighbours get together here and then there is another unity of two or three neighbours. Usually neighbours because you don't want to bunch with people on the other side of town. Too far away to communicate, to share (115:89.11.09).

Co-operation can be as simple as an informal, voluntary exchange of labour between two women, who take turns pouring and heating the water for the daily evening bath, or it can be as formally organized as the decision to finance and build a school or community hall. Respondents from both Number One and Number Five villages give numerous examples of co-operation and labour exchange. One woman (110:89.11.09) remembers sharing a bath regularly with the children next door:

> Mother had to bring the firewood and light a fire under the **furo** [bath]. And so, with the neighbour, we would do it on alternate days. Up to age nine, all the boys and girls would bath together without thinking about the fact that they were of the opposite sex . . . .

Another woman (321:90.11.15) describes how her father organized a group to cut firewood during a particularly cold winter:

> During the hard years, dad organized a wood-cutting group to supply heating wood for the hotels downtown. He was the one who had the team of horses and the equipment to haul and the people who came and worked would have shared whatever he made. It couldn't have been very much, but it helped eke out a living.

She tells how neighbours came to help her mother clean house, to do baking and to make sure that the children got to school--"little things, but that was the way they managed"--after her father died. Children are taught the mechanics of "helping co-operation" (Embree 1939:125) from an early age. Harold Hirose (90.11.08) explains:

> . . . as we grew up, we used to take turns, what we call **gobai**

> [reciprocity, mutual assistance]. At the school, there was no janitor hired to clean. And so the school was run by the students. We took turns cleaning.

Another form of common co-operative activities can be loosely grouped as "civic" responsibilities, even though the local government of Cumberland is responsible for public works. At regular intervals through the year, work parties of young men set about to clean village pathways that have become uneven or overgrown with weeds. As well, an annual work party goes to the cemetery to tend grave sites. When houses need to be built or a roof needs repairing a work party is brought together with an "expert." Harold Hirose (90.11.03) explains that "among a bunch of them there's a fellow that knows a little more than the other guys to build a house. So he'll tell [the others what to do] and help everybody." In an emergency, co-operative organization takes over. A resident of Number One (252:90.02.19) explains, "When there was a fire--chimney fires mostly--everybody ran. Everybody helped. Get the hose. And, when the men went to help up in the logging camps and weren't at home, the ladies formed a group. A fire brigade."

Funerals are another time for social mobilization. Neighbours will gather to pay their respects and to help relatives prepare for a funeral. While women help to prepare food, men go to the cemetery to dig the grave.

At the household of the deceased's relatives, one or two men receive **kōden**--monetary offerings which will help to defray funeral expenses. Ken Hayashi (KH) and Harold Hirose (HH) explain (90.11.03):

> KH: **Kōden** is like compulsory insurance.
>
> HH: Sort of a mutual fund.
>
> KH: Everybody had to chip in. If somebody died in the Japanese community. There was a set minimum. Maybe fifty-five cents or a dollar. In those days, a dollar was a lot. It didn't matter if you were a single person, a bachelor, or a family.
>
> HH: It was so there was no worry about the expense, there would be enough to pay for the funeral. No matter who died. As long as you were Japanese in that district.
>
> KH: There were some Vancouver families living in Courtenay. Somebody in Cumberland died, so someone went to Courtenay to collect money from them. They objected strenuously. And so this guy explained the system we had here. So they grudgingly paid their amount. But, later on, one of them died. And even though there was only a few families in Courtenay and maybe a hundred families in Cumberland, all the Cumberland families chipped in. Even though they didn't know the one who died, they still all chipped in.

A similar mechanism is used when someone leaves the village to go on a journey. A farewell party is given by the community. Masato "Stoney" Sora explains, "everyone participates. The women cook food and you give **sembetsu**--a parting gift of money" (90.11.14). When the traveller returns, he or she is expected to bring back **omiage** [a small gift for everyone who has given **sembetsu**].

With the exception of civic co-operation, the principle of reciprocity is significant in all of these examples. There is an inherent obligation for a future return of value received. Labour exchange, gift exchange, these serve as integrating factors in the community and as opportunities for relatives and neighbours to come together to work and to socialize. A woman says to me:

> the Japanese way is to co-operate and to help when people are in need. When you are in need, people will help you. If there had not been co-operation and mutual aid, our society would not have survived. We would not have survived. This is what it was built on (262:90.11.15).

Community Associations, School and Church are Unifiers

In addition to forms of social organization based on kinship or neighbourhood groups, the people of village Cumberland find association through common interests. Generally, these associations are centred around either church membership or through the local school. Associations and clubs that are loosely connected with religion are discussed in Chapter Seven.

The **Komokusu Sukuru**, [the Comox District Japanese Language School] is significant to everyone in the community. Built by

community members in 1918 (**Islander** August 10, 1918), it is financed and maintained by a sustaining fund which is subscribed to by the entire community. Harold Hirose (90.11.03) explains:

> . . . the whole community had this **ijikai**--sustaining fund--for the school. So the bachelor people who worked in the Royston sawmill or whatever, they all contributed to the maintenance and running of that school. . . . In that small mining town, the whole community was involved in order to give us bilingual education. The parents had the vision that all persons of Japanese descent could attend that school. Anybody living in that district. So the whole community, Fanny Bay, Union Bay, Royston, Number One, Number Five, they all came to that school.

As well, there is a Japanese Mothers' Association of Cumberland (**Islander** November 23, 1928; **Comox District Free Press** June 28, 1934) which, from time to time, raises money for books or sports equipment for the public school in town.

Other Associations and Societies

A number of organizations can be said to be patriotic societies. During the early years of settlement, there is a **budōkai**--a group which promotes Japanese cultural values through encouraging Japanese sports. This is done primarily through teaching **sumo** and **jūdō** [Japanese forms of wrestling] and **kendō** [fencing]. On February 18, 1911, the Cumberland

Islander reports

> . . . an interesting feature of the [Silent Smith and J. Greenaway Boxing] Tournament will be the Japanese Broad sword Fencing between Ito and Yama, consisting of four rounds of three minutes each. The way in which these experts handle the great two handed swords is a revelation to those who have never witnessed an exhibition of this kind and is in itself well worth the cost of admission [$1].

During World War I and in the beginning years of World War II, many women in Number Five village do volunteer work for the Canadian Red Cross. Following World War I, the local Japanese Canadian Association is particularly active in raising funds for a memorial tablet at the Veterans Hall (**Islander** March 5, 1921). When Japan suffers a catastrophe, such as an earthquake, temporary societies are formed by local Japanese to collect relief money and materials. The **Cumberland News** (April 25, 1904) reports that local Japanese collect "in the neighbourhood of $2,000" for the Russo-Japanese war. These contributions are sent overseas by the Japanese Consulate in Vancouver (**Islander** September 15, 1923; October 28, 1927).

Life in Village Cumberland

Birth

A woman from Number One (240:90.02.19) says:

> I don't know if the **issei** parents really had an enjoyable life. Because, there were lots of children. One after the other.

> The children would come and the mothers, their job was to raise the children. So they didn't have much of a social life.

In Japanese Cumberland, many babies are born at home, attended by a midwife or by the doctor who is employed by the Dunsmuir Collieries. Since 1901 (**Cumberland News** November 27, 1901), the Collieries has a medical insurance plan for its employees so there is no cost for the doctor's services. A woman says,

> Cumberland had one of the first medical insurance schemes, through the company. Everybody paid, in those days, a few dollars and odd cents a month. Like medicare today. If you get sick, you go to the doctor and the doctor won't charge you. House calls, the doctors came free, the hospital was free. Operations, five dollars (273:89.11.09).

In Number Five village, the doctor is aided by Shizuko Matsubuchi, one of the few women who speaks English. Generally, she acts as a translator. As she gains expertise in medical matters, she becomes the doctor's assistant when necessary. As time goes on, some women choose to go to the Cumberland General hospital for childbirth, where there is a six-bed "oriental" ward. A woman from Number Five (103:90.11.03) explains:

> Most of the women had midwife. In later years, some went to the hospital. Usually, most Japanese women know how to handle getting kids born. Even my mother was more like a midwife when somebody has a baby. They called her. . . . Dr. Hicks, the doctor, he used to come and say, "You're wanted," and take her along, no matter what she was doing. She had to translate everything for him.

In the early years, registration of births is haphazard, dependent upon whether a birth is attended by a midwife, or whether the doctor attends. In the latter case, a birth is reported to the local health officer. All births are registered in Japan.

> Children had dual nationality. In Japan and also in Canada. To register birth in Japan they had to send a notice to the Japanese Consulate in Vancouver. Sending a letter saying that such and such was born and the address in Japan. Then they register you in Japan as being born in Canada (115: 89.11.09).

Several days after a birth the child is named. A name may be chosen by the child's parents or, in some cases, Japanese custom is followed. In this instance, family members and close friends write names on slips of paper which are collected and put into a bowl or hat. One slip of paper is drawn from the container. A man explains that this is how he was given a name that is normally given to a girl (118:89.08.05). A woman (267:90.11.04), says, "A friend of the family chose my name. People come and put the names. Lots of helping hands when it comes to names. . . ."

Education and Schooling

From age six, children are required to go to public school in the town of Cumberland. A woman from Number One (277:90.11.15) recalls:

> From Number One we had to walk to Cumberland school and it was about a mile and a half. We had to walk along the train tracks. In winter, it was deep snow. But the train track, it goes to the mine, so the snow was not so bad. But when the train comes, we all had to go on the side of the track, in the deep snow, and wait until the train passed. It was so cold standing and waiting. We grew up with chilblains.

Most agree that they do not speak English until they begin school. An elderly woman explains, "In those days, parents didn't speak English. All the children spoke Japanese. We didn't speak English until we went to school" (267:90.11.14). Another woman (103:89.11.09) agrees:

> Most of these kids, when they were at home, they could hardly talk English so what they had to do was open a school for them before they entered grade one. They had a hard time coping with the teacher. They couldn't understand what the teacher was talking about. So they hired the church minister. He taught these kids.

Some families send their children to Japan for a Japanese education:

> They wanted their children to go to school, to learn Japanese. So, my eldest sisters, born in Cumberland, were taken to Japan. This was very common. Just like the English sending their children back to England from India. They were sending children back to Japan, to be brought up by the grandparents and to go to school there. When they reached sixteen, they were usually called back. . . (273:89.11.09).

Parents who do not send their children to Japan for schooling, are still concerned that their children learn to read and write in Japanese. Accordingly, in both Number One and Number Five villages children attend classes after "regular" school on a daily basis. Prior to 1920, all children return to their village to attend a classes in a one-room building. In later years, this pattern

changes. A new, large school with several classrooms is built to accommodate a growing population. It offers a full curriculum in Japanese language. Most children in the Comox Valley attend the **Komokusu Sukuru**, except for very young children. One man (328:89.11.09) remembers:

> After we finished regular school, about three o'clock, we started Japanese school. We got the whole curriculum when we were there, just like the real schools in Japan--geography, history, composition, writing, penmanship. Not just reading and writing like they have in most Japanese schools now.

Another woman (110:89.11.09) recalls:

> We had debate, elocution in Japanese, court [law] in Japanese. And we had Saturday morning drill session--**taisō**. We had everything else but math: **kakikata** [penmanship], **hanashikata** [oral reading], **fude** [brush writing], singing, written Japanese, **rekishi** [history], geography of Japan. Every subject, we even had **shūshin** [moral education]. The lady teacher would teach grade one to six, then **otoko no sensei** [the male teacher] had the rest. Grade seven and eight, then high school. We had to study hard, all the time. Our school day wasn't finished until 7:30, eight o'clock at night.

Built between 1918-1921,[18] of cooperative labour, the Japanese school near Number Five village is one of the largest schools for

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[18] The Cumberland **Islander** (August 10, 1918) observes "The local residents of Number One and Number Five Japanese town held a meeting on Sunday last and decided to establish a school of their own. They intend to make application to the management of the Canadian Collieries for permission to erect a building on a site convenient for the children of the two places mentioned and to secure a Japanese teacher from Japan who understands English." A census of the Cumberland public school population (**Islander** December 6, 1919) reveals that thirty-two of the 424 registered students are Japanese. By 1922, this number has grown to forty-eight (**Islander** June 24, 1922).

Japanese children on the west coast. I am told how several fathers decided that the two communities needed "a proper Japanese language teacher from Japan" (115:89.11.09). In order to petition the Japanese Ministry of Education for such a teacher, they are told that a school had to be built. At the same time, community elders see that such a project might serve as a unifying device for the two villages.

> Here are these two communities, Number One and Number Five, separated by about two miles. And in between was the city of Cumberland. And so they thought, "we should get these two communities together and build a big school. . . ." So they organized a team and started to build. It took two or three years to finish. During the school holidays, I went there to do some carpentry work. I was on top of the roof doing shingling. I was a kid. Maybe fourteen, fifteen. And then, it was arranged with the Consulate of Japan, in Vancouver, for the Department of Education to send the teacher (115:89.11.09).

A woman (110:89.11.09) adds,

> And so this husband and wife came. They were both teachers. And it is unique, our Cumberland. In other communities, teachers were women who were educated in Japan, not qualified as a teacher, but they had gone to **jōgakkō** [girl's college] and come to Canada to get married. So, their Japanese would be a higher standard than your average person.

The teachers, both educated at the Tokyo Teachers's College (Isenor *et al* 1987:292), come for an initial contract period of three years. They remain in the community until 1934, when they move to the mainland. Their living quarters are the upper storey of the two-storey building, and they board Japanese children who come from small communities throughout northern

Vancouver Island. Schooling takes place in the afternoon and early evening, after classes at the public school in town are finished and on Saturdays, as well. Harold Hirose (90.11.03) recollects,

> We had to go to school on Saturday from the morning. [The teacher] said that at least once a week I got to teach you Japanese when your minds are clear, your head is clear. So we had to go on Saturday. And then, summer holidays, we had to forego one month. We had to go to Japanese school only.

The school does not have quite the unifying effect that the fathers want. Ken Hayashi (89.11.09) explains.

> The people in Number One town decided to hold to their elementary Japanese school but sent the graduates of that school to the high school near Number Five. So they didn't come wholeheartedly, but decided to send the older children.[19]

In addition to the elementary school in Number One village, there is also a small school operated by the Buddhist priest in the nearby sawmill community of Royston. Opportunities for some adults to learn English are provided by English-speaking teachers from the Cumberland Public School. Church officials from the Anglican Church of Canada and the United Church are active in the Japanese communities, offering both English language and

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[19] Further discussion of the attitudinal differences between Number One and Number Five villages toward schools may be found in Chapter VI.

Bible instruction.

School functions to keep children "off the streets" while fathers are at work or sleeping between shifts during the day and while mothers work in their gardens. "We understood that we weren't supposed to make noises because of those on the night shift or afternoon shift that were sleeping. Everyone, their fathers worked in the mines" (273:89.11.09). In Number One, the elementary school teacher teaches a group of girls how to make **kimono**, how to knit, and how to do **origami** [a paper-folding craft] after school.

