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Creating and Recreating Community: Hiroshima and Canada 1891-1941

by

Michiko Midge Ayukawa

B.Sc. (Honours), McMaster University, 1952

M.Sc., McMaster University, 1953

B.A. (Honours), University of Victoria, 1988

M.A., University of Victoria, 1990

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in the Department of History

We accept this dissertation as conforming
to the required standard

Dr. E. P. Tsurumi, Supervisor (Department of History)

Dr. P. M. Senese, Departmental Member (Department of History)

Dr. Y. F. Woon, Outside Member (Pacific and Asian Studies)

Dr. T. K. Shoyama, ~~Outside~~ Member (Public Administration)

Dr. Isao Soranaka, External Examiner (Department of History, University of
Western Ontario)

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University of Victoria

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Supervisor: Dr. E. Patricia Tsurumi

ABSTRACT

This dissertation covers the political, economic, and social circumstances in Japan that led to the emigration from Hiroshima prefecture, and the lives and communities of these emigrants in Canada. It traces the gradual conversion of a sojourner society to family-centred communities with social relationships modelled upon the Hiroshima village societies the immigrants came from. Ostracized by white workers, exploited by the British Columbia entrepreneurs in a "split labour market," and denigrated to second class citizenship by institutional racism, the pioneers nevertheless persevered and reared their Canadian-born nisei children to be Japanese Canadians. That is, they "acculturated" their offspring with Japanese language and traditions so that the nisei would be able both to function within the Japanese communities in Canada and would be proud of their heritage. The degree of acculturation of the nisei varied and was dependent on many factors: family goals, environments, time periods, as well as individual inclinations. This study employed both English and Japanese language sources including oral interviews of over fifty Hiroshima settlers and their descendants residing in Japan and in Canada.

Examiners:

Dr. E. P. Tsurumi, Supervisor (Department of History)

Dr. P. M. Senese, Departmental Member (Department of History)

Dr. Y. F. Woon, Outside Member (Pacific and Asian Studies)

Dr. T. K. Shoyama, ~~Outside~~ Member (Public Administration)

Dr. Isao Soranaka, External Examiner (Department of History, University of Western Ontario)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The generous financial support from fellowships received from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the University of Victoria helped defray the costs of research trips and expensive documents.

During the years spent in researching and writing this dissertation I received the assistance of many friends, colleagues, and relatives in Japan and Canada, some who provided scholarly aid, and others who patiently encouraged me and lent their ears. Many people across Canada and Japan welcomed me into their homes and shared their stories with me.

At the University of British Columbia, Tsuneharu Gonnami of the Asian library, George Brandak of Special Collections were invaluable. At the University of Victoria, the office staff, fellow students and the academic members of the Department of History must be thanked for their friendship and support. I am indebted to Tim de Lange Boom for the maps which he painstakingly drew and patiently altered many times. My ninety-six-year-old mother, Ishii Misayo, unfailingly encouraged my academic endeavours, while my five children and seven grandchildren patiently and happily stood by while I "neglected" them.

All this could never have been brought to fruition without the wholehearted efforts and enthusiasm of my supervisor, Dr. E. Patricia Tsurumi. As the Japanese say: *"osewaninarimashita."*

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Canada is, with the exception of the First Nations people, a land populated with immigrants. It is a nation with a variety of ethnic, racial, religious, and political identities.¹ Yet, as Jean Burnet and Howard Palmer wrote:

Professional Canadian historians have in the past emphasized political and economic history, and since the country's economic and political institutions have been controlled largely by people of British and French origin, the role of those of other origins in the development of Canada has been neglected. Also, Canadian historians in the past have been almost exclusively of British and French origin, and have lacked the interest and the linguistic skills necessary to explore the history of other ethnic groups.²

This neglect of the stories of peoples from other areas of Europe, from Asia, and from elsewhere, began to be remedied just prior to the celebration of Canada's centennial when a few ethnic histories were published.³ Then the Citizenship Branch of the Department of the Secretary of State of the Canadian government commissioned the series, "History of Canada's Peoples" with Burnet

¹Leo Driedger, The Ethnic Factor: Identity in Diversity (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1989), p.3.

²N. F. Dreisziger, et al., Struggle and Hope: The Hungarian-Canadian Experience (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1982), p. vii.

³An excellent one is Joseph M. Kirschbaum, Slovaks in Canada (Toronto: Ukrainian Echo Publishing Co., Ltd., 1967).

and Palmer as editors—"an indication of growing interest in Canadian social history, which includes immigration and ethnic history."⁴ Many ethnic groups also sponsored the writing of their stories inspired by this development.⁵

While various ethnic social historians and sociologists have been telling their stories, many historians who have concentrated on British Columbia have continued as before. Peter Ward and Patricia Roy have focussed on the hostility of the whites in the province towards Asian immigrants, the notions of white supremacy, Anglo-Saxon race hatred and xenophobia.⁶ According to Roy, political leaders seized upon the anti-Asian atmosphere prevalent in British Columbia since the mid-1800s, the "real or anticipated economic conflicts [and]

⁴Dreisziger, Struggle, p. vii.