It is not uncommon for students to graduate from high school and go to either university or a business college. The first Cumberland Japanese student to graduate with a Bachelor of Arts is Noboru Abe Nakano (**Islander** May 7, 1926). Another early graduate, Toshio Kajiyama receives a Bachelor of Arts in 1929 (**Islander** May 10, 1929) and goes on to receive a medical degree from the University of Toronto. Sumida (1935:359) notes "of 32 Japanese graduates from the University of British Columbia [where tuition fees were about $40 a year (Nakayama 1984:148), increasing to $100 annually, in 1932 (**Comox District Free Press** July 21, 1932)], four are from Cumberland; and in addition several more had attended one or two years at the University." These students are held by teachers in both the public school and the Japanese

school as role models for other students. "We were told, be like Noboru, be like Toshio. Study and study and study" (122:90.11.03). School records show attendance decreasing in the upper grades as older students develop other interests or begin to work at wage jobs to assist in the household economy.

A Division of Labour

When children are not at school, they are expected to assist with household chores. Boys stack firewood and fill water barrels. Girls help to fold laundry, wash dishes and mind younger children. Older girls trim the wicks of kerosene lamps, clean the lamp chimneys and keep lamp bases filled with coal oil. A woman (110:89.11.09) who lived in Number Five explains,

> We all had chores, certain duties. Brother had to take the ashes out of the stove and bring kindling into the kitchen. Bring in the coal. Sister had to clean the chimneys of the oil lamps. I was always minding my sisters or brothers, because I was the third one.

Her sister (101:89.08.29) adds, "But we played tennis, baseball. In winter, we'd go skating on Maple Pond when it was frozen. Swimming, in summer." She continues,

> When we were sixteen, seventeen, there was a social group. Me and my girl friends. We used to have dances. Play cards.

> Mostly we would eat peanuts, sitting around the stove, talking. When there was a major baseball game, ten or fifteen people would sit down with one radio (110:90.08.21).

Men work long shifts in the mines or in logging camps--anywhere from eight to sixteen hours. At home, they help with heavy work, cutting wood and digging gardens. They keep the house repaired. Some men keep gardens.[20] Women, on the other hand, are up several hours before dawn, often as early as three or four a.m., to cook breakfast and pack tin lunch pails in primitive kitchens for the household men who are leaving for work. Then they dress their children and send them to school. Many women spend their days working in small vegetable gardens taking their babies and small children with them--the babies strapped to their backs--returning home at six o'clock to make supper. In the house, there is daily scrubbing because coal dust from the mines filters through everything. Water for washing is pumped from a well and heated on a wood stove. Women compete among themselves to see who can hang their laundry out first (101:90.08.21). Masato "Stoney" Sora (89.11.06) reflects,

> I remember Mrs. Z. cutting firewood with a bucksaw. There were so many boys in the family but not too much help. Her day, washing and ironing and cooking and cleaning and tending the garden and chopping wood, too. Mothers kept the family

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[20] Mr. Shibata, the jeweller, is known for his prize chrysanthemums (Cumberland **Weekly News** September 17, 1906).

together.

At the end of the day, after everyone has bathed and supper is eaten by the light of the kerosene lamps, children do school work while women repair and iron clothes or knit. One woman has made her own spinning wheel. Her daughter tells me,

> she made the spinning wheel herself and people would come and look at it. It was a very primitive thing. Big. High. She had a handle on one side of the wheel and she would sit. Work at it. Everybody looks at it, [asks] "where did you get the idea?!" She used to buy the fleece from the farm, dirty wool. Have to wash it and wash it and dry it and pull it, then spin. She used to make the wool and then sweaters and socks. Pure wool (252:90.02.19).

Women remember helping their mothers to make **futon** [comforters] of sheep fleece during winter evenings. After the fleece is washed and dried, children help to pick it clean of grass, twigs, feathers and dung. The clean wool is matted and anchored with strong thread between muslin. Then it is covered with fabric. "It was pure wool. In layers. Sheep wool. Nice and warm. We didn't have blankets. We still have the **futon** our mother made" (251:90.02.19). Another woman explains the process further:

> That was a chore. Sheep's wool. The farmer use to sell us by the bag full. Mother would wash it by hand, then string it up and dry. This is our winter chore. Sitting around the stove. Stretching it out. Card it by hand. It was the night chore in the wintertime. Then, stretch it all out nicely so that it can be put in the **futon**. . . . But, first of all, they put it all in a box and press it down, press it down. Then, cheesecloth. You

> spread it all out. Take the wool. Thread it through. Anchor it down, every foot or two, you put a loop and tie it so it doesn't move, so the wool doesn't shift. And then you make the top cover. It's light and warm. Every house had them. We still have. We still use. . . (110:89.11.09).

Her sister adds (101:90.08.21), ". . . and when it is too matted and thin, we washed it and took it all apart and did it again. That was a job."

More often than not, a woman does not go to bed until after midnight, only to sleep four hours and then rise to repeat their day of arduous labour. Those who have children, do all this work while pregnant. Their daughters, as they grow up, have no choice but to help their mothers and they learn, in the process, to endure.

A common outlet for men, both married and single, after long hours of hard labour is drinking and gambling. Some go to the fantan parlours and brothels in Chinatown, where the women give the miners credit until pay day (132:90.02.21).

> In the mining town there was **sankaku kankei** [triangle relationships], like three or so men fighting over women because the number of women was so small. And so there would be fighting between two men, and drinking and gambling. . . . There was so much drinking and gambling. They abused their wives. These women suffered and they stood it, too. Lack of money, not knowing where their next meal was coming from. Those men gambled away the whole month pay. You have to really appreciated your mother, especially. It's amazing how they survived. But, Japanese

> women from Japan--they were of the generation that what your husband says you serve him. Not to help, to *serve* (110:89.11.09).

Marriage, Sickness and Death

When a young woman and a young man marry, it is a community event. Whereas their parents differ in age by as much as twenty-four years (but, on average, eleven years), **nisei** spouses are, on average, about six years apart in age (Ono Papers). Marriage between two families continues to have continuing social and economic importance as it does in Japan, but the customs surrounding it have been influenced greatly by Canadian society. In Japan, a spouse is selected and a marriage is arranged by a child's parents and with the aid of a **nakōdo**, or **baishakunin** [go-between].

In village Cumberland, while marriage is still a family concern, and several marriages are arranged and include the involvement of a **baishakunin**, often the individuals who want to marry might start the proceedings by going to their respective parents themselves. At that point, for appearance's sake, the groom's family will approach a close family friend to be the go-between. The formalities of the marriage arrangements and ceremony are the responsibility of the go-between.

> In the old days, most of the marriages were arranged and married in Cumberland. But, lots of them had their own love affairs and married. And later on, the second generation, there was supposed to be a go-between, but they are already in love. So, they find a go-between after. They still continue with go-between (101:89.08.29).

As in Japan, family backgrounds are scrutinized and if conditions like tuberculosis and insanity are found, the marriage is discouraged. A man (110:90.08.21) explains:

> [This woman], she ran away with her boyfriend. Eloped. In those days, this was not done. You see, that family in Japan had tuberculosis. In those days there was no cure. And so, her mother said no. So, one day, they decided to elope. She died just a few years ago. In her nineties. He died early. When he was thirty-three. He had tuberculosis.

There are only a few incidents of elopement in village Cumberland.

The marriage banquet, generally hosted by the groom's family, is the social sanction of a marriage and indicates the approval of both families. In village Cumberland, usually the whole community participates in the event. One woman (110: 90.02.21) recalls:

> When we do things, we're all together. Like there was one wedding. . . . There was no invitation. Everybody in the town came. Everybody took it for granted that they were to come to the wedding. It was at the hall, with bridesmaids, flower girl, long dresses, the whole shebang. A lot of goodies. Everybody made something.

While a marriage may be solemnized in either the United Church or the Buddhist temple, brides generally wear western dress rather than the ornate

traditional dress of Japan. Another woman (267:90.11.14) remembers,

> We were married at the Japanese temple at Royston. Married in white. Not Japanese. Western style. Nobody had Japanese style. Most, even older **nisei**, always Western style wedding.

Mixed marriages are rare and divorce is infrequent. A person who is widowed early will often remarry. In the **issei** pioneer community, there are few women and they are valued for their productive and reproductive function.

Members of village Cumberland agree that "it was a healthy place" (273:89.11.09) although hospital records and news stories in the local paper during the 1910-1920s report regular outbreaks of scarlet fever[21] and diphtheria, a rising rate of tuberculosis, smallpox and influenza epidemics. In 1918, there is a major epidemic of Spanish influenza which does not affect the Japanese community much. The District Health officer's report for 1918 (**Islander** February 8, 1919) states

> During the [Spanish influenza] epidemic, out of a population of 1,099 in the city [of Cumberland] there were 571 cases and 9 deaths. [In Number One: 100 cases and two deaths; in Number Five: 50 cases and one death.] In the whole district (city included) there were 1,598 cases in a population of 3,184, with 28 deaths. Of the deaths, 18 were Orientals, 13 being Chinese and 5 being Japanese.

Japanese patent medicines are ordered from Japan or bought through

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[21] The **Cumberland News** (October 26, 1910) reports "The public schools are closed for one week on account of scarlet fever among the pupils".

travelling salesmen from Furuya, a Vancouver merchant. However, the Collieries Sick and Accident Fund provides both doctor and hospital care. When a person dies, as a rule he or she is buried in the Cumberland Japanese Cemetery.[22] A woman from Number One (262:90.11.15) explains:

> There's a Cumberland cemetery *for* the Japanese. And there's a Cumberland cemetery *for* the Chinese. And there's Courtenay-Cumberland cemetery for the white people. There are three. So it didn't matter what the denomination, religion was. Christian, Buddhist, if you're Japanese, you ended up there.

Alternatively, kin may ship the remains to Vancouver for cremation (**Comox District Free Press** September 29, 1931, December 6, 1934) and then send the ashes to Japan for interment. As with marriages, funeral rites may be observed in either the Buddhist or United Church, although invariably a Christian burial will include aspects of traditional Japanese customs (**Comox District Free Press** February 9, 1933, May 17, 1934, March 19, 1936). If a widower cannot afford to care for his children or to send them back to Japan to his family, he may send them to the Victoria Oriental Home and School, an orphanage for Chinese and Japanese children, operated by the United Church Mission in Victoria.

> There were about fifty Chinese and Japanese children there, looked after by the missionary people: a superintendent teacher, a cooking teacher and one teacher was for looking

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[22] It is not known when this cemetery was established, but a Japanese funeral at the is reported at the Japanese cemetery in the Cumberland **Weekly News** August 20, 1898. Deaths of Japanese caused by mining accidents are reported from 1897 (**Weekly News** September 28).

> after the welfare of the children's upbringing. There was a school teacher and a kindergarten teacher. About five teachers in that Oriental Home, in Victoria. At 732 Cormorant Street. The building is still there (262:90.11.15).

Photographs are generally taken at important life milestones--particularly marriage and death. This way, relatives and family ancestors live on as individuals within the family. Prayers are regularly said for deceased family members and ancestors are honoured annually at **Obon**.[23] The cemetery, with its stones and square wooden posts which mark gravesites, is a reference point for family cohesiveness.

Neighbouring Peoples

An elderly **issei** (115:89.11.09) tells me that, from his perspective,

> Number One is about two miles from town of Cumberland. Number Five is just close by. So, Number One was more or less isolated so they clung to these old Japanese customs longer than Number Five people did. They were so close to town they assimilated into town of Cumberland. So what we did was different between One and Five. You might say, Number Five Japanese were more Canadian than Number One Japanese. The distance of two miles makes such a big

[23] See Chapter VI, page 149.

> difference. Of course, in Number Five, you can go to town, just walk there and come back and mingle with the white people. Whereas, Number One was two miles away. You don't want to walk two miles to town every day. So you don't go there too often. Two communities going different ways.

Physical distance is identified by many former residents of village Cumberland as a primary factor of difference between the communities of Number One and Number Five. Number One, located further from the city of Cumberland, is seen to keep more to traditional village ways and thus maintain strong cultural bonds with Japan. Number Five, on the other hand, is only a ten minute walk to town. This is seen to create greater opportunities for commercial and cultural exchange.

Original immigration and basic settlement patterns, however, contribute another important factor. The pioneer settlers of Number One village are primarily immigrants from Kyushu, the southernmost island of the Japanese archipelago. The pioneer settlers of Number Five village are the relatives and friends of Hiroshima farmers and come from the main island, Honshu. As such, the residents of Number Five speak a different dialect from that spoken by their neighbours in Number One. This creates fundamental communication barriers. Harold Hirose (90.11.08) describes an aspect of this, while telling me why the Japanese school teacher had weekly elocution

exercises for practising "proper Japanese speaking:"

> Because of the people who come from Japan, they come from various prefectures--provinces--they had their **namari**--dialectic idiosyncrasies--that creeps into your everyday speech. So what this teacher thought was the standard, correct Japanese way of saying things. But, as far as [the students] are concerned, they are using the right Japanese. They've been listening to that since they were small. . . . And, then, we had an English-speaking club, too. Lots of debates and speech contests.

Others simply say, "we didn't speak to each other."

Extent of the Villager's World

A miner's daughter from Number One (260:89.08.27) observes:

> We were different. Number Five people were more liberal. During the summer, they went to Vancouver for berry-picking and things like that, for work. Number One people were quite traditional. Parents did not want their children to leave the community because they might come back from the big city smoking and swearing and being too modern. Nobody worked outside the community. The boys would go to the woods and the sawmills during the summer, Royston Lumber company. The girls never worked. In fact, until my husband died [recently], I never earned five cents in my life.

And, one of her friends (119:89.11.09) adds to the explanation:

> Number One are not outward. Number Five, when the kids grew older, there was no work. They *had* to go *out*. Whereas, Number One people, they didn't have to go out because they had the lumber yard. So just a handful of [Number One people] are outward.

These two observations sum up the range of connections the inhabitants of

Number One and Number Five villages had. One finds that children from both communities, in attending the Cumberland Public School, associate daily with town children. Their fathers have an everyday connection with townspeople, through their work in the mines. Their mothers' lives, however, revolve around housekeeping, bearing and raising children. While women can function in the public sphere (as one will find in the next chapter) their lives are isolated. They seldom interact with the larger society. Their Canadian-born children, who speak English and who go to public schools, live in a world apart. Until the **nisei** community matures into adulthood, there is little opportunity to see the world beyond the Comox Valley. A Number One woman (260:89.08.27) reminisces, "My marriage was arranged. I never left Cumberland until I married and had to go to Chemainus. I cried and cried and cried."

Accordingly, while local history books (such as Takata 1983 and Isenor *et al* 1987) talk about "the Japanese community" and imply a homogeneous population, interviews reveal that, in fact, Number One and Number Five villages are an assortment of people from various prefectures and regions of Japan who have brought with them their different regional dialects and customs. Further evidence of difference can be found in the economic and religious practices of the two communities.

Chapter V : SUBSISTENCE AND ECONOMY

The Japanese in Cumberland rely, for the most part, on their gardens, fishing, travelling representatives from Japanese stores in Vancouver and the general store that is the centre of each village for food and household items.

Horticulture

Each household has a small vegetable patch, either adjacent to the house or located nearby, where staples such as **hakusai** [Chinese cabbage], potatoes, and **daikon** [Japanese white radish *Raphanus sativus var. hortensis*] are grown. Many other vegetables are raised, including turnip, carrots, **mame** [beans] and onions. Women do most of the gardening, after men and boys have cleared the land by cutting and hauling trees, using chains and block and tackle. Stumps are dug and burned out. If a man can afford it, he uses dynamite.

One woman recalls,

> Some houses had gardens near their houses, but we didn't. When mother and father first came from Japan they went into the woods and cleared a space. We had a potato patch in one place and a vegetable patch in another place. When I had to find mother, I had to go all over the place to look for her. I never knew where she might be. I don't remember exactly how many patches we had, but there were several and they were in different places (260:89.08.27).

A miner's son remembers,

> . . . the garden was hand ploughed. The parents would wait until us kids, during the Easter holidays, and that's when we'd start to plough the garden. . . . All that after working in the mine all day. Come back, work in the garden and they were on shift work, too. . . (129:89.11.06).

and continues,

> The gardens, not huge, just patches because not enough space. But, some had patches way out somewhere. If you were ambitious enough, you till the soil and make a garden. Well, it is yours to plant. A few ladies might get together and make a garden by the creek. . . . Cabbages. Whatever is a good spot, you clear it and you garden. Nobody had the thinking "Oh, close to Tateyama, this is Tateyama's garden" (129:90.02.19).

Early settlers planted fruit trees, including apple, pear, plum, peach and cherry:

> . . . just about everybody had fruit trees--apple, cherry, plum. A lot of people had cherry trees, a few had apple trees. We had plum trees, we had pear. . . (273:89.11.09).

Several households own chickens and some also have a few ducks. A few men who operate small businesses own horses for hauling goods.

Collecting

During the summer months, salmonberries, huckleberries, blackberries and elderberries are gathered in the surrounding forest. In the cool autumn months, villagers collect mushrooms and a variety of plants, including **akada** [lamb's quarters, or wild spinach *Chenopodium album*], **gobō** [burdock root *Arctium minus*], and **seri** [described as "wild parsley," possibly water-parsley *Oenanthe sarmentosa*]. Plants like **fuki** [butterbur, or bog rhubarb *Petasites japonicus*] and **udo** [Japanese asparagus *Aralia cordata*], both native to Japan, are brought by immigrants and cultivated or allowed to grow wild.[24]

> My parents used to go and pick **seri** from the swamp. The leaf is a little bit like parsley. But it has a bigger stalk. Maybe watercress, but I don't think. Wild parsley. . . . It had to be a certain kind. They knew exactly (243:90.02.19).

Her friend adds, "As long as it looks like it, they called it" (129:90.02.19).

When asked about **udo**, a woman explains,

> **Udo**, it's like asparagus. They used to import it from Vancouver and then save the seed and plant. Iwasa's store sold it, too. **Fuki**, it grew wild. You didn't have to grow (240:90.02.19).

Mushrooms were a treat and villagers looked forward to the autumn months. Harold Hirose recalls the mushroom hunting expeditions.

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[24] Along with **higan sakura** [cherry blossom trees *Prunus spp.*] and bamboo, these plants can be found today in the forest undergrowth surrounding the sites of Number One and Number Five villages.

> We would go mushroom hunting, mushroom picking. Bring back hundred-pound rice sacks full of mushrooms. At first, we'd pick everything in sight, then we would take only the best. If it was today, we'd make a fortune out of it (90.02.21).

Fishing and Hunting

Fish, abundant in both coastal waters and in local streams, are similar to those available in Japan and form a significant part of the diet. Children, when not in school, are encouraged to fish and to gather shellfish and seaweed from the beach at Union Bay.

> We used to go to Royston or Union Bay. We used to catch crab, because the crab would come right to the shore. . . . We caught things like **namako** [sea cucumber *Parastichopus californias*] and **uni** [sea urchin, probably giant red sea urchin *Strongylocentrotus franciscanus*] and **ika** [octopus *Octopus dofleini*] and **tako** ["squid", probably small octopi]. **Anako** ["eel", probably either "rock-eel" or prickleback *Xiphister mucosus* or Pacific lamprey *Lampetra tridetata*]. Bring it home and cook it (101 :89.08.29).

> We used to go for little shiners, down to the wharf, the Royston wharf. Nearly every Sunday morning, get up early in the morning. The Japanese and Chinese would be fishing there. The other people, they couldn't be bothered with shiners. We used to take them home to help supplement the food supply. This was the whole thing. It wasn't just the fun of fishing. Shiners were about five-six inches. And then, if you were lucky, you would get a big black **pochi** [probably pile perch *Phacochilus vacca*]. **Shainapochi** [Shiner perch *Cymatogaster aggregata*] is a small **pochi**. As kids, we called them **shainako** [loosely, shiner "children", or baby shiners].

> The big **pochi**, you catch one of those and you were okay. And, on the lake. Cumberland Lake. It was all rivers and lakes around there. So, trout [generally, steelhead *Salmo gairdnerii*]. It was fun catching them, but you wanted to catch them for the food supply. That was the real purpose. It wasn't sports fishing (328:89.11.09).

Seafoods which are not immediately eaten are salted or dried for the winter months.

> Clams. We used to go digging clams. With horse clams, we just used to snip off the snout, dry it and salt it. And then they went into a drawer in the kitchen and in the winter you just kind of roast it on the top of the stove. It peels just like **ika** [squid]. Peel it, chew it. Just like gum. You couldn't afford gum. No preservatives or anything like that in it--just a little salt. That skin, it was so hard. You put it into really hot water, and let it soak and then peel. To dry, you work a thread through it and then put on the clothesline, instead of clothes, all these **kai** [shellfish], to dry. Then, they'd last forever, once they're dried. You want to eat, you put on the stove. Roast it, turn it over. Peel it. . . (328:89.11.09).

If there wasn't a fisherman in the household, sometimes fish could be purchased from a neighbour. Masato "Stoney" Sora remembers (89.11.06),

> My uncle, Nakano, he used to go up to Campbell River. Sometimes buy from the Indians. Salmon--dog salmon we used to call it [chum salmon *Onchorhynchus keta*].

His friend, Hiroshi "Rosie" Ogaki continues, "Twenty cents, twenty-five cents for a great big thing. That would feed the whole family. Takahashi got it from Deep Bay, but he had a more expensive fish."

Black-tailed deer, grouse, pheasant, wild geese and wild ducks

are hunted by those who own guns and the meat is shared among villagers. Occasionally, a bear is shot.

> My father . . . he would go deer hunting. And when he got deer he'd hang it up one night and peel the skin and we'd give it to all the people in the village because you can't keep it. You just give it away. Sharing (101:89.08.29).

The General Store

Within both Number One and Number Five villages a small general store[25] provides a limited selection of tools, hardware, dry goods, clothing and groceries. Bread and milk from nearby farms are delivered to the store twice a week.

> I remember selling Stanfield shirts. Western and Japanese goods. In those days, a hundred pounds of rice was $3.50. Three point five cents a pound. . . . Bread and milk were delivered and then people bought from the store. But not many people bought milk because they couldn't afford it. . . (101:89.08.29).

A Royston farmer's daughter (321:90.11.15) remembers,

> We sold milk to Cumberland people. Mostly **hakujin** [non-Japanese]. Most Japanese didn't use milk. . . . Some days, my father had to backpack because of the snow. But, he always

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[25] These stores are owned by the Union Collieries Company and leased to the Japanese merchants. Tax Assessment Rolls (B. C. Provincial Archives) as early as 1899 show a S. Nakano as a tenant in a company store. Later, the Rolls indicate that S. Nakano is assessed $5 for a store at "Japtown" in 1903.

> delivered the milk. There was a creamery, too, to whom my people sold cream.

Kazuko Iwasa Umemoto, the daughter of the storekeeper at Number One describes her father's store:

> We lived in the store, in the back. There was no such thing as a separate establishment. It was a general store. Mostly food. Everything from canned goods to some fruit. Everybody grew their own vegetables so there really wasn't anything special in vegetables. . . . When we were very young, . . . it even had shoes. We had clothing and, gradually, when the population dwindled and people started to go up to town to purchase their things and Eatons' and Simpsons' catalogues, there was less need for clothing and that sort of thing, so we concentrated on food, groceries. . . . Things like rice, soy beans and **shōyu** [soy sauce] and **miso** [soy bean paste] and other Japanese ingredients we got through Vancouver (89.11.09).

Another former resident recalls:

> [The Vancouver store] would send the order for all the communities, like Number Five, Number One, in bulk and then we distributed it. **Shōyu**, hundred pound sacks of rice. The stores, Matsubuchi, Iwasa, they had certain things. But bulk, most of them used to order (328:89.11.09).

Vegetables are supplemented on a daily basis with boiled rice. While seafood, poultry and game are part of the diet, most proteins are available in the many traditional Japanese foods made of soy beans, such as **age** [deep-fried soy bean curd] and **tōfu** [soy bean curd]. Both communities have a **tōfu** maker. A woman recalls,

> At first, we got **tōfu** from Chinatown. Bean sprouts, **age**, and

> **tōfu**. Later on, in Number Five, there was a lady, she operated a **tōfuya** [**tōfu** shop]. I remember **age**, fresh out of the hot fat, three pieces for five cents. That lady, she used to grind the soy beans by hand in a big stone mill (110:89.11.09).

Essential products made from rice include **mochi** [ceremonial cakes],[26] **sake** [wine], and **shōchū** [distilled liquor]. Each household makes alcohol for its own consumption. An **issei** recalls,

> **Sake**? Before Prohibition, **sake** was sold cheap. Nobody thought about making **sake**. But after the Prohibition, you couldn't get it so everybody started making **sake.** Everybody. Every household made **sake**. There's nothing to it. Get some rice, get **kōji** or fermenting what-do-you-call-it, that's it. And, people in Number Five, they made it, **sake**, for their own consumption so the police didn't raid, or bother people in Number Five. But Number One, a few people were making a business out of that. In Number One town. So, the police raided Number One town quite often.[27] Other than that, Number Five people were left alone because they didn't bother selling it. All they had was for their own consumption. Even my mother used to make **sake** for my father. They were scared about police so they take it down the basement and hide it. But, when you look back, you didn't have to be scared of police because you are not making spirit. **Sake** is similar to wine . . . so you are allowed to make that. . . (115:89.11.09).

As well, a type of unrefined **sake**, known as **kame doburoku** or "**dobu**" was commonly made.

> We made **dobu** from what was left over when **sake** was made.

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[26] A description of the making and use of **mochi** is in Chapter VI.

[27] The Cumberland **Islander** (February 7, 1920; July 3, 1920; June 12, 1931) and the **Comox District Free Press** (February 13, 1932) have published several accounts of residents of Number One village being arrested and fined for being in possession of "bootleg whiskey"--**shōchū**, in fact.

> It takes twenty-one days. Strong and good. And then, home brew. If it turned sour, you get the mash and distil it. That **shōchū**! Holy smoke, what a stink. You can smell it a block away. You know, when you start coming up the street, when you're doing that **shōchū**, you can smell it (132:89.11.06).

> We made it at night, cover the windows in the corner room, like a pantry. Everybody made their own because the husbands, they had to have their **sake**, that **dobu** before they eat their meal (252:90.02.19)

While the city of Cumberland is an immediate source of tools, manufactured clothing, footwear, and dry goods, many of the Japanese villagers order food and goods directly from travelling salesmen who come from Vancouver once a month. A resident of Number One remembers,

> Once a month, three merchants from Vancouver came--Komura, Furuya and Manakawa. They had big suitcases with everything 'from soup to nuts'. There was fabric, magazines from Japan, food, clothing. Mother went through the goods in the suitcases and order things. Later, they would be shipped to us from Vancouver. We ordered clothes from Eatons' and Simpsons' catalogues, too. (260:89.08.27)

And,

> Komura's would ship parcels by crates, to Courtenay. And then, Chow Lee's oldest son, he had a truck. He would go and pick them up and he charged us ten cents a box, a crate. Didn't matter how big the box was. So we had to open them and find out who [the contents] belong to and deliver them and collect ten cents--to cover [the costs]. Like, there were five boxes, we had to collect fifty cents. If we were smart, we would have made sixty cents! Three cents from this house, five cents from that house. Because we had to pay Chow Lee out of our pocket. . . (277:90.02.19).

Village Specialists

Not all immigrants choose to be miners. Some choose fishing and farming as occupations, while others open and operate small businesses which serve the needs of the Japanese communities of the Comox Valley. So, while most of the men in both Number One and Number Five villages work in the coal mines or as loggers, there is, in both villages a small group of shopkeepers and specialists--both male and female. Full-time specialists include the Christian missionary, the dentist (Mr. Kuzuhara), the school teacher (Mr. Aoki), and the managers of the public bathhouse.

Part-time specialists are those men who combine work as miners with another occupation--for example, the Buddhist priest, and the men that do carpentry and stonework when required. Matsubuchi, whose wife manages the family general store in Number Five village, also operates a photography studio in downtown Cumberland and co-owns a large general store in town with Chow Lee, a Chinese who is also employed as a miner by the Union Collieries.[28] Lee has been in partnership with Matsubuchi's father-in-law, Umematsu Nakano, since the early years of the century. In Number

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[28] Chow Lee is registered, by name, as early as 1907 (Union Collieries Output Books, B.C. Provincial Archives).

Five, there is a man (Mr. Harada) who operates a shingle making business. Until 1935, when the mines begin to close, Tokuji "Hiro" Hirose works as a labour contractor. A few men work in the local hotels.

In both villages, there are women specialists who work to augment the household income. These women include the **tōfu** maker, the barber, the woman who manages the boarding house and the midwife. In Number One village, one woman operates an ice cream parlour for a number of years. Her daughter recalls,

> My mother had the business in her home. Before that, she said that she had an ice cream parlour right by the railway track. I remember helping her churning. Hard work! And my friends used to come and I would give them, instead of a scoop I'd give them two scoops. My father used to say, "What are you doing?!" (252:90.02.19).

Town Merchants

The few Japanese households which are located in downtown Cumberland are merchant families and are well-established in Cumberland. "Tommy" Nakanishi has operated a hardware store and bicycle repair shop from 1911, and the watchmaker, Mr. K. Shibata, has been established since

1898.[29] There are two tailors--Cumberland Tailor (K. Aida[30] and N. Hirano) since 1906 and Union Tailor (S. Isaka, then U. Watanabe) since 1907. These merchants are employers: Union Tailor, which provides dry cleaning and pressing, has four employees; Cumberland Tailor has six employees (**Cumberland News** January 31, 1912).

Outside Cumberland, near Royston and Courtenay are several farming families, some with large, established landholdings and dairy businesses--notably Maruya, Kishimoto and Kobayakawa.