⁵A few of the more notable ethnic histories are: Peter D. Chimbos, The Canadian Odyssey: the Greek Experience in Canada (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1976); N. F. Dreisziger, et al., Struggle and Hope: the Hungarian-Canadian Experience (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1982); Franca Iacovetta, Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992); Peter S. Li, The Chinese in Canada, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988); Joseph M. Kirschaum, Slovaks in Canada (Toronto: Ukrainian Echo Publishing C. Ltd., 1967); Gulbrand Loken, From Fiord to Frontier: the Norwegians in Canada (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1980); Anthony W. Rasporich, For a Better Life: A History of the Croatians in Canada (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1982); Jaroslav Rozumnyj, et al., New Soil: Old Roots: the Ukrainian Experience in Canada (Winnipeg: Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in Canada, 1983); Edgar Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1982).

⁶Peter W. Ward, White Canada Forever, 2d ed., 1990 (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978), pp. ix-x; and Patricia E. Roy, A White Man's Province (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1989), pp. vii-x.

. . . notions of racial differences" and used the Asians as "ideal political pawns." Since the Asians were not granted the franchise, there was no "fear of retribution in the ballot box."⁷ Even Ken Adachi's history of the Japanese in Canada, The Enemy That Never Was, concentrated mainly on white racism, on the discriminatory treatment of the Japanese Canadians, and presented the Japanese Canadians as passive victims of the paranoia of the mainstream society.⁸ Thus only part of the story of the Japanese Canadians has been told and it is necessary to retell it with the eyes and ears of the people who were directly involved.

The historical experience of the Japanese who came from Hiroshima prefecture is an important part of the yet to be completed picture of the dynamics of the Japanese immigrant community in Western Canada from 1891 to 1941. A major aim of this dissertation about these Hiroshima emigrants and their descendants is to show how the Japanese immigrants in Canada managed their lives as much as was possible within the restrictions that had been imposed upon them by legislation and the mainstream community—to show that although many adjustments in the lives of Japanese immigrants were forced upon them by the exterior world that practised "institutional racism," the immigrants from Japan

⁷Ibid., p. xvi.

⁸Adachi had been commissioned by the National Japanese Canadian Citizens Association to write the history of the Japanese in Canada and this assignment included a charge "to reveal the demon [of racism] in all its scaly ugliness and perhaps to exorcise it." (Adachi, Enemy, p. iv.) See Roy Ito, Stories of my People: A Japanese Canadian Journal (Hamilton: Promark Printing, 1994), pp. 432-41 for a picture of how Adachi struggled with this undertaking.

were nevertheless far from helpless victims.⁹ The first contract immigrants, the Hiroshima "miners" in Cumberland called upon the Japanese government through their representative the Japanese consul in Vancouver for help when they were without jobs and income in 1892. When later legislation threatened their right to work underground in the mines, the Japanese government came to their assistance by appealing to Britain, citing the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in force in the years 1902 to 1921 between Britain and Japan.¹⁰ Japan regarded any blatantly unfair treatment of its citizens as a direct insult to its honour and a breach of the Alliance agreement. The Japanese consul in Vancouver protested to Britain when discriminatory laws were passed by the British Columbia legislature against the Japanese immigrants. A number were disallowed by the Canadian government but a few remained nevertheless and relegated the Japanese Canadians to an inferior status within British Columbia.¹¹

And yet, although British Columbian capitalists victimized the Japanese labourers and used them as "cheap labour" to maximize their profits, within the

⁹According to B. Singh Bolaria and Peter S. Li, "institutional racism involves both a racist theory, and a social practice embedded in institutions that systematically exclude subordinate members from equal participation and treatment in society." Bolaria S. Singh and Peter S. Li, Racial Oppression in Canada (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1985), p. 21. Thus, the Crown Timber Act of 1902, the denial of the franchise, and the decisions of the Department of Marine and Fisheries to gradually decrease the numbers of Japanese fishing licenses are examples of the practice of "institutional racism."

¹⁰W. G. Beasley, The Rise of Modern Japan (London: George Weidenfeld and Nicolson, Ltd., 1990), pp. 150, 162.

¹¹See Roy, White Man's Province, regarding Alien Labour Bills, pp. 124-25; Liquor License Act, p. 129; Immigration Acts of 1902, 1903, 1904, pp. 158-61.

Japanese community there were predatory "bosses" who took advantage of their fellow countrymen. This ethnic society had social, business, and educational groups; and like the rural villages in Japan these organizations gave mutual aid. This ethnic society was a complex community, "neither static, nor monolithic, nor submissive."¹² This society evolved over the years as the original *dekasegi* [literally meaning "going out to work"] aim of the immigrants gradually gave way to permanent settlement.

The Japanese Canadian community did not consist of predominantly successful farmers and middle-class shopkeepers as represented in some books such as Gordon Nakayama's *Issei*.¹³ Although there were extremely wealthy lumber barons, there were also disillusioned lay-abouts. There were divisions between right-wing Japanese nationalists, and those who were openly criticized as being "red" agitators. The majority went peacefully about their everyday lives, barely scratching out an existence on their still developing berry farms, or risking life and limb in the lumber industry and other hazardous jobs. And yet they were "not cardboard cutouts but real people with a historical presence [who] move[d] on a Canadian stage and [were] shaped by and interacted with their Canadian environment."¹⁴

What were the concerns of these men, women, and children beyond their

¹²Roberto Perin, "Clio as an Ethnic: The Third Force in Canadian Historiography," *Canadian Historical Review* LXIV, 4 (1983), p. 467.

¹³Gordon G. Nakayama, *Issei* (Toronto: NC Press Limited, 1984).

¹⁴Perin, "Clio," p. 450.

daily existence? What were their goals, their hopes, their joys? What did parents wish for their children? What were their thoughts and feelings as they coped with the humiliation and frustration of the institutional racism under which they struggled? What were their actions and their reactions? In order to draw a complete picture, it is necessary to study individuals—to see how some led, some followed, some coped, and some fell by the wayside. Some individuals sacrificed much for their fellow countrymen, while others took advantage of them.

Within this complex milieu, the issei [first generation] in Canada created their own society and raised their children in it. Although the children were exposed to the mainstream culture at public schools, similar to the American situation that David O'Brien and Stephen Fugita wrote about, many nisei [second generation—Canadian born] in Canada also had few intimate contacts with persons other than fellow Japanese.¹⁵ Canadian nisei enjoyed activities such as dancing, basketball, baseball, pop music and Hollywood movies, but it was usually only within their own ethnic group. The manner in which they interacted amongst themselves was both like and not unlike the ways their parents related to fellow Japanese immigrants.

This "interplay between acculturation and the components of ethnic identity in each person," best describes the issei and the nisei in the society that

¹⁵David J. O'Brien and Stephen S. Fugita, The Japanese American Experience (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 36.

existed in the years before World War II destroyed the community.¹⁶ The term "acculturation," as in the statement above, is commonly used in describing the changes that take place in immigrant groups—the gradual adjustments and adoption of the mainstream culture. I prefer to give it a different twist, and in this dissertation define it as the results of conscious efforts by parents and other Japanese of their generation to ensure that THEIR culture is adopted by their Canadian born offspring; that is, in this study "acculturation" is the teaching of what are perceived to be Japanese ways to the nisei. (Perhaps a more appropriate term may be "enculturation.")

This dissertation is not solely Canadian history. At least partially it is also a regional history of Japan—a study of the processes that precipitated emigration from Hiroshima prefecture and through this emigration affected the economy and the society of Hiroshima prefecture. One of the reasons for my decision to confine the study to one prefecture, Hiroshima, was made because my parents and paternal grandfather had emigrated to Canada from Hiroshima prefecture. This prefectural identification eased the way and opened many doors in the interviewing process.

Another prime reason for this decision is that the history of the Japanese in Canada from 1891 to 1941 is in fact made up of a number of regional histories of emigrants from a number of different areas of Japan. Although Japan is a

¹⁶Margaret Clark, Sharon Kaufman, and Robert C. Pierce, "Explorations of Acculturation: Toward a Model of Ethnic Identity," Human Organization 35: 3 (Fall 1976), p. 233.

small country of only 142,707 square miles, there are regional differences due to variations in climate, proximity to the sea, fertility of the soil and other features.¹⁷ Beyond the physical dissimilarities, there are also social ones. For two and a half centuries, the Tokugawa regime (1600-1868) had maintained its hegemony by a number of strict laws which also precluded free movement.¹⁸ The peasants were forced to remain on the land in their villages, so that the rural communities became insulated and developed different customs and dialects. The demands of their rulers and regional climatic calamities also made an impact on the lives of the villagers.¹⁹ Even in my period of investigation, the late Meiji (Meiji period was 1868-1912), Taisho (1912-1926) and the early years of Showa (1926-1989), people from Hiroshima were known to have different characteristics from, for example, those from Shiga prefecture that also sent a substantial number of emigrants to Canada.

The mention of Shiga immediately brings to mind the *ōmi-shōnin*, the salesmen from that area who used to travel throughout the country selling goods. In Canada too, many individuals from Shiga were proprietors of businesses. In 1981-1982, Audrey Kobayashi did a geographical study of the village of Kaideima,

¹⁷Richard K. Beardsley, John W. Hall and Robert E. Ward, Village Japan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), pp. 14-15.

¹⁸Hane Mikiso, Modern Japan: A Historical Survey (Boulder: Westview Press, 1986), p. 24.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 50-52.