An idea of the distribution of occupations in the early pioneer days can be found in Table 2 (**Cumberland News** February 12, 1913). In 1913, the watchmaker and jeweller, Shibata, advises the local newspaper that there are 305 Japanese in the district. Of these, there are 57 women and 62 children: there are three men for every woman. He also provides the information regarding the occupations of Japanese men who live in the Comox

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[29] Shibata's store is managed by Y. Nakagami from 1920-1925 when it is sold to a Mr. M. Shiozaki who runs the store until 1942.

[30] Aida, who also operates the Cumberland Cafe on Dunsmuir Street from 1909 (**Cumberland News** July 13, 1909) operates his tailoring business in Cumberland until 1911. In October, he turns the tailor shop over to his partner Hirano and lists for sale "two four-room houses on Derwent Avenue--price $1300 for the two" (**Cumberland News** October 3, 1911). By December of that year, he sells the cafe business. In 1924, Aida's son, E. Aida, returns to Cumberland to resume his father's business.

District, which includes neighbouring farmlands. He does not mention occupations of women.

TABLE 2: OCCUPATIONS OF JAPANESE MALES COMOX DISTRICT, 1913

Occupation	
Miner	91
Farmer	30
Logger	25
Merchant	25
Coal Washer [Picker]	6
Domestic Servant	5
Not employed	2
Mill-Hand	1
Missionary	1
Total	186

Mining

Miners, who represent almost 50% of employable men in 1913, are generally under a preliminary contract to the Collieries for three years. "They have a contract for three years to work in the coal mine. Not that he--my father--wanted to be a coal miner. That was the only job he could get. That was the only way he could come" (245:90.02.19). Japanese miners receive

$1.25 in wages for an eight hour shift, or eighty cents for each ton of coal mined (Sumida 1935:354). A miner's daughter tells me that, when her father arrived in Cumberland in 1910, he knew nothing about mining. For one month, he and the other contracted miners work without pay "to learn how to mine." She adds, "he had never been underground, until then" (260:89.08.27).

Very young men and old men may be hired as coal pickers. Their job is to separate lump coal from nut coal and pea coal and rock waste after the coal has come to the surface and before it is loaded onto railway cars destined for the port at Union Bay. Some women also work as coal pickers, sorting coal from rock waste. They then sack the coal and sell it back to the Company. The miner's daughter (260:89.08.27) continues:

> The coal had to be picked over because there was a fire hazard. If the coal was buried with rocks in the pile, it could catch fire. A long fire that is hard to put out. I can remember my mother mending the coal-picking gloves. Sometimes the mothers and children would pick coal, too. Put coal in sacks. A Chinese man would come and help my mother.

In April 1931, the Canadian Collieries (Dunsmuir) Ltd. is forced to close Number Five mine. The **Islander** (March 27) reports, ". . . the shut down will affect about 120 men [approximately 50 Japanese work in Cumberland mines at this time (Sumida 1935:356)] and these will be placed in the No. 4 mine as quickly as places can be found for them. The married men

will be given first consideration. . . ." By 1934, there are only thirty Japanese miners who are still employed; by the end of 1935, both Number Four and Number Five mines are closed and all are out of work (Sumida 1935:356; **Comox District Free Press** February 7, August 8, 1935).

Logging

Masato "Stoney" Sora says, during an interview (90.11.14):

> You know, when I was logging, I thought, "am I going to do this for the rest of my life?" It was really tough. Six days a week. Tough. And, you know, in those days safety didn't mean nothing.

While the **issei** work in the mines, their sons find employment in the forest industry, either as loggers or as mill-hands. Yamashita (1942:30-31) notes,

> in Royston, Vancouver Island, may be found the largest saw-mill operated by Japanese in British Columbia. Originally, this saw-mill was operated by a group of white capitalists, but was taken over by two Japanese for the sum of $30,000 in 1916. By 1934, this company had an investment of over $300,000. The products are marketed in Eastern Canada, United States, Australia and Japan.

In 1933, the Royston Lumber Company employs thirty men regularly in the mill and mill-yard, and maintains a logging crew of twenty-five men (**Comox District**

Free Press December 7, 1933). Young men, when they reach age fifteen, augment the household income by going to work in nearby Japanese-owned or operated logging camps at Coombs, Fanny Bay and Port Alberni during the summer months. A woman remembers, "Mitsui Company of Japan financed the Coombs logging camp" (132:89.11.06). A neighbour adds, "The Terakita family ran it. Just a little community. Not more than fifteen families" (101:89.08.29). Another elderly man remembers,

> We worked in Japanese-owned mills. Well, in those days, they really discriminated. We can't work in crown company, only a private company. I was working in the bush, at a tie camp--making railway ties with an axe. . . . Falling trees was too tough, too dangerous for me. . . (269: 90.11.14).

Ted Aida, the tailor's son remembers, "When I left Cumberland in the fall of '39, I was eighteen. We didn't have much choice in work. You worked in the bush, or in a logging camp, or in a pulp mill" (89.11.09).

An elderly man (325:89.08.26) who worked for the Royston Lumber Company reminisces about life in the mid-1930s:

> I lived in a company house, two bedrooms. Rent was two dollars a month. My wages were fifteen and a half cents an hour--maybe thirty dollars a month. There was no union. We were poor in the Depression years, in the early thirties. But, a sack of rice, 100 pounds, cost $3.50 and if you had a sack of rice you didn't go hungry. Sometimes we would walk to Royston Beach and catch a salmon. Use shiners for bait. Then, bring the fish up to the white farms and barter for potatoes. In those days, a cord of wood cost fifty cents.

He goes on to say that after the Depression, wages went up by about five cents an hour and that, in 1942, they were making about fifty cents an hour.

The Royston Lumber Company becomes the major employer in the area. The storekeeper Iwasa in Number One village at Cumberland owns shares in the enterprise and so there are employment opportunities for young men in that village. A woman from Number Five (119:89.11.09) says:

> Number One people didn't have to go out to find work because they had the lumber yard. The boys [of Number Five village], they are seventeen, eighteen, they went to the logging camps, down in Fanny Bay. They had to leave home. But Uchiyama and Iwasa, they had this lumber yard together at Royston--a big lumbering business, that Royston sawmill. . .

Another woman (252:90.02.19) adds "Tsugio [Iwasa] and his father had shares in the Royston logging camp and all Tsugio's friends went to the logging camp and worked along with him. . . ."

Augmenting the Household Economy

During the summer months, some of the miners and, later, the loggers go fishing in the Skeena or Fraser Rivers. The fish they catch is either sold or is brought back to the village to be salted for the winter:

> A number of years, my father went up to Skeena to fish

> because the mine had closed down. So he had to go and do something, so he went fishing. And he would bring home fish and of course you can't bring fresh fish because we didn't have a freezer. So he would salt it. I can still see that white salt on it. Then you rinse it and soak it in water and then you toast it, or bake it and eat it. . . (101:89.08.29).

Children are also expected to contribute to the household economy. "We used to pick blackberries in lard cans and sell a pail for twenty-five or thirty-five cents. We worked all day, walking, to pick those blackberries. . ." (110:90.02.21). A woman (262:90.11.15), who grew up in Number One village, explains that, as a child, she delivered mail for a fee, to help buy food:

> Number One didn't have a postman, just a mail box at the Iwasa store. People put their letters to be mailed out. And we would take them. A responsibility. We were the mailman. They trusted us. We were about eleven, or twelve, I guess. On the way to school. Then, at lunchtime, we would have our lunch and then go to the post office. There was two boxes for Number One, and a box for the Nakano store and a box for the Iwasa store. I remember the numbers. And we had a key and a bag to fill up from those boxes. So, we put the mail in our bag and then we used to deliver it after going home from school. We used to go from house to house and deliver at night. We were the postman! And we got something like five cents a week. Later on, maybe thirty cents a month. The money went towards food. During school it wasn't too bad. But, summer holidays, we didn't go to school but we definitely had to go to the post office, each day. At least we were earning money from each household.

During the 1930s and until World War II, gathering cascara

bark[31] is a way of supplementing the household economy, particularly after the mines and some of the sawmills close during the Depression years.

> We would peel the bark off the tree and dry it and then sell it to the pharmacies for fifteen cents a pound as medicine. I think they made some kind of cold medicine (325:89.08.26).
>
> We went to Powell River, on a big boat. And then we camp, stay there a few months in a big canvas tent. Sleep in there, stock the cascara bark, dry it out, break it up. All summer long, picking cascara bark. A guy named Douglas, he used to buy old beer bottles. He had a truck. He'd buy the cascara (129:90.02.21).

In the early years, although few **issei** women work outside their homes, they might also, for a fee, cook and do laundry for bachelors or married men who arrive without their wives. Women who do laundry for a fee have to haul water from a well, heat it, scrub clothes which were permeated with coal dust on washboards and then, when dry, press them with irons heated on stoves. Conversely, many young **nisei** women do laundry and housework employed as domestics. "Housework. That was the only work that was around" (321:90.11.15). Some begin working before they finished high school. A

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[31] The cascara tree (*Rhamnus purshiana*) is native from northern California to British Columbia. It grows at low elevations on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, along a coastal strip of the mainland to Bella Coola, and in the Arrow and Kootenay Lakes area. Cascara trees grow up to nine meters (thirty feet) tall, with sparse, upright limbs bearing large, oval, strongly veined leaves and plump, blue-black berries in late summer. The bark was harvested in great quantity during the Second World War, for its medicinal value as a laxative. The **Islander** of April 16, 1921 reports that Japanese loggers are collecting cascara bark and selling it to American and British buyers.

woman from Number Five (101:89.08.29) recalls:

> I worked as a housegirl. House cleaning. I used to work on Saturdays. And then, in the summer holidays, I went to the hotel and worked as a laundry girl. . . .

Girls generally finish high school before going to work full time, although many of their brothers have entered the work force after finishing Grade 8 at the Cumberland Public School. One or two girls attend the Courtenay Commercial School where, for seventy-five dollars tuition (**Comox District Free Press** August 4, 1932), they learn typing, bookkeeping and Pitman shorthand (**Comox District Free Press** March 10, 1932). Other girls are able to go to Vancouver to learn dressmaking.

> After I finished [school], I went to Vancouver in 1939 to learn dressmaking. I got three dollars a month for ten months as an apprentice. That was a lot of money. Then I finished, went to Duncan. I was getting twenty-five dollars a month. Because of the war, I came home, to Cumberland (101:89.08.29).

One woman (252:90.02.19) chooses to learn dressmaking as a trade, after she has worked as a domestic:

> I worked a few months, I went to this Japanese family in Nanaimo. They were fishermen. He had a big home, a big business. So I did all the chores there. And I had to clean fish. That was part of the work they gave me. They were short-handed. I wasn't supposed to be doing it. I had to clean the house. And watch the store. And then, draw the bath for the men when they come home. Job itself wasn't too bad, but when the fish came, they were short-handed. I had never cleaned fish in my life! That sort of killed me. So, I left after, I don't know, how many months. I decided to go to Vancouver and go to Japanese sewing school. . . .

By 1942, 51% of **nisei** women over eighteen, who are not still in high school, are in the workforce. All **nisei** men are employed--85% as either loggers or mill-hands. A 1942 census of the Comox District,[32] provides the following breakdown of occupations for both men and women:

TABLE 3A: OCCUPATIONS OF JAPANESE MALES, COMOX DISTRICT, APRIL 1942

Occupation	Issei	Nisei
Miner	--	--
Farmer	4	5
Logger	7	43
Mill-Hand	2	29
Merchant	7	--
Coal Washer [Picker]	4	--
Mine-Timber Cutter	8	--
Domestic Servant	3	--
Not Employed	4	--
Retired (9 miners, 1 merchant)	10	--
Missionary, Clergy	--	1
Carpenter	1	1
Mechanic	1	5
Total	51	84

[32] The census, taken by the Rev. Yoshio Ono in order to assist authorities with the transfer of Japanese to Hastings Park in Vancouver, lists the residents of Cumberland Number Five, Cumberland Number One, Union Bay, Fanny Bay, Courtenay, Headquarters and Royston, by name, gender, age, occupation, school year (if applicable), Japanese registration number, and citizenship status (Ono Papers).

TABLE 3B: OCCUPATIONS OF JAPANESE FEMALES COMOX DISTRICT, APRIL 1942

Occupation	Issei	Nisei
Housewife	55	25
Housekeeper	1	2
Domestic Servant	--	17
Dressmaker	--	5
Tailor	--	1
Clerical/Stenographer	--	3
Laundress	--	1
Teacher	1	--
Not Employed	--	3
Total	57	57

A further breakdown of occupations for men and women in Number One and Number Five villages shows that young men are almost entirely employed in the lumbering industry (Table 4A). Young women, on the other hand, have a variety of occupations (Table 4B). In Number One, unmarried girls tend to find work in domestic service. Occupations of unmarried girls from Number Five range from domestic service to dressmaking and clerical work. Table 4B also indicates that married **nisei** women of Number One generally do not work outside the home.

TABLE 4A: OCCUPATIONS OF JAPANESE MALES, VILLAGE CUMBERLAND, 1942

Occupation	Number One		Number Five	
	Issei	Nisei	Issei	Nisei
Miner	--	--	--	--
Farmer	--	--	--	--
Logger	4	14	2	20
Mill-Hand	--	12	--	10
Merchant	1	--	4	--
Coal Washer [Picker]	3	--	--	--
Mine-Timber Cutter	2	--	6	--
Domestic Servant	1	--	1	--
Not Employed	1	1	--	--
Retired	6	--	4	--
Missionary, Clergy	--	--	--	1
Carpenter	1	1	--	--
Total	19	28	17	31

TABLE 4B: OCCUPATIONS OF JAPANESE FEMALES, VILLAGE CUMBERLAND, 1942

Occupation	Number One		Number Five	
	Issei	Nisei	Issei	Nisei
Housewife	15	9	20	4
Housekeeper	1	1	--	1
Domestic Servant	--	10	--	3
Dressmaker	--	--	--	6
Clerical/Stenographer	--	2	--	1
Laundress	--	--	--	1
Teacher	1	--	--	--
Total	17	22	20	16

Household Expenses

It is agreed that, with the exception of merchant families, "everybody was poor" (328:89.11.09). "There were seven in our family and I have good memories, I'll say that. But, we were all poor. And the Japanese and orientals were a little poorer than the other poor!" (328:89.11.09). Sumida (1935:358) in his survey of Japanese communities provided some information on 1934 income expenditures in Cumberland. His findings are based on an average family size of six persons and he does not differentiate between residents of Number One or Number Five. However, it is known that he included the merchant Iwasa's family of Number One. This family enjoyed a better lifestyle than other families in the community.

His data show that, in 1934, many families spend more than their income and dip into small savings accounts or borrow on credit, where possible. A storekeeper's daughter (110-89.11.09) explains, "Mother would give credit because people didn't always have the money to pay for food and whatnot. Some of those bills were a hundred dollars."