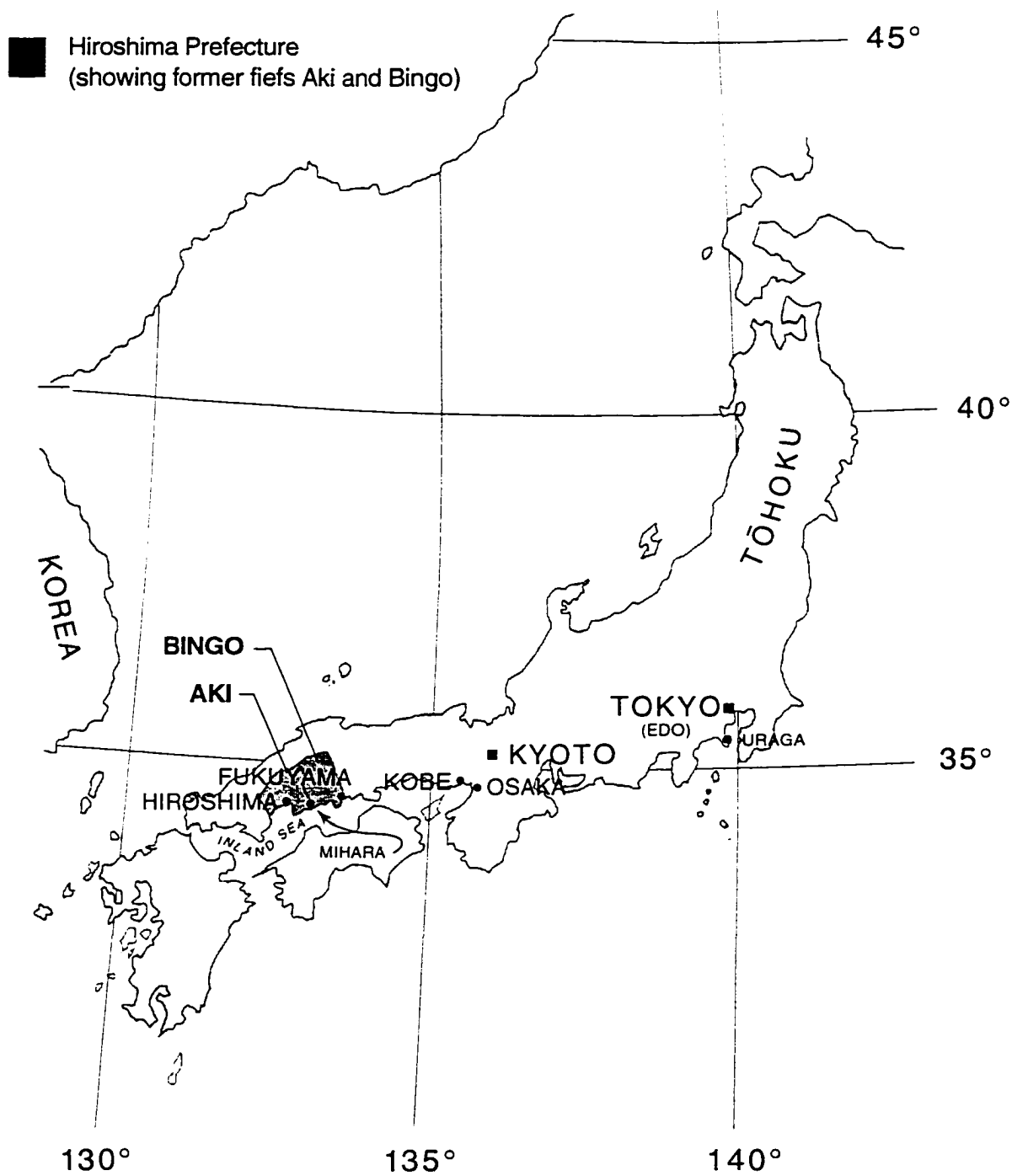
on the east coast of Lake Biwa, in Shiga prefecture.²⁰ The peasants of Kaideima had suffered from periodic floods for years. In 1896, particularly drastic floods precipitated emigration, the majority to British Columbia. The money earned in Canada, mainly by labouring in sawmills and in running shops in the Powell Street area of Vancouver, did much more than merely keep their relatives alive. Almost 70 percent of the Shiga emigrants whom Kobayashi studied returned to their village, bought land, built beautiful homes, and donated money to the local Buddhist temple. Kobayashi noted that of the 535 emigrants, or 135 households, only thirty families remained in Canada after the Pacific War.²¹ But as we shall see, Hiroshima emigrants tended to settle and remain in Canada.

Another regional difference was the different proclivity to emigrate. For instance, in the Tōhoku region in northern Honshu where poverty was often widespread and devastating, the villagers often lacked even the minimum economic resources that would enable them to book passage to Canada. (See Map 1.) Nitta Jirō thoroughly researched documents pertaining to prefectural records, Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs papers, memoirs and letters retained by family members, conducted personal interviews, and told the story of the

²⁰Audrey Kobayashi, "Emigration from Kaideima, Japan, 1885-1950: An Analysis of Community and Landscape Change," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1983.

²¹Kobayashi, Ph.D. dissertation, p. 219. See also Matsumiya Masuo, Kaideima monogatari [Tales of Kaideima] (Hikoneshi: Sun Rise, 1986).

Map 1 Japan



herculean efforts of one man, Oikawa Jinsaburō,²² who urged people from Miyagi prefecture in Tōhoku to emigrate.²³ Oikawa had first gone to Canada in 1896, and then returned in 1899 to his home village and tried to recruit both men and women for dog salmon (chum) and salmon roe salteries ventures in Canada. Wherever he went in Miyagi prefecture, he heard sad tales of the famine in the past year which had caused many to die of starvation. The sixty yen necessary for passage to Canada was an impossible amount for any of the local villagers to acquire. He returned to the area in 1906 with a daring venture. He managed to recruit eighty-three people including three women, who all sailed in September on the *Suianmaru*, hired to transport them illegally to Canada. They landed at Becher Bay, near Victoria, were caught, but were allowed to stay. These emigrants were eventually able to send back money to their home villages to keep their families from starving. Such desperate poverty was not a main theme in the stories of the Hiroshima emigrant families that I studied.

Another village, Mio-mura, a fishing village in Wakayama prefecture, widely known as *Amerika-mura*, was rescued from obliteration only through the inspiration and drive of one man, Kuno Gihei. Kuno's poverty-stricken village was totally dependent on the fisheries. When the fishers ventured further and

²²Following Japanese custom, this dissertation gives surnames first except names that had been published earlier in reverse order and names of Canadian-born.

²³Nitta Jiro, Mikkōsen, Suianmaru [Stowaway Ship, Suianmaru] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1982).

further out and yet returned with meager catches, Kuno urged his fellow villagers to go to Canada to fish for salmon there. For a number of years the fishers who followed his advice returned from Canada to their village in the off-season, but later they emigrated with their families. The vast majority of these Wakayama fishers settled in Steveston. Although a fair number eventually returned to Japan to live well on the fruits of their labours and on the money sent to them by the sons they had left behind in Canada, many Mio emigrants realized that Mio village itself could not provide any permanent sustenance and thus they chose to remain in Canada. They now make up about ten percent of the Japanese Canadians.²⁴ Like Hiroshima emigrants, they stayed but, unlike Hiroshima emigrants, they fished.

As in the case of such villages in Shiga and Wakayama prefectures, there are areas in Hiroshima prefecture from which large numbers have emigrated. From a brief glance at Nakayama Jinshirō's Kanada dōhō hatten taikan [Encyclopedia of Japanese in Canada] in which home addresses are given for the Japanese who lived in Canada in 1920, it can be readily noted that many had

²⁴Nishihama Hisakazu, "*Kanadaimin no chichi, Kuno Gihei* [The Father of Canadian Emigrants, Kuno Gihei]," Ijūkenkyū no. 30 (1993.3): 170-84. See also, Kazuko Tsurumi, Sutebusuton monogatari [Tales of Steveston] (Tokyo: Chuo-koronsha, 1962); Tadashi Fukutake, Man and Society in Japan (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1962), pp. 147-79; and Daphne Marlatt, Steveston Recollected: A Japanese Canadian History (Victoria: Aural History, Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1970).

emigrated from villages in Asa, Aki and Saeki counties.²⁵ (See Map 2 of Hiroshima prefecture with the county divisions.) A table in a Hiroshima history book showed that in 1910 there were in the prefecture twenty-six villages from which more than 270 people had emigrated. The percentages of the numbers of people in these villages who had emigrated ranged from 3.1 percent to as high as 25.6 percent.²⁶ Since these numbers do not include people who had moved to the colonies of Taiwan, Sakhalin or Korea, we can reasonably conclude that emigration overseas was not an uncommon experience for residents in some parts of Hiroshima. In fact, Hiroshima people led the way to foreign lands and their apparent success created many "emigrant villages" in Hiroshima prefecture. The first emigrants who went overseas as contract labourers to Hawaii in January 1885 were composed of 222 Hiroshima people out of a total of 945.²⁷ And as we shall see, the first contract Japanese emigrants to Canada in 1891 were all from Hiroshima.

In the history of Japanese emigration to Canada, Hiroshima sent the third most numerous emigrants, following Shiga and Wakayama prefectures.²⁸ Of the

²⁵Nakayama Jinshirō, Kanada dōhō hatien taikan [Encyclopedia of Japanese in Canada] (Tokyo, 1921).

²⁶Hiroshimaken, Hiroshimaken shi kindai I [The History of Hiroshima Prefecture, Modern Period I] (Hiroshima: Hiroshimaken, 1980), p. 1025.

²⁷Kodama Masaaki, Nihon iminshi kenkyū josetsu [Introduction to the Study of the History of Japanese Emigration] (Hiroshima: Keisaisha, 1992): 110-11.

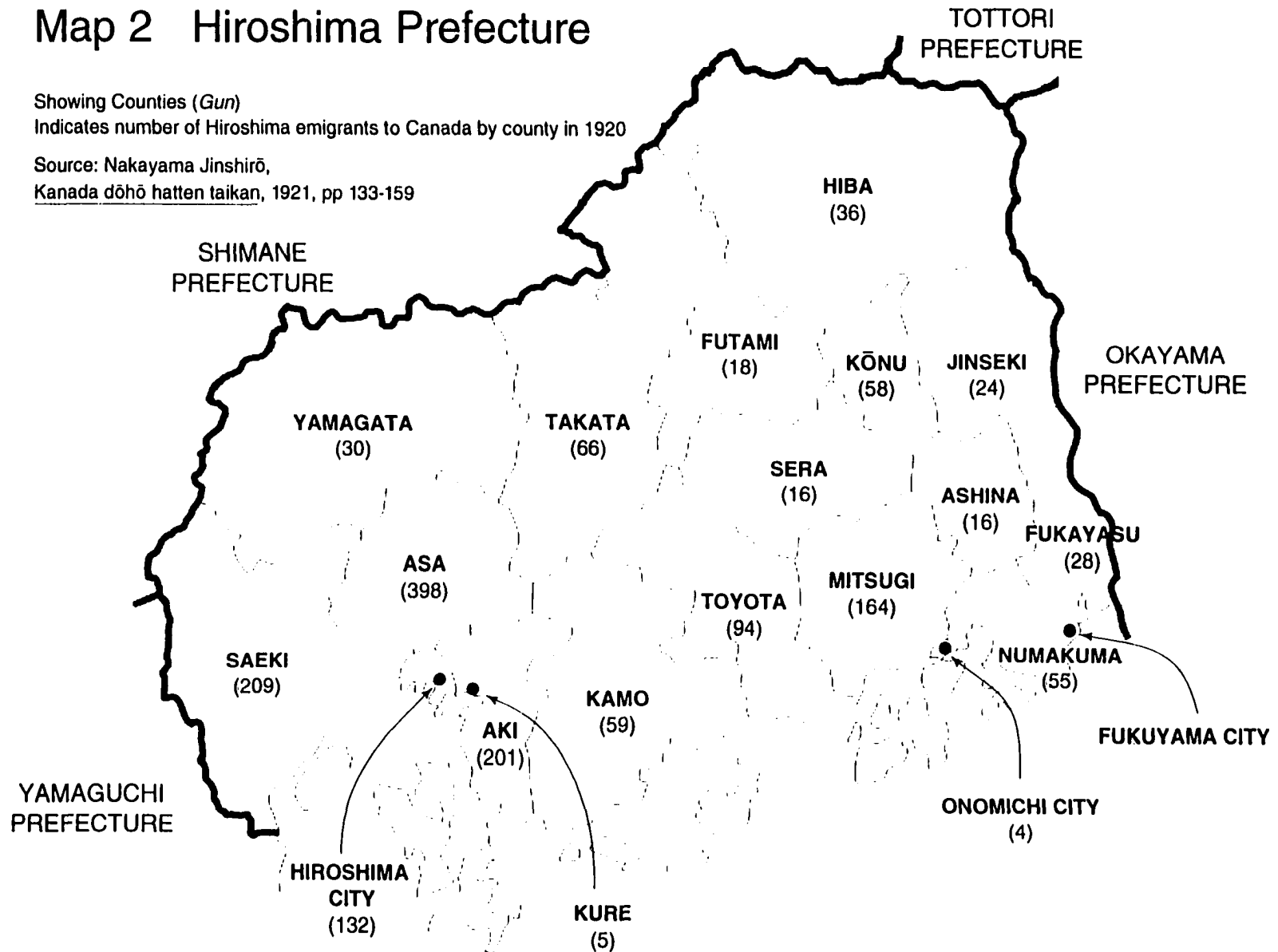
²⁸Yoshida Tadao, Kanada no imin no kiseki [The Situation of Immigrants in Canada] (Tokyo: Chuo shinsatsu kabushikisha, 1993), p. 179.