TABLE 5: ANNUAL INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR SEVEN FAMILIES,1934[33]

EXPENDITURE			INCOME
Expenditure **Item**	**For 7 families**	**Average/Family**	
Food	$ 2,644.00	$ 377.71	
Clothing	1,146.00	163.71	
House Rent	6.00	1.00	
Fuel	503.00	71.85	
Taxes	100.00	14.29	
Electricity	192.00	27.42	
Telephone	162.00	23.14	
Education	190.00	27.14	
Reading Materials	57.00	8.14	
Amusement	394.00	56.28	
Insurance	56.00	8.00	
Medical Services	206.00	29.43	
TOTAL	$ 5,992.00		$ 4,380.00*
Average per Family		$ 808.13	625.71

*Total income for seven families

While food expenses average about $31 a month and account for 60% of monthly income (Sumida 1935:358), these expenditures represent the purchase of necessary Japanese staples--such as rice and **shōyu** [soy sauce]--and western food items--such as rolled oats and flour. Women make their own

33 Some adjustments have been made to the table to reduce or remove obvious consistencies that were created by apparent typographical and/or calculation errors. The adjustments still produce conclusions that are essentially the same and figures that are similar to Sumida's original work.

udon [noodles] and **tsukemono** [salted pickles]. A woman (252:90.02.19) remembers,

> . . .then rice. And salt pickles. If the fishing isn't any good and there isn't enough to buy the meat, then rice and fried potatoes. **Poteto furai**--bacon and fried potato. You put in the oven and eat, every day. Only starch. Well, we survived. Not really nutritious meals. Nutrition was secondary.

Many families eat rice three times a day, although **nisei** men and women recall having bread or toast and oatmeal for breakfast. "Grandmother often made rolled oats for breakfast" (101:89.08.29). Another woman adds, "Rice for breakfast, old-fashioned mother" (321:90.11.15). Her friend (267:90.11.14) protests, "I don't like porridge. My father had porridge every morning, but I never eat. I don't like toast. Bread, we used to have bread." Some children take bread and jam to school for their lunch. "Mother wouldn't buy bologna, except for school picnics. Bologna was a treat! Exotic!" (321:90.11.15). Some children bring traditional Japanese lunch food.

> Number One kids used to bring rice ball. Just a round rice ball--**onigiri** with **umeboshi** [red pickled plum] inside--size of a snowball. And the Canadian boys got a liking for it. A lot of time they used to say, "bring me a rice ball, with the red berry in the middle. I'll give you a chocolate bar, or sandwich." So, they were happy to swap. Swap **onigiri** for sandwiches. Sandwiches was a treat! (328:89.11.09).

Everyone agrees that western food is a treat. The tailor's son

(328:89.11.09) recalls shovelling snow for the owner of one of the hotels and receiving a piece of pie as part payment:

> I used to shovel snow and Mrs. Bonora'd give me twenty-five cents and a piece of pie. Oh, my God! What a luxury!" He adds, "You'd never get that at home. A piece of pie? God! You don't just bite through it fast, you nibble it, you taste it, you nibble it a bit more. Every little thing, you appreciated it.

He goes on to explain that his family would eat western food once a week for Sunday lunch, if "things were good."

> Japanese food six days a week and on Sunday, lunch, **yōshoku** [western food]. When we could afford it. . . . Nothing fancy, but bread and potatoes and carrots. Baked beans, that was the favourite. I used to love baked beans. If you were lucky, you'd get a wiener, or something. Oh, that was a real treat.

As previously observed, rent and land taxes for most families are minimal because they live on Canadian Collieries land. Everyone pays for electricity. Telephone service comes to Cumberland in 1910 and six Japanese merchants are among the first subscribers (B.C. Tel Archives). Generally, merchants have telephones, and there is a telephone at the Japanese high school. While some private residences maintain a telephone line, these lines are generally held by people who provide a service in their community--for example, I. Kuzuhara of Number Five, who is also a dentist; Hiro Hirose, who is a labour contractor and who runs a boarding house; and M. Tanaka "Hojo," who is manager of the baseball team for a while but who also assists with

immigration matters from time to time. So, although only ten families, on average, in village Cumberland have telephones, everyone pays something for telephone service because everyone pays for using the telephone in the general store for long distance calls to other communities.

> Only a few people had telephones. So if they needed to use, they would come to the store. There was no need to own one for any sort of conversation. Perhaps, you had to call the odd taxi, you had to order something, you had to call a doctor, you came and used the phone (273:89.11.09).

According to Table 5, fuel accounts for 12% of annual expenditures. People are quick to explain that some of the merchants[34] own a car or a truck and have to buy gasoline. Cooking fuel, on the other hand, is either free or very cheap. "You go to the woods and cut your firewood. If you lived on that Company property, coal was free. They delivered it" (277:90.02.19). Some families pick coal.

> It was better coal because it was hand-picked. No rock. Once a year, they would give each family two days to go to the rock pile and pick coal for your own use. And then, on the train, haul it back. Each sack was marked--your own ribbon, or something--and this is how we got our coal (277:90.02.19).

Masato "Stoney" Sora (90.02.19) adds:

> And Number Five people had a chance to go, too. In Number Five, the Collieries people used to shunt a flatcar right there.

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[34] The first record of this is an "automobile for sale for $150" advertisement placed in the **Cumberland News** of March 30, 1909, by K. Abe (also known as Umematsu Nakano) of Number One village.

> We used sack the coal and pile it on the flatcar. They would haul it down and all of us young guys would unload the flatcar. Take sacks to each house.

The other major expenditure that applies to every family is clothing, accounting for 26% of monthly income. Men's work clothes and school clothes for children are purchased through mail order catalogues from Eatons or Simpsons, or from the clothing store in town. Masato "Stoney" Sora (89.11.06) of Number Five remembers

> We used to go on a shopping spree. If the goldarn clothes fit you and you didn't outgrow, you wear it forever. Parents got our clothes from Campbell Brothers, he had a department store. He was good because he used to let my parents charge for all the clothes and shoes.

One miner, who has several children, has a shoemaker's last and repairs shoes for his family and for others in the community (101:89.08.29). Several women own sewing machines and make their own clothes. A woman from Number One (273:89.11.09) explains:

> Mother was so busy! Cooking, looking after us. She sewed dresses for us. She took a few sewing lessons. Somebody came from Vancouver to teach some of the ladies. She used to take apart a dress and trace the outline. Make the same one, different sizes [for everyone].

Entertainment is not a great expense. In village Cumberland it is provided by **shibai** [Japanese amateur theatrical amusements]. Families

also visit the theatres in Chinatown to see visiting Chinese performing troupes. As well, for amusement, a person can go to movies in town at the Ilo-Ilo[35] Theatre. Admission for children is ten or fifteen cents and twenty-five cents for an adult. However, one man (129:89.11.06) is quick to point out

> Matinees were ten cents. It was quite expensive. In those days, well, five cents, you could get a bag full of candy. And so I think it was fifteen cents for the regular show. We hardly went. During school days, forget it! I mean, there was some educational shows, then your parents let you go. But, otherwise . . . .

Men remember when radios come to village Cumberland. Not every family can afford a radio. Those that do have a radio often find that groups of neighbours gather round inside their house, or on the verandah outside a window, to listen.

> N. had a radio. He used to work night shift in the mine, come back and he'd have the radio on. We would come home from school and hardly eat anything--just a bowl of rice. And listen to the World Series. That was the year Babe Ruth pointed the bat to centre field and the next ball that came--yeah! (132:89.11.06).

Some men buy radios because they discover that they can get Japanese news, from Japan, at 6 o'clock in the morning.

From about 1916, baseball is keenly followed. The Royston Lumber

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[35] The name of the theatre is, in fact, an anglicization of the Japanese word **iro-iro**, which means, among other things, "variety". Built as a variety hall in 1912, the hall is converted to a movie theatre in 1913 (**Cumberland News** June 25, 1913).

Company sponsors a baseball team which is a member of the Comox District Intermediate League. There is a regular season of games with both local teams and with visiting teams such as the Vancouver Asahi team. Baseball games are twenty-five cents admission. As well, families regularly make contributions to the subscription fund for Empire Day celebrations.

An expenditure which is not shared by everyone is education. Students who are over the age of sixteen and still attending high school are required to pay a fee of two dollars a month (**Comox District Free Press** August 11, 1932). Some families can afford to send their children to Victoria or Courtenay for high school and a few students attend classes at the University of British Columbia.[36]

The small, relatively isolated community of Number One, with the exception of a few families, perceives itself as a conservative, and self-sufficient group with specific geographic and cultural boundaries. They tend their gardens, order goods--both western and Japanese--from catalogues or travelling salesmen, and maintain paternalistic economic relationships. Number

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[36] See Chapter IV, page 89.

Five, on the other hand, is a community where several families depend upon the maintenance of commercial ties with the townspeople of Cumberland. Continuous contact with Canadian culture and social mobility among male family members--as they follow seasonal occupational activities in mining, fishing and lumbering--create a broader range of experiences with the world outside the Comox valley. Further, the ability of one woman to speak English and act as an interpreter for the community (Shizuko Nakano Matsubuchi) creates an important communication link between village mothers and medical and educational services in town. Nevertheless, while social and economic organization can define community structure, religious systems, too, explain some of the differences between Number One and Number Five villages.

CHAPTER VI: RELIGION AND COMMUNITY OBSERVANCES

Religious Observances

Since the late 1880s, there has been a religious community in Cumberland. By 1897, four representative congregations of the major Christian churches--Presbyterian, Methodist, Church of England and Roman Catholic--have been established. As the majority of Japanese immigrants to British Columbia are Buddhist, from the turn of the century dedicated worshippers gather regularly in informal groups. A Japanese Buddhist temple is formally established by 1915.

Whether Christian or Buddhist, religion finds its way into the daily life of the Japanese residents of village Cumberland. Early schooling is associated with missionary and temple schools; later, church and temple help with family problems--such as the social adjustments of Canadian-born children who return to Canada after being sent to Japan for their early education or the problems faced by picture brides.

Christianity and Village Cumberland

It is the Presbyterian Church that directs most of its missionary attention to the community of Chinese mining labourers, while the Methodist Church focuses upon the moral reform of the early settlers of a Japanese community where the major pastimes are gambling, drinking and visits to the brothels in Chinatown. The earliest evangelizing mission in village Cumberland is recorded in the diaries of Reverend Sadakichi Kawabe who travelled from San Francisco, up the Pacific coast of North America in the fall of 1892. He recounts a two-day visit to the Union Mines at Cumberland where "fifty out of eighty [Japanese] men present decided to become Christians" (Kawabe n.d.:138, as cited in Mitsui 1964:17-18). In that year, Canadian Collieries (Dunsmuir) Ltd. sponsors an additional 150 men from Japan to work in the coal mines (Osterhout 1929:160)--although Mitsui (1964:24) suggests that the earliest labour immigrants from Japan were sponsored by the Canadian Collieries (Dunsmuir) Ltd. in 1889.

Another reference to early missionary work in this community is reported at the 1895 Methodist Church of Canada Conference by Masutaro Okamoto, a missionary who follows Kumabe's initial visit and who works in coastal communities between Victoria and the Skeena River. He writes

> six of our number have consecrated their lives wholly to the Master's service. Two of these [Kazuo Tajima and Ukichi Oyama] have gone to the Union Mines, where about 200 Japs [*sic*] (in original) are working. By the aid of some Christians a small church has been built (Minutes of the Conferences, B.C. Conference 1895:41).

By the turn of the century, baptisms are recorded. The Cumberland **Weekly News** (March 15, 1898) reports the baptism of three Japanese:

> . . . Mr. Hicks [the Methodist preacher] reading the service in English and the Japanese Missionary [Ukichi Oyama] translating it into Japanese. . . . The Missionary is a very earnest speaker and seems to have great influence over his people.

Of the all-Japanese mission at Union Mines (later, the site of Number One village of Cumberland) a woman remembers, "It was a nice church. Beside the train track that went to the coal mine. Quite big, with pews and pulpit and organ. It had a big bell which they rang on Sundays" (262: 90.11.15). In addition to Sunday church services, a Sunday School was taught by the preacher's wife [Inake Kudo] and a language school for children was operated during the week. The same woman recalls that, as Buddhism became formally established in the community, another school was built.

> They built another school because they didn't want to be associated with Christianity. When some priests came from Vancouver, they would have a gathering at the school house. They didn't associate with the church (262:90.11.15).

In addition to being a place where early settlers can learn about the teachings of Christ and find language instruction for their children, the early Christian mission is where newcomers to the community--and to Canada--learn simple survival skills, rudimentary instruction in Western values and laws, and a few words of English. A missionary bulletin (V 1:207, as cited by Mitsui 1964:59) reports the establishment of a night school by 1901, for the purposes of teaching English to miners. By the mid 1910s, a second mission has been established at Number Five village by Japanese Methodist evangelist Gīchi Suga. While Japanese merchants who live and work in downtown Cumberland send their children to Sunday school in the basement of the Methodist church in town, the people of Number Five attend services in a one-room wooden building on the outskirts of the village, close to the railroad track to the mine.

In June 1925, the Methodist, Congregationalist and Presbyterian churches are united and become the United Church of Canada. Oriental missions, formerly under the foreign missions of the Methodist Church, are assigned to the Board of Home Missions (Osterhout 1929:133-134). Osterhout (1929:162), superintendent of Oriental Missions, writes

> The original mission building at Number One Mine, built in the days of Tajima, is still in existence and occupied by Mr. Oyama, who, though no longer on the staff of workers, continues with his family to maintain an interest in the work of

> the church. The missionary from Victoria holds regular services on his monthly trips. . . . During the intervals between visits much volunteer service is rendered by the leading members of the mission. A successful night school for adults and a Sunday school for the children are kept up.

In Cumberland, St. George's United Church begins to play a greater community role, particularly among the families of Number Five village. Services are held in the basement of the church by visiting Japanese ministers or by local laymen, while children attend Sunday school. Young peoples' organizations associated with the United Church--Canadian Girls in Training (C. G. I. T.), Golden Key, Tuxis and Trail Rangers have an active role in the community by the mid-thirties. Supervision is shared by the Canadian minister and his wife in the absence of Japanese clergy. The clubs meet for fund-raising and other activities and, while girls learn cooking and crafts, boys participate in sports events. The **Islander** (January 30, 1931), in reporting the annual general meeting of St. George's Church Sunday school, states:

> A report was presented of the Japanese United Church Sunday school, with a membership of 60, with a C. G. I. T. and a Golden Key amongst the girls and Tuxis and Trail Rangers for the boys, with a membership of 52. This work is under the superintendency of the Rev. Utaka Ogura, of Victoria, and Mr. K. Nomoto, a student at the British Columbia University.

In 1932, the Asahi Trail Rangers of the Cumberland United Church are the first all-Japanese team to compete in a national athletic contest for boys and girls, sponsored by the Religious Education Council of Canada. The five-

member team wins the provincial shield for British Columbia (**Comox District Free Press** June 16, November 17, 1932; January 19, 1933).