Map 2 Hiroshima Prefecture

Showing Counties (*Gun*)

Indicates number of Hiroshima emigrants to Canada by county in 1920

Source: Nakayama Jinshirō,
Kanada dōhō hatten taikan, 1921, pp 133-159



574 Japanese immigrants investigated in Rigenda Sumida's survey conducted in 1934, Hiroshima emigrants were the fourth largest group at 8.01 percent, following the prefectures of Wakayama (16.02 percent), Shiga (12.6 percent), and of the Hiroshima people lived in Vancouver, 24.65 percent on farms and 28.25 percent in company towns. There were no Hiroshima fishers according to the survey.²⁹

By concentrating on Hiroshima emigrants, I hoped to illuminate the ways in which regional identities influence personal behaviour and community networking. Another reason for choosing Hiroshima is my interest in Hiroshima emigrants and my special qualifications to study their history. As an "insider" born to Hiroshima immigrants who lived within the rather narrow confines of the Japanese Canadian society in Vancouver of the 1930s, I acquired tools that aid understanding of these people and their history from their earliest days in British Columbia. For this reason it may not be too presumptuous to assume that the family customs and traditions that I studied were similar to those to which I also had been "acculturated." Moreover I have special regional language skills that scholars in both Japan and Canada do not normally have.

In a way this study continues earlier work that was also a product of my

²⁹Early Hiroshima emigrants did fish according to my research, but in all cases it was just long enough to earn sufficient money for other ventures such as farming or starting a business. It is interesting to note that in the San Pedro fishing community near Los Angeles, there were no Hiroshima fishers. John Modell, The Economics and Politics of Racial Accommodation: The Japanese of Los Angeles, 1900-1942 (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1977), p. 21.

interest in my own roots and the qualifications that make it possible for me to do "insider" research in the history of Hiroshima emigration to Canada. The subject of my Bachelor's essay and Master's theses, Mrs. Imada Ito, was also from Hiroshima. Mrs. Imada came from Saeki county, from a village which is now part of the city of Hiroshima. A vivid picture of village life is obtained from her description of her childhood on a farm, her stay at her in-laws' home before she joined her husband, and her temporary return to the village with three children in 1918.³⁰ She was a product of her village, and the manner in which she conducted her life in Canada may also have been partly because she was a Hiroshima person. Mrs. Imada's memoir was written in a unique blend of Meiji Japanese, fractured English, and Hiroshima dialect, combining *hiragana* [cursive syllabary], *katakana* [phonetic syllables used for foreign words] and *kanji* [Chinese ideograms]. The language she used had been confusing to scholars from Japan but it was very familiar to me. Where there was some doubt with some idiomatic expressions, a telephone call to my elderly mother readily clarified the problem. In her memoir, Mrs. Imada also mentioned many people who later appeared in my present research.

The fact that I was a Hiroshima descendant helped open many doors in this dissertation research based in large part on the lives of different individuals, many of whom have passed on. Their descendants, as well as many who had known the

³⁰Michiko Midge Ayukawa, "The Memoirs of Imada Ito: A Japanese Pioneer Woman," B.A. essay, University of Victoria, 1988, pp. 17-19, 61-64.

pioneers, appreciated this prefectural connection and agreed to lengthy and repeated interviews which may not have been granted otherwise. During conversational pauses, names and events that I recalled from my childhood aided latent memories. There was also a mutual feeling of sympathy and understanding. As Peter Rose put it, "Acquaintance with something is very different from true understanding, . . . there is a wide chasm between KENNEN and VERSTEHEN. Outsiders might know a bit of another person's history and some cold facts; but it is much more difficult for them to feel the undertones."³¹ My insider's knowledge also was often necessary in analyzing the information received. Memory is not always infallible and people tend to "rewrite" history in their own mind. Many wish to put the best "face" on past events and to deny actions which in present times may be judged as unacceptable.