Kazuko Iwasa Umemoto tells me, "The minister's wife, Mrs. Hewitt, she taught us how to make fudge in her kitchen. And we learned basic knitting and crocheting, and other things like that" (89.11.09). Another woman, from Number Five, says, "We met once a month, Sunday afternoon, at the manse next door to the United Church. We did singing, knitting. Nobody had any money to go anywhere. Nowadays, they go to camp. We were just Japanese girls" (110:90.02.21). By 1940, the Japanese United Church in Cumberland has eighty-four registered members with a Sunday school attendance of 152 (Memorandum re Japanese Situation 1941).

Festivals Associated with the Christian Calendar

While New Year's is the big holiday of the year in the community, **Christmas** is observed by Christian Japanese in both Number One and Number Five villages, particularly if there are children in the family. It is common for Buddhist and Christian families in both villages to have Christmas trees. Christmas pageants and concerts are popular activities at the public

school in town and at church. Although it is a Christian festival, Christmas is also observed by some Buddhist families. By the late 1930s, modest Christmas gift giving is practised by most families.

It is common practice for members of the young peoples' groups--C. G. I. T. and Trail Rangers--to assist with scripture reading during Sunday evening services during the **Easter** period or on **Mothering Sunday**. A search of the Register of Baptisms, Marriages and Burials of Grace Methodist and St. George's United Church (1911-1959) reveals that Easter, Mother's Day and Christmas Day are popular days to christen a child. As well, an annual memorial service is held on Easter Sunday to commemorate those members of the church who have died during the previous year.

Buddhism in Village Cumberland

The people of village Cumberland belong to the **Shinshū** sect. **Shinshū** is a salvationist sect of Pure Land Buddhism, a tradition which asserts that salvation, or rebirth in the Pure Land at death, will be provided to those who have faith in the goodness and merit of a Buddha named **Amida** [Infinite Light]. This sect recognizes that most individuals cannot follow a disciplined

religious practice because they are too busy with the exigencies of every day life--working for a living, raising a family, caring for the aged, and so on. Accordingly, if one recites the invocation "**Namu Amida Butsu**" [literally, "I rely on the Buddha of Eternal Light"] with faith, salvation is assured (Mullins 1984:71-72; Varley 1984:90; Erskine 1925:192-196).

Until the arrival of a Buddhist missionary in Vancouver in 1905, religious services are irregular and informal. If there is a death in the community, funeral rites are observed by laymen who were friends of the deceased. After 1905, a Buddhist priest sent to Vancouver by **Nishi Honganji** [the mother temple of one of the **Jōdo Shinshū** sects] travels regularly to coastal communities. This priest and his followers formally establish, in Vancouver, the first **Nihon Bukkyō Kai** [Japanese Buddhist Association] in Canada (Mullins 1984:59).

In the Comox valley, by 1915, a **Shinshū** temple has been built at the village adjacent to the Royston sawmill (262:90.11.15). It draws its congregation from the village at Royston and from nearby communities at Number One, Number Five and Union Bay--although not everyone goes to Royston regularly. It is also common for services to be held in the buildings used for Japanese language instruction in both Number One and Number Five.

By 1934, there are approximately 100 adult Buddhists in the Cumberland-Royston area which is served by this temple (Young 1936:96; Mullins 1984:62).

A woman who lived in Number One recalls, "a big truck with a canvas cover would come to pick everybody up to take them to the temple in Royston for services and ceremonies" (260:89.08.27). In Royston, there are regular services, a Sunday school organized along similar lines to Christian Sunday schools, and monthly prayer meetings and memorial services. Connected to the temple are a women's organization and a young men's association. These two groups--the Royston **Fujinkai** [Buddhist Women's Association] and the Royston **Aiyūkai** [Young Men's Buddhist Association]--are particularly active from 1940 in collecting money to aid the Canadian war effort (**Comox District Free Press** February 15, 1940; February 13, 1941; April 3, 10, 1941; January 29, 1942; February 19, 1942; March 5, 1942).

There are also some followers of **Zen** Buddhism in the Comox valley. In contrast to **Shinshū**, the **Zen** sect follows a meditative doctrine which encourages an individual to seek enlightenment through self-discipline and control (Varley 1984:93-94). Christians and the few members of the **Zen** sect who live in the area do not go to this temple.

After 1923, an all-purpose building built in Number One is where visiting Buddhist priests also hold services:

> The community financed that school, families put out the money, built the building, so that children could have Japanese education. When the priests came, because there was no church, they would perform ceremonies in the school. We just decorated it, set up a stage, put benches to sit on. It was a multi-purpose building, one room, it served both purposes (262:90.11.15).

As noted in the discussion on Christianity, it is the opinion of one that this building, which has daily use as a primary school for instruction in Japanese for grades one through five, is there because many families object to their children being schooled by the Methodist missionary and his wife. She says that there was a fear that children would have a Methodist upbringing instead of traditional Japanese schooling. Others say that the school near Number Five village was really too far for young children to walk to every day and so parents decided that a school was needed in Number One village.

The families that can afford it have a **butsudan** [a small, portable altar of plain or lacquered wood which contains an image or a picture of the deity **Amida**]. As well, there are memorial name tablets or photographs of deceased relatives. Every morning, members of the household routinely bow and pray "**Namu Amida Butsu**" three times. The housewife daily puts an offering of a cup of tea and a little freshly cooked rice. In Cumberland, many

butsudan are homemade affairs.

Shintoism and Village Cumberland

Whereas Buddhism in Japan has its roots primarily in China--with the exception of the **Nichiren** sect (Varley 1984:91)--Shintoism (also known as the way of the gods) is exclusively Japanese in origin and beliefs. Followers of Shinto worship natural phenomena as the revelation of supernatural deities--which may have protective power, or healing power, or destructive power--and also deified scholars and heroes. It is a doctrine which is rich in mythology and which has no system of theology or ethics (Varley 1984:8-11; Embree 1935:222-225). Kimura (1988:156-157) observes

> Shinto shrines [took] care of celebrations concerning birth, marriage, prosperity, happiness, health, harvest, ground breaking, and dedication of new buildings--all aspects of life in this world--while Buddhist temples took care of funerals, burials, and memorial services for the deceased--activities largely related to death and life after death.

There is little, if any, evidence of Shintoism in the Comox valley. One woman, an active member of the United Church since childhood, told me:

> I really don't know just what it was, to tell you the truth. They just said Buddhist and we didn't really distinguish between that and Shintoism. There was only one minister anyway for the Buddhist church and so we just assumed they were all the same (273: 89.11.09).

A former resident of Royston, whose mother was a Zen follower, says, "Never heard of Shinto in Cumberland. Shinto is a strange religion" (321:90.11.15).

Festivals Associated with the Buddhist and Shinto Calendar

While the annual calendar in Japan is full of festivals associated with both Buddhism and Shinto, few celebrations and festival days have survived the trip across the Pacific Ocean. Four major festivals are retained: New Year's, Girl's Day, Boy's Day, and **Bon**.

Oshōgatsu--New Year's--is a three-day celebration and is considered to be the major family and community celebration of the year. Although its purposes are based in Shinto (praying for luck and well-being) and Buddhist (venerating one's ancestors) beliefs, all members in the community--including Christians--participate in the festivities. Preparations begin several days before, as family members return home from university in Vancouver or from jobs in logging camps at other parts of the Island to participate in the festivities and to settle quarrels and debts. A work party is organized to go to the cemetery to tidy the graves.

The first festive event of this season is **mochi-tsuki** [the rice pounding ceremony], where cooked rice is pounded into a heavy glutinous dough. Masato "Stoney" Sora (MS) and Hiroshi "Rosie" Ogaki (HO), both of Number Five village, describe the process:

> HO: We used to wash the rice, steam it and put it in a wood tub. Hundred pounds a family.
>
> MS: So it was about five hundred pounds. One morning, five families, we get together in a bunch. Not the whole community. No, three, five neighbours get together here, and then there is another unity of three, four neighbours. In those days, we were working in the logging camp. Physically we were really fit. So, we got up very early in the morning, in the cold and dark, and made a team.
>
> HO: Men, only men, working two together, pound with wood log. We'd just pound, pound, pound and Mr. Matsubuchi, he'd just roll and turn the hot [paste].
>
> MS: And in between the pounding, the rice has to be turned, so you duck between the pounding and turn it and you have to add water--just enough. You see, too much water is no good because it makes it soft and it doesn't have the body. So you use just enough so that the pounding with the hammer wouldn't stick. Just using enough so that it would never stick. Mr. Matsubuchi, he was a hard man to get up early in the morning, so my uncle would do it. I betcha he'd put a cup full of water and then, when we pounded, it was like a shower!
>
> HO: But Mr. Matsubuchi, he was an expert. You pound, pound and then it's got to have the final touch, what they call the **tsukuage**.
>
> MS: He'd watch and turn, watch and turn, and then tell you he's going to take it, he's going to take it. You've got to be awfully careful, and then he'll take it right out [from under the pounding]. And his **mochi** [dough] comes out round, so nice, smooth. That Mr. Matsubuchi. He had the knack!

> HO: See, when the greenhorn does it, it just flows all over. It's like octopus. You have to make it into a ball. And with the amateurs, you have to get a spoon and scrape it!
>
> MS: And other guys, young guys, would come over and help and then, the next day, if other parties were doing it, we'd go and help. So it was community. Together.

The resulting mass of glutinous dough is made into cakes for both ceremonial offerings at the cemetery and at home **butsudan** and for eating throughout the holiday. **Mochi**, which also means "to have", signifies wealth, so **mochi** cakes are thought to bring good fortune in the new year.

By New Year's Eve, the women and their daughters have cleaned their houses thoroughly and done all the laundry. It is important for people to wear clean clothes for the new year celebrations. Enough food for three or four days is prepared. Kazuko Iwasa Umemoto, of Number One village, recalls, "I remember my mother preparing food New Year's Eve, staying up late, making all the goodies, getting everything ready" (89.11.09). A neighbour adds,

> you had to do the housework because New Year's brings good luck into the house. The brooms were tied around with string, so they couldn't be used to sweep away the good luck. Nobody could use a knife either, for three days. Same reason. And mother, she couldn't light the stove. Father would do it on New Year's Day. Sometimes, we didn't open the windows, so luck couldn't escape (260:89.08.27).

She continues,

> It wasn't lucky for a woman to be the first person to come into the house on New Year's Day, so the boys and men would go visiting, knocking on doors and being the first person to enter the houses. After New Year's service in the school, we all stayed home, girls and women, to entertain the men who came visiting. They eat and drink, eat and drink! On the second day, then we could go visiting with mother. This was for good luck, too (260:89.08.27).

Number One villagers remember that during the Depression in the mid-thirties, families brought food to the school and spread it out on tables, for sharing. "We hopped from table to table, enjoying everybody's else's goodies" (252:90.02.19).

In both villages, the doorways of many houses are decorated with **kadomatsu**--pine branches, which represent long life--placed on either side of the door. Children are given new clothes and small gifts of money. The women who own **kimono** wear them. Visits are made to the cemetery to make offerings of **mochi** and tangerines imported from Japan. There is an exchange of ritual New Year's greetings,[37] then older people visit and chat while young people play cards. Several people describe the Japanese card game traditionally played at this time of the year, called **Hyakunin isshu** [Single Songs of 100 Poets] and involving a collection of 100 31-syllable poems. The

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[37] **Akemashite omedetō-gozaimasu. Sakunen jū-wa iroiro osewa ni narimashita. Kotoshi mo yoroshiku onegaishimasu.** [Happy New Year. Thank you for your sharing help and kindness during the past year and may it continue in the new year.]

card deck is in two parts: one set of cards containing the full text of the poem, for the reader, and another set of cards containing the latter half of each poem, for the players. In the game, one person is assigned as reader and the remaining players form two opposing teams. The players' set of cards is divided equally between the two teams and is spread out, face up, in front of the players. As the reader recites the first half of a poem, players must identify and pick up the corresponding card which bears the second half of the poem. Any card may be picked up by either team. The team that gets rid of its fifty cards first wins the game. Proficiency in this game relies upon retentive memory of the complete text of the 100 poems and speed in finding and picking up the second part of the poem upon hearing the first few syllables. There are several variations of this game.

During the three days of celebration, there might be **shibai** [an entertainment consisting of traditional dances followed by a theatrical presentation]. In the days before the holiday, Takeshima Matsubuchi of Number Five village works with groups of villagers, teaching each age group different activities. Younger girls are taught **odori** [a posture dance performed almost exclusively by girls and women]. Each dance tells a story and, with slow movements of body, hands and feet, dancers interpret this story using fans, sprays of flowers, parasols or other accessories accordingly. **Odori** are usually

accompanied by players on **samisen** [a three-stringed instrument which is plucked]. Older children and men are coached in the roles--both female and male--of the classical tales of **kabuki** theatre. Costumes and wigs imported from Japan are aired and refurbished. Stage manager Hatano, of Number One village, (Matsubuchi's cousin) makes scenery. "We had old warrior, **samurai** plays. Take was one of the main characters" (103:89.11.03). A resident of Number One village recalls,

> N.'s father, he was made into a woman. Had woman's **katsura**--wig--and his voice sounded like a woman. There was always a group of people interested in performing. All amateurs. We used to go and watch (262:90.11.15).

The other major event in the Buddhist calendar is **Obon**, known also as **Bon** [the Festival of the Dead], in August. At this time, it is believed that the spirits of one's ancestors return briefly to their earthly homes. A house which has had a death during the previous twelve months prepares to receive visits from close friends and relatives, who will bring gifts of money, rice, or incense. Graves in the cemetery are tidied, sticks of incense are burned and offerings of **mochi**, water, seasonal fruit and flowers are made. The Buddhist priest, or his colleague from Vancouver, may conduct a brief service at a family grave site and the day concludes with a memorial service for all the deceased members of the families who belong to the temple. Traditional **Bon-odori** [folk dances associated with this festival] follow the

service. These are done by dancers who form concentric circles and move slowly in a counter-clockwise direction. Usually, a group of "model" dancers will lead the larger group of community participants in the repetitive, easy-to-learn steps and hand motions.

Fumiko Matsubuchi Ono recalls, "We are Christian, but at **Obon**, everyone who owned would wear **kimono** and we would dance. We just danced around" (101:90.08.21). Her cousin, Masato "Stoney" Sora, adds "and we did **hakamairi** [visiting the graves] and put **senkō** [incense] (129:90.11.14). Another resident of Number Five says, "At **Obon**, a [Buddhist] minister would come from the Vancouver temple to say the **sutras**. When he couldn't come, then my uncle would perform the rites" (122:90.11.08).

There are two additional, lesser festivals which are celebrated in Cumberland. These are not associated with the Buddhist calendar but are based in Shinto: **Hinamatsuri** [the doll festival], better known as **Girl's Day**, on March 3rd, and **Boy's Day**, on May 5th. On these days, pre-adolescent girls and boys are honoured in each household. They are dressed in their best clothes and their mothers make them special treats. Children born in the previous twelve months are especially honoured.

> Girl's Day, March 3rd, we didn't celebrate in a big way, but we used to have dolls that we decorated, dressed up and put there

> on a shelf. And mom, in the good days, she would make me some **sushi**. Boy's Day, those that had, put up fish--**koinobori** [cloth kites in the shape of carp]. And my brothers would get **makisushi** [seasoned rice rolled in seaweed] and **inarisushi** [seasoned rice stuffed into a bag of fried tōfu which has been boiled in sweet sauce] (101:90.08.21).