Oral evidence was a challenge. Fortunately a large network of independent witnesses to events developed in the course of the research and this helped me to evaluate oral testimony. However, I had to constantly remember my role of a historian as a detective.³² Even when written material existed, there could be different interpretations: for instance, regarding conflict within the community, different factions told different stories.

It was important to be always mindful of the necessity to respect the

³¹Peter Rose, Mainstreams and Margins: Jews, Blacks, and other Americans, 3rd ed. 1983 (New York: Random House, 1963), p. 205.

³²Robin W. Winks, ed., The Historian as Detective (New York: Harper & Row, 1969).

privacy of the interviewees. At times, family secrets were inadvertently revealed, and I used my discretion and judgement in not writing about them. Some upsetting topics were avoided. With such avoidance there is always a danger of unintentionally or otherwise submitting to an interviewee's censorship, the motives of which may not always be unselfish. The interviewees and I were always aware of the deep-seated effects of the racism that we had experienced during our lives. Since painful memories inhibited questions about racism, I may have neglected or understated parts of the story. Being an insider can be a difficult as well as a privileged position.

In addition to oral testimony were primary and secondary Japanese language sources. The two main records of early history of the Japanese in Canada are Nakayama Jinshirō, Kanada dōhō hatten taikan [Encyclopedia of Japanese in Canada] and Kanada no hōko [Treasures of Canada]. Copies of these were extremely scarce but have recently been reprinted in extremely expensive editions.³³ Both these books were written in 1921 while the pioneers who contributed to the contents of these volumes were still available to write or relate their reminiscences. In spite of inaccuracies, these two works are valuable sources. They are written in a highly-stylized literary Japanese language. They contain lists of all the Japanese in Canada in 1920, divided into the prefectures from which the emigrants had come, giving names of home villages and all family

³³Kanada iminshi shiryō [Data on the History of Canadian Emigrants] (Tokyo: Fujishuppan, 1995).

members. They also contain extremely laudatory short biographies of many prominent people in the community. Another old book which had been published in 1920 by *Nikka jihōsha*, entitled Kanada zairyū dōhō sōran [General Survey of Compatriots Resident in Canada] was reprinted in 1993. It contains short biographies with accompanying photographs of a number of Japanese in Canada.³⁴

A major source of information on the history of the Japanese berry producers is Yamaga Yasutaro's history of Haney farmers entitled Hene'e nōkai shi [History of the Haney Agricultural Association]. Fortunately, for non-readers of Japanese, much of its contents is available in English in the Yamaga Collection at the University of British Columbia Library Special Collections.

There are also a number of recent publications by Japanese authors on Japanese Canadians, due in part to an awakening of interest in Japan in their emigrants. This awareness of those who emigrated was brought about by the "u-turn"; that is, the temporary immigration to Japan of *nikkei* [people of Japanese descent] labourers in the industries of Japan. The trend started in 1990 with *nikkei* from the Phillipines and South America.³⁵ By 1992, there were some 150,000 such *nikkei* labourers. Curiosity about these "Japanese" who were *gaijin* [foreigners] has led to both academic and popular books about the emigrants. The Chūgoku shinbun [literally, Central Area News. *Chūgoku* is the term used for

³⁴*Nikka jihōsha*, Kanada zairyū sōran [General Survey of Compatriots Resident in Canada] (1920) (Tokyo: Nihon tosho senta, 1993).

³⁵Chūgoku shinbun, Imin [Emigrants] (Hiroshima: Chūgoku shinbunsha, 1992), p. 397.

the south west area of Honshu.], a newspaper published in Hiroshima city, commemorated its one hundredth anniversary by publishing Imin [Emigrants] in 1992. The newspaper had sent reporters throughout the western hemisphere and South East Asia, in search of emigrants from Hiroshima prefecture.

Even before the 1990 "u-turn," limited scholarly interest in Japan regarding emigrants had produced work that was useful in my research on Hiroshima emigrants to Canada. A series of four volumes on Hiroshima prefecture published in 1976, 1980, 1981, and 1991 involved some top academics in Hiroshima city. I went to Hiroshima city in April 1993 and consulted three of the historians who were authors of this series. They were most helpful. Kodama Masaaki, one of the participants in this project recently consolidated all his research on Japanese emigration in one book and he presented me with a copy of this along with other academic papers pertinent to my research.³⁶ Ishikawa Tomonori, Irie Toraji, and Sasaki Toshiji also have written well-researched articles about the emigration of Japanese. Sasaki wrote a series of papers on the Kobe Emigration Company that sent contract workers to Cumberland, British Columbia. These are invaluable contributions to the early history of the Japanese pioneers in Canada. The studies of Tamura Norio on Etsu Suzuki, the Japanese Canadian labour union (Camp and Mill Workers Union) and its newspaper The Daily

³⁶Kodama Masaaki, [Nihon iminshi kenkyū josetsu [Introduction to the Study of the History of Japanese Emigration] (Hiroshima: Keisuisha, 1992).