Masato "Stoney" Sora recalls, "Mother made me **dango** [rice dumplings. Boy, were they good!" (90.11.14). A former neighbour reminds him that not everyone had dolls or **koinobori** ". . . but mother made special food. Always, our favourite treat" (267:90.11.14).

Community Observances

In addition to religious festivals, there is an annual round of secular holidays and events. In village Cumberland some of these are associated with national public holidays in either Japan or Canada. Furthermore, there is an annual summer event which is specific to Cumberland, the **Cumberland Collieries Employees' Picnic**.

National Secular Festivals

Since 1946, the Japanese have adopted as public holidays New Year's Day (January 1), Adult's Day (January 15), Vernal Equinox (March 21 or 22)--replacing Spring Imperial Ancestor Worship Ceremony, Constitutional

Memorial Day (May 3), Culture Day (November 3), and Labour Thanksgiving Day (November 23). Celebration of the death anniversary of Emperor Jimmu was abolished without replacement in 1946 (Beardsley, Hall & Ward 1959: 188-194). However, before American occupation of Japan at the end of World War II, there were few major public holidays--distinct from those with a religious observance or significance--which could be said to be of national importance. Two such holidays, are **Jimmu Tenno** [the anniversary of the death of the first Emperor] who is believed to be descended from the sun-goddess Amaterasu and **Tenchōsetsu** [the Emperor's birthday], on April 3rd and 29th, respectively.

In Cumberland, the Emperor's Birthday is generally observed with a ceremonial program at the children's language school. Kazuko Iwasa Umemoto tells me, "they would have a big ceremony at the school, which is one of those things we hated. We had to be very stiff and formal" (89.11.09). After the ceremonies, the children would be assembled for a group photograph as a souvenir of the day.[38]

In addition to Christmas, which is a public, as well as religious,

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[38] C140-97 from the Glass Negative Project is an example of one of these photographs. The banner advises that the occasion is **Otenchōsetsu Taisho junen**--the Emperor's Birthday, 1921.

holiday, and New Year's Day, there are two major celebrations in the city of Cumberland that the Japanese participate in--**Empire Days**, which coincide with the birthday of Queen Victoria during the third week of May, and **Dominion Day**, on July 1. The children also participate, to some extent, in Hallowe'en festivities. Of these five occasions, Empire Days is recalled as being most important.

Cumberland Empire Days celebrations, which have always involved the whole community, date from 1898. They have progressed from being a day of sports competitions to a full program which includes a parade through the down town streets from the public school yard to the recreation grounds, a day of sporting events, dancing and physical drill exhibitions, the crowning of a May queen, an exhibition baseball game and a community dance in the evening. Special Collieries trains bring people from communities throughout the Comox valley to the celebrations (**Islander** May 26, 1917). Small Union Jack flags distributed to spectators are waved enthusiastically as the "grand patriotic parade," led by fire trucks and the town band, passes through town.

One of the major events of the day is an English maypole dance which is performed by girls from the elementary school. The non-

oriental population of Cumberland perceive this dance, with its weaving of many coloured ribbons, as being symbolic of the "ethnic groups and the satellite communities that [weave] the pattern of Cumberland" (Isenor *et al* 1987: 313).

> It was taken for granted that we join in. Twenty-fourth of May was a big event in our lives. We used to have a parade and it was a holiday so we didn't mind going to town. We always met in the school first, and then we were in the parade. Sometimes we had to dress up--not **kimono**--costumes! We took part in everything that was going on there with the school, with the town. Then we went to the recreation grounds and we had may-pole dancing and we joined in, because we were in the class and whichever age group they took for that year there would be girls in their dresses (273:89.11.09).

> We all celebrated. Because you had to. Everything stops and so you go and have a good time, too (115: 89.11.09).

> We used to get a dime for marching in the parade. All the students from the public school, we paraded and they gave a dime. And the girls would take part in the may-pole dance. It was a really English celebration. And we joined in. Dressed up nicely and our parents made lots of food. And then we did races. Track and field (132:89.11.06).

> Every class had a competition to have the best parade theme. I remember we had this theme "Holidays of the Year"--Christmas, New Year's, Hallowe'en--so we all dressed for the appropriate occasion. My class got a first prize for that parade. I remember that. And I was proud of it because I helped to paint the sign (129:89.11.06).

> Sometimes they asked us to wear our Japanese **kimono**. And we'd pack a lunch, have the whole day. And we used to get ten cents. Everybody got ten cents. There was ice cream, too (251:90.02.19).

Each school child receives a strip of four tickets, valued at five cents apiece, which can be exchanged for soda pop, ice cream, and candy. A wide variety of track and field events draw children and adults, with prizes ranging from consolation ribbons and a few cents to three or four dollars for a first place in an adult event. Children from the Japanese communities are fiercely competitive and regularly place in sprints, sack, relay and three-legged races, shoe scrambles, high jump and broad jump.

Empire Days is financed by a subscription fund solicited from merchants in the community. Although the Japanese merchants who live and work in Number One and Number Five villages generally do not contribute to this fund, the annual report of contributions published by the local newspaper regularly lists the Japanese merchants who live and work in town--Nakanishi's Hardware, Shibata's Jewellery, the tailors Isaka (later Aida) and Watanabe, and the Japanese-owned general store. As well, the Royston Lumber Company--through an employees' collection and a donation from management--contributes generously.

People from the Japanese communities generally do not participate in the Dominion Day (July 1) fete which is sponsored by the local chapter of the Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire (I. O. D. E.).

The Collieries Picnic: a Community Festival

The other major, annual occasion in Cumberland is the **Cumberland Collieries Employees' Picnic**, sponsored by the Canadian Collieries Dunsmuir Ltd., every August. The event, established in 1918 and known locally as "A Day for Mothers and Children" (**Islander** August 9, 1919), is discontinued in 1935 when most of the mines in the area are closed down. Although it is primarily for employees of the area mines and their families, it is a local business and bank holiday and attracts up to 4,000 people each year. For the Japanese families of the Comox Valley, it is the one event when all peoples and all nationalities in the valley are unified.

Early on the day, a special Collieries train of fifteen flatcars leaves Cumberland at 8:00 a.m., picking up picnic goers at rural communities en route to Union Bay, the site of the picnic. The Cumberland City Band occupies one of the flatcars, playing rousing tunes through the duration of the short trip. When the train arrives at the picnic grounds, the band takes its place on a platform specially built for the day and provides continuous musical entertainment. At 8:00 p.m., the train leaves the picnic site for the return journey. People also come to the picnic grounds in their own vehicles, and on foot.

As with the Empire Day celebrations, all children are issued strips of tickets which can be exchanged for ice cream and candy. The **Islander** (July 22, 1927) reports that refreshments, donated by local merchants and consumed by children at the picnic included "150 gallons of ice cream, 155 cases of soft drinks, 1200 chocolate bars, 1500 bags of peanuts, 15 boxes of candy suckers, and 2016 oranges." Hot water for making tea is provided by the picnic organizing committee while families bring lunch baskets. In addition to track and field events similar to the Empire Days celebration, there is a wrestling tournament, a tug-of-war competition, baseball and football games, and a grand raffle. A merry-go-round and a magician are provided for the childrens' entertainment and there is swimming and wading in the nearby bay.

> The whole town participated. White and Japanese and Chinese. Everybody. They had a train, slow train, to transport people on the company train. Today the government would never allow it. In those days, they had these flatcars. And in order for a person to sit on it, you put the ties on, for benches. No fence, nothing. And if something just fell off . . . or in between the cars--but that's the way they transported people. And you have kids. Not all grown-ups. Kids, four years old, five years old. And never an accident (115:89.11.09).

> They had every kind of contest, with prizes. Twenty-five cents, fifty cents. And tickets for ice cream. Everyone took their own lunch and there, by the beach we eat. And if you wanted ice cream, you gave a ticket. Oh, we ate and ate and ate! (103:89.11.09).

> Because we all worked for the mine, we went to the company picnic. The train would come, and we'd pack a lunch and go for the day and then come home. We would have races and ice cream cones. And my mother would pack some rice cakes

and chicken and things like that (101:89.08.29).

Table 6 summarizes community events and festivals:

TABLE 6: CALENDAR OF FESTIVALS OBSERVED

MONTH	DATE	FESTIVAL	AFFILIATION
JANUARY	1-3	Oshōgatsu	Buddhist
FEBRUARY			
MARCH	3	**Hinamatsuri** Girl's Day	Shinto
APRIL	varies 29	Easter Emperor's Birthday	Christian, Canadian National, Buddhist
MAY	5 2nd Sunday 24	Boy's Day Mother's Day Empire Days	Shinto Christian, Canadian National, Canadian
JUNE			
JULY	1	Dominion Day	National, Canadian
AUGUST	varies varies	**Obon** Collieries Picnic	Buddhist Local
SEPTEMBER			
OCTOBER			
NOVEMBER			
DECEMBER	25	Christmas	Christian

Community Beliefs

A resident of Number Five (122:90.11.08) says, "all Japanese families are Buddhists. But, one elder in particular, he adopted the Christian

religion right away. He said to us, 'It is Canada and we will adopt the Canadian way.' And so, many did. But, regardless of--well, we were all Buddhist families." This observation illustrates the fundamental flexibility of Japanese attitudes toward religious belief (Kitano 1976:58).

Village Cumberland, some say, is divided by its religious beliefs: Number One is a Buddhist community, while Number Five is a Christian community. However, one finds from interviews with villagers that there are Buddhists and Christians in both communities. It is the *character* of each community that is, in the case of Number One, Buddhist and, in the case of Number Five, Christian. The former, isolated by distance and economic self-sufficiency and essentially conservative and traditional in its ways, finds comfort in the established religion of Japan. The latter, influenced by social and economic ties to Eurocanadian Cumberland, looks to the religion of its new homeland, while finding ways to integrate traditional religious observances into everyday life.

Chapter VII : CONCLUSION--PORTRAIT OF A PAST

Redfield (1956:10), in his discussion of the "little community" has observed,

> . . . the unity and distinctness of the little community is felt by everyone who is brought up in it and as a part of it. The people of a band or a village or a small town know each of the other members of that community as parts of one another; each is strongly aware of just that group of people, as belonging together; the "we" that each inhabitant uses recognizes the separateness of that band or village from all others. Moreover, to the member of the . . . isolated band or village the community is a round of life, a small cosmos; the activities and institutions lead from one into all the others, so that to the native himself the community is not a list of tools and customs; it is an integrated whole.

Residents of Number One and Number Five villages reflect this perception of the "integrated whole." A miner's daughter (262:90.11.15) from Number One says,

> There's something about Cumberland. I don't know what it is. We are bound by something intangible, a community sort of thing. A togetherness. If we didn't have that cooperation, we wouldn't have survived.

The storekeeper's daughter (110:90.02.21) from Number Five says,

> Cumberland? We were very close. None of us had very much, but we worked together. We shared everything. We

> are very close-knit, Cumberland people. Even if we are not relatives, as we grew up together, Cumberland people.

Moreover, the "separateness of that band or village from all others" is recognized as well when people are asked about the relationship between the two villages. In response to a question, a miner's son (129:90.11.14) from Number Five laughs and says, "We fought like cats and dogs!"

This exploration of the way of life of the Japanese people of pre-war Cumberland has revealed some of the character of the two small, relatively isolated communities known as Number One and Number Five. Each of these villages is characterized by strong internal solidarity and mutual support and, yet, research has shown that each was unique: their distinctiveness affected by physical distance from each other, communication differences, internal and external economic relationships, and predominant religious beliefs. One can, therefore, talk about the Japanese community of Cumberland and the Japanese communities of Cumberland.

Relations with Canadian society

While men from both Number One and Number Five villages regularly had contact with other, non-Japanese, men in Cumberland, the residents of both Number One and Number Five agree that school and events,

such as the annual Collieries picnic, are places where everyone came together--providing opportunities for the Japanese from village Cumberland and the Comox Valley to mix with the rest of the community. Except for the merchant families who lived and worked in downtown Cumberland, contacts engendered at work were not extensive and did not normally develop into sustained social relationships outside village Cumberland.

Some residents of both villages choose to talk briefly about relationships with the townspeople of Cumberland. A **nisei** from Number Five tells me (90.11.08),

> There were two groups. One group thought that in order to get away from discrimination and all that we've got to assimilate into the Canadian society as fast as possible. Forget everything Japanese. Mr. Uchiyama--he was the general manager for Royston Lumber Company--he had one daughter and he sent her to UBC, and after she graduated. Then, all of her friends--occidental friends--up to high school it's all right, they were together. Then they get married. Things change. Her father said he'd made a mistake. She was over-educated for **nisei** men. . . . So he sent his wife and daughter to Japan and got his daughter to marry a professor there.

He continues, "the Japanese stayed together because they were discriminated against and so they thought they had to stick together. They were paid ten cents an hour less than the white people in the mines. So they stuck together and maintained their ways, to hold on."

A miner's son (129:90.11.14) painfully remembers:

> Sometimes you're trying so hard to be Canadian. You're kids. You think you want to be like **hakujin** [literally, white people] so you try to talk like **hakujin** and act like **hakujin** and then suddenly out of the clear blue sky a guy calls you a dirty Jap or whatever. Naturally, you're not going to take it lying down. So it's hard. You want to be but they don't want you. That's the kind of attitude. Or at least, the thought we were forced to think. We wanted to be Canadian but if **hakujin** comes and says "you're a Jap," what am I going to say? What do you do?

Attempts in the Eurocanadian community of Cumberland to try to integrate the Japanese, while accepted at the time, are now interpreted by some as acts of prejudice. Others are less judgmental. The following conversation (110,101,129:90.02.21) between two women [F1, F2] and their male relative [M] is illustrative of this:

> F1: You know, you talk about discrimination, racism. In Cumberland we were disallowed to speak Japanese in the school grounds. We were not allowed to speak any Japanese.
>
> M: That was for us to improve our English because it was so much in Japanese.
>
> F1: That, too. But, you know, in the hospital in Cumberland, they had a section, a ward, for orientals and Japanese and you had to enter through--you didn't go through the hospital. There was an entrance through the back part.
>
> M: Royston Lumber, they bought, built their own wing for all Japanese.
>
> F1: But you were still segregated from the **hakujin** people. You were never in the--sure, Royston Lumber bought the section. Still you were segregated from the other ward.

> M: But I think Japanese might as well be segregated because they don't speak English. They'd sooner be with their people.
>
> F2: Outside of being prejudiced by the school principal, I don't think we were that much separated. We got along quite well with the white people. But the principal was quite strict about our English because we were living in a community where it was all Japanese speaking and naturally when we go to school our English--my tongue still has a lot of Japanese in it when speaking English.
>
> F1: Well, before we went to school, we couldn't speak one work of English. So the principal said, "No Japanese books in school and nothing in recess time. As soon as you get to [school] grounds you have to forget Japanese." He was the principal.

Nevertheless, the editorial in the Cumberland **Islander** for January 21, 1922 states:

> Nanaimo wishes to exclude Chinese children from the public schools, and to provide accommodation elsewhere for the little Chinks. We are in accord with Nanaimo on this matter, and hope that the Victoria School Board will follow suit at an early date. "East is East and West is West and never the 'twain shall meet."

By May 1926, separate classes for primary grades one and two are established for Chinese and Japanese children in the Cumberland school system, with the approval of the district school inspector and trustees. George E. Apps, principal of the Cumberland Public School, is reported as saying (**Islander** May 7, 1926):

> although the Oriental children were very quick at learning the English words, they [are] far behind in catching the thought behind the words, and this [proves] a detriment not only to themselves but to the white children as well. If the two races

> could be separated in their first two years at school, . . . both would be very much benefitted.

Another man (122:90.11.08) observes, "we went to Canadian school and during recess we spoke Japanese. And when we had a snowball fight, we were white against Japanese. At least, I was." The merchant's daughter (273:89.11.09) from Number One reminds me:

> You have to remember that we led two separate lives. We came home to Number One and we were, we went to Japanese school. We were living the way our parents wanted us to live. When we went to school in the town of Cumberland, we were leading a Canadian life with all of our friends. It was [as if] there was almost a boundary that you just stepped into. It was different. . . . There was a distinct division between the two places.

Avenues of employment that were closed through the overt actions of trade union movements and government, as well as the less-noticeable but nevertheless effective covert actions of white-collar employers, meant that the only occupations open to young **nisei** in the 1930s and 1940s were the same blue-collar jobs as their parents held, with low status, limited prospects, and modest wages. Alternatively to wage labour in primary industry or as domestic servants, some chose to operate laundries, grocery stores and import outlets. Kitagawa (1985:264) has reported, "the hopeless ones would argue: 'What's the use of education or training. . . . No matter what degree

you get at a university you'd still have to work in a sawmill, or a garden, or any old dirty job that the Occidentals don't want."

The Cumberland Japanese reflect this attitude with regret. The tailor's son (328:89.11.09) says to me:

> They're very for education, the Japanese. At that time, you could get an education but you couldn't become a lawyer or anything like that. You were restricted, eh. Very restricted. But, nevertheless, the parents used to encourage the kids to get educated. I remember when I graduated and my father wanted me to go to university. I would have to go to Vancouver and board out. It was going to cost money and we couldn't afford it. And I thought, if I went, what am I going to be. I'd still have to work in a sawmill. So many areas were restricted. U.B.C., someone in the administration, they wrote me a letter asking me why, you know, I'm not thinking of continuing my education. I wrote back and said well we're so restricted that an education isn't going to do me very much good. . . .

One can observe, therefore, in considering the evidence, that the Japanese community of Cumberland maintained their separate communities--Adachi's "self-enclosed congeries" (1976:109)--through food, common language, customs, and mutual assistance. The separate communities were also a result of imposed prejudice, economic discrimination and social segregation.

Discussion

It is beyond the scope of this paper to measure the attitudes of the Caucasian community toward the Japanese residents of Cumberland and the surrounding area. Rather, there has been an attempt to describe major aspects of community life in the two villages named Number One and Number Five. I am conscious that the data leave many gaps and that, because of these gaps, there is little opportunity for detailed analysis.

A major problem is that of community dimension. The two pioneer communities under study are missing the social depth that an elder generation would have provided. That generation, of course, was the parents of the pioneers who emigrated, the generation that would have provided a basis for the cultural sustenance of traditional lifeways--a focus for the observation of Japanese customs. While a certain degree of this was maintained by those who could afford to make return visits to their families in Japan or who could afford to send their children to Japan for schooling, general maintenance of Japanese cultural patterns was left to men and women who were in their late teen years or early twenties.

As well, as mentioned in the chapter on methodology, there

has been no opportunity to do extensive research among the **issei** who were the first generation of householders in Cumberland and who, as such, set community standards and patterns. This is the group which could have described family relationships and the structure of early household economics. Their children, the **nisei**, who were interviewed could not say, for example, how a village council exercised and maintained authority within the local population. As children, they were not privy to the decision-making processes of the adults in the community, in either community.

These two generational matters leave unsolvable gaps. I am reminded, "You obeyed. Didn't ask questions. I never asked any questions" (251:90.02.19). Nevertheless, the data shows that the Japanese people who lived in Cumberland had a distinct identity that was, in essence, Japanese. Furthermore, their Japanese identity was sustained, even while they were exposed daily to acculturative processes.

Royce (1982) has argued that an ethnic group is defined internally by its members and externally by those who perceive the sharing of a common set of references. This is clearly illustrated by the relationships, both internal and external, of Caucasian Cumberland to Japanese Cumberland, and of Number One and Number Five villages. It is apparent, in the description of

Number One and Number Five that there are both similarities and differences in the two communities. The differences, for the most part, do not appear to be marked--except by the inhabitants of the two villages for villagers are consciously aware of how they differ from their neighbours. Nevertheless, even though the two communities are bound by their "Japaneseness," evidence shows that each community has developed divergent strategies for coping with life in Canada, adopting Canadian ways at different rates, dependent upon opportunities for acculturative processes. Boundaries created by the geographic relationship of the two Japanese communities and Eurocanadian Cumberland affected communication and cultural exchange. Internal political decisions regarding economic relationships and religious systems further influenced the identity or character of each community, creating boundaries between the two Japanese communities. Common customs and language, despite dialectic differences, were enhanced by institutions such as the Japanese school and served to strengthen the boundaries between Caucasian and Japanese society. A gentle voice echoes,

> We led two separate lives. When we came home, . . . there was almost a boundary that you just stepped into . . . . (273:89.11.09).

In summation, this study cannot produce a complete

ethnographic picture of the communities that were village Cumberland from about 1885 to 1942. It is, at best, an exercise in salvage ethnography and, as such, can only provide a descriptive framework of a pioneer Japanese community in British Columbia, and attempt to contribute both new information to the historical record of the settlement of British Columbia and to contribute a body of data which should assist further exploration of the phenomena of culture change and continuity in immigrant peoples.

Howard Becker (1970:76) has suggested that, while a community case study can lead to the development of general theoretical statements about regularities in social structures and process, it can also try to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of that community. Accordingly, this study of the Japanese communities of Cumberland attempts to portray that community--who its members were, what their constant routines and processes of interaction were, how they were related to each other and how they related to the surrounding community. It does not deal in depth with the variety of descriptive and theoretical problems surrounding the nature and form of ethnic identity, acculturation and culture maintenance. These are issues for further scholarship.

The photographs of the Glass Negative Project were a

significant methodological tool, providing a common link between the people interviewed and me even though there is much information missing from the photographic record and many gaps yet to be filled. People were encouraged to reminisce about their childhood and, in this respect, many of the anecdotes they related were of happier times, reflecting a hard, but good, life. Kazuko Iwasa Umemoto, the merchant's daughter (89.11.09) from Number One sums up: "What we remember, usually when we remember, we only remember the good parts." Generally, people were reluctant to talk about or dwell upon their wartime experiences. Historical information gleaned from local newspapers, tax rolls, church registers, telephone books, and coroner's reports served to validate the accuracy of the memories--the "mindscape which reflects the collective experience of a settlement" (Evenden and Anderson 1977:43)--alleviating a concern that facts might be not only filtered but distorted by the memory process.

Finally, one can question whether the Japanese community of Cumberland was unique or whether it is representative of other pre-war Japanese communities in Canada. This is, after all, a single case among the many small communities of Japanese immigrants up and down the Pacific coast of North America. These communities, whether they were located in urban centres such as Vancouver, Victoria and Nanaimo, or clustered around single

resource commodities--such as the fishing industries of Steveston and the Skeena River, or lumbering and its attendant industries at New Westminster, Woodfibre and Chemainus--were generally the product of a migrant people limited by economic and political circumstances. Nevertheless, Cumberland, as a primarily single resource town, offers some unique features for consideration--its schooling program for children, the several divisions within the Japanese population as a whole, its photographic record. One can only speculate as to the applicability and comparability to other communities and one can only hope that this study will be of value in providing both a preliminary description and some suggestions as to the shape of future research; further, that it will stimulate inquiry into other communities, thus providing a body of data by which comparability could be measured.

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APPENDIX I --- QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. When did you first come to Cumberland? How old were you, at that time?
2. Where did you live before you moved to Cumberland?
3. Why did you/your parents come to Cumberland?
4. How many years did you live in Cumberland? Where did you live?
5. When did you leave?
6. [If prior to 1942]: Why did you leave?
7. What did your mother, your father do for a living?
8. What was it like living in Cumberland?
9. Tell me what school was like?
10. Can you show me any old photographs, or tell me any information about your parents/ your grandparents?
11. Who else, who lived in Cumberland when you did, have you kept in touch with?
12. Can you tell me about any special memories that stay in your mind?
13. Did you have a job in Cumberland? What was it? Tell me about it.
14. Can you remember any buildings being built? being torn down?
15. How many stores were there in Cumberland when you were there?
16. What can you remember about food or clothing prices?
17. Did you read the Cumberland newspaper?

18. Do you remember who the mayor was?

19. Tell me about the first automobiles that you remember in Cumberland.

20. Do you remember paved roads? What can you tell me about the roads?

21. Tell me about any farms or farming families you knew. What were they like?

22. How was the law enforced: in Cumberland, in Number 1 village, in Number 5 village?

23. Tell me about volunteer activities in the community--for example, fire fighting.

24. Tell me about the most exciting thing that happened while you lived there.

25. Tell me about any disasters that you remember.

26. How did the Depression affect you?

27. Did you get out of town often? Why? Where did you go? How did you get there? What did you do?

28. What sports did people play? What sports did you play?

29. Do you recall any famous people having grown up in Cumberland?

30. Was Cumberland famous for anything other than mining?

31. Did you participate in Empire Days celebrations? How?

32. Did you ever work in the mines? If so, what was the job you did there?

33. Which mine(s) did you work in? Where was it located?

34. What were some of the various jobs included in working in the mines?

35. What were the work conditions like?

36. What was your wage for mine work?

37. Do you remember any of the big fires or mine explosions? What do you remember about them?

38. What do you remember about the Chinese community?

39. Where you ever in the Chinese community? Why did you go? What did you do there?

40. Did you know any people in the Chinese community? Tell me about them.

41. What do you remember about the Japanese communities that you didn't live in?

41. Where did you live in Cumberland? Who were your neighbours?

43. Did you know anyone in Number 1/5? Who were they?

44. Have you stayed in touch with anyone who lived in another part of the valley?

45. Do you remember the ice-cream parlour in Number 1 [that looked like a pagoda?]

46. Do you remember the Iro-Iro theatre? Did you ever go to it? What did you see there?

47. Did you ever visit Japan while you lived in Cumberland? Who did you visit there?

48. What is your family hometown in Japan? Do you still have relatives there?

49. Did you ever visit Vancouver while you lived in Cumberland? Who did you visit there?

50. What was your religion in Cumberland? Dow did you family observe religious occasions?

51. What classes did you have a school? Did you learn traditional

Japanese things--kimono-making, calligraphy, ikebana, etc.?

52. When you needed a doctor, did you go to the hospital? Did the **hakujin** [white] doctor come?

53. Was there a midwife? What happened with babies? Who delivered them? Where were births registered?

54. What sort of medicines did you use?

55. Who had a car? a telephone?

56. What annual customs did your family observe in connection with annual holidays, festivals, and so on?

57. Did the houses have gardens? What did you grow?

58. Where did you get **tōfu, miso, mochi**--things like that?

59. Describe the house you lived in. Describe your neighbour's house.

60. Marriages. Were they arranged? Did you go to anyone's wedding? What do you remember of it? Which religion was it?

61. Did you work during the school vacations? What kind of work did you do?

62. How many brothers and sisters did you have?

63. Was there a social club? men's/women's organization? What do you know about it?

64. Was your house rented or did your family own it?

65. Did you know anyone who was a picture bride?

66. Did you participate in **shibai** [community entertainments]? Tell me what you remember.

67. Tell me about the village community hall. What sort of things was it used for?

GLOSSARY

age	deep-fried soy bean curd
atotori	heir, successor
baishakunin	marriage go-between
bangi	a slab of wood, which is hung centrally and beaten when people have to be called together
Bon	All Soul's Day, observed in August
budōkai	a group which promotes Japanese cultural values through encouraging Japanese sports
butsudan	Buddhist shelf or altar in a Japanese home
daikon	a giant white radish, usually eaten pickled
dango	rice flour dumpling
dekasegi	emigrants, specifically from Japan
fude	brush writing
furo	family bathhouse
futon	bedding, specifically a comforter which is used like a blanket
gobai	reciprocity, mutual assistance
hakamairi	visiting graves
hakujin	a person of non-Japanese ancestry; usually Caucasian
hakusai	Chinese cabbage
hanashikata	oral reading
heidagensa	military conscription
ijikai	sustaining fund
issei	first generation immigrant who was born in Japan

jōgakkō	college for young women, in Japan
jūdō	a form of Japanese wrestling
kakikata	penmanship
kame doburoku (dobu)	unrefined **sake** (rice wine)
kendō	Japanese fencing
kibei	those born in Canada to **issei** parents but who were sent to families in Japan for education
kimono	traditional Japanese dress
kōden	monetary offerings which help to defray funeral expenses
koinobori	cloth kites in the shape of carp
koseki	family register
miso	soy bean paste, used in making soup
mochi	ceremonial cakes made from rice flour
mochi-tsuki	the rice pounding ceremony
nakōdo	marriage go-between
namari	Japanese language dialectic idiosyncrasies
nikkei	a collective term which refers to all generations of Japanese immigrants
nisei	second generation, born in Canada or the United States to **issei** parents
nushidōri	elected village official who acts as a caretaker of village affairs
obasan	aunt, auntie
obāsan	grandmother
odori	a posture dance performed almost exclusively by girls and women
ojisan	uncle
ojīsan	grandfather

omiage	a small return gift
onēsan	elder sister
onīsan	elder brother
origami	a paper-folding craft
otoko no sensei	male teacher
rekishi	history
sake	Japanese rice wine
samisen	Japanese three-stringed instrument which is plucked
sankaku kankei	triangle relationships
sansei	third generation, born in Canada or the United States to **nisei** parents
sembetsu	a parting gift of money, usually given to a person going on a journey
shakonsai	picture brides
shibai	Japanese amateur theatrical amusements
shōchū	Japanese distilled liquor made from rice
shotai	a household group which shares a common budget
shōyu	Japanese soy sauce
shūshin	moral education
sumo	Japanese wrestling
sutra	Buddhist prayer
taiso	physical drill
tōfu	soy bean curd
tōfuya	shop that sells food products made from soy bean curd
tsukemono	Japanese salted pickles, usually made from **daikon** or **hokusai**
udon	Japanese noodles

yobiyose	literally, "the summoned"; people and family who were encouraged by Japanese immigrants to emigrate
yonsei	fourth generation, the children of **sansei** parents
yōshi	adopted son
yōshoku	western food

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