People were important sources of Japanese Canadian labour history.³⁷ Tamura's Japanese books were a good supplement to Rolf Knight and Maya Koizumi's A Man of Our Times.³⁸

To locate the living and dead actors of my study I started with the data base that Audrey Kobayashi had created at McGill University with the financial support of the National Association of Japanese Canadians. On my request in September 1992, she printed out all Hiroshima emigrants to Canada that were in her listings. The lists consisted of the following: Tairiku nippōsha, Kanada dōhō hattenshi [History of Japanese Progress in Canada], 1909 (henceforth, Tairiku 1909); Nakayama Jinshirō, Kanada dōhō hatten taikan [Encyclopedia of Japanese in Canada], 1921 (henceforth, Nakayama); Canada, Department of Labour, Immigration Records, 1908-20, Returning Immigrants from Japan; Canada, Department of Labour, Immigration Records, 1908-20, New Immigrants from Japan; Japan, *Gaimusho* [Ministry of Foreign Affairs] Records; Tairiku nippōsha, Kanada zairyū hōjin jinmei [Japanese Residents in Canada], 1941 (henceforth, Tairiku 1941).

³⁷Tamura Norio, Suzuki Etsu: Nihon to Kanada o musunda jaanalisuto [Suzuki Etsu: The Journalist Who Linked Japan and Canada] (Tokyo: Liburopoto Publishing Co., 1992), Tamura Norio, "Nikkan Minshū shūka jijō-nichibei kansen to Bankūba-Local 31 [Last Issue Circumstances of the Japanese Newspaper Daily People: The Japan-US War and Vancouver Local 31." Communication Kagaku 3 (June 1995), pp. 27-41; Shimpo Mitsuru, Tamura Norio, and Shiramizu Shigehiko, Kanada no nihongo shinbun [Japanese Language Newspapers in Canada] second ed., 1992 (Tokyo: PMC Shuppansha, 1991).

³⁸Rolf Knight and Maya Koizumi, A Man of Our Times: The Life-History of a Japanese-Canadian Fisherman (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1976).

Unfortunately, there were a number of errors made in the transcribing of information and in Kobayashi's translation of place names as well as in personal names, but the lists were nevertheless helpful. I also used a copy of the BC Japanese Phone Directory of June 1941 that I received from an interviewee, Reginald Hayami, in October 1992. Nakayama Jinshirō's list was much more useful in the original Japanese which gave home village addresses and names of family members than in Kobayashi's translated version. In addition, Kanada zairyū dōhō sōran [Compatriots Resident in Canada], 1920 (henceforth, Nikka), provided additional names and information on more publicly known men. From these lists, names that I recognized were selected and the people contacted. Suggestions by friends, and others in the Japanese community were also helpful in the arrangement of some interviews. Occasionally, Hiroshima descendants approached me and asked that their families be included in my research. I did some interviews by telephone, but the majority were carried out in person. More than fifty interviews were conducted in Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Hamilton, Lethbridge, Salmon Arm, Kamloops, Barriere, Vancouver, Surrey, Victoria, Tokyo, and Hiroshima, usually in the home of the interviewees. These interviews of elderly issei, and nisei, and also Japanese who have never emigrated, were made over a period of six years.

There were a variety of reasons why the emigrants I studied chose to seek their fortunes in Canada. Some came alone, others had been recruited by emigration companies, many had been hired by fellow villagers who had returned

to gather a crew for work on particular ventures. They included extremely successful men such as Kaminishi Kannosuke and Sasaki Shūichi, who became owners of tracts of forest land, lumber camps, and sawmills. There were successful farmers, poor farmers, mill-workers and small businessmen. There were family-oriented, caring men, others who spent every penny they earned on gambling and liquor, and men who were lazy and selfish. Some community leaders sacrificed their own families in order to help others. There were adventurers and dare-devils but many like my father were just steady workers who made personal sacrifices for their families.³⁹

There were women who had actively chosen to emigrate to "Amerika" and those who had merely acquiesced to their parents' suggestions to marry overseas men. All these women found their lives in Canada extremely difficult and without the aid of an extended family, worked both inside and outside their homes. Burdened with irresponsible mates, some women became the main bread-winners, while other women just gave up and abandoned their families, or committed suicide.

The history of the Hiroshima people is a vital part of the history of British Columbia, because it was in that province that these emigrants, in spite of anti-Asian racism which brought about discriminatory labour practices and anti-

³⁹My father usually worked in his trade as a carpenter, building boats and renovating houses, but when such jobs were not available, he laboured in sawmills or as a gardener and even set pins in a bowling alley. His only recreation was watching the games of the Asahi baseball team and its junior teams. (See chapter 8.)

Japanese legislation, tried to achieve their dreams. Yet, over the years, the Hiroshima immigrants to a large extent controlled and directed their destinies—at least until the bombing of Pearl Harbor by their ancestral country destroyed the Japanese Canadian communities.

Since this study is at least partly a regional history of Hiroshima prefecture, chapter 2 deals with Hiroshima. Chapter 3 is about the adventures of the earliest individual and first contract emigrants to Canada: the one hundred Hiroshima "miners" and other early pioneers. Gradually many of these predominantly male "sojourners" created the Japanese town around Powell Street in Vancouver. This community and its relationship with outlying coastal communities is described in chapter 4. The conversion of the bachelor society to a family-centred one came with the picture brides. The stories of these women, their dreams, steadfastness, and adaptability are told in chapter 5. Settlement drew many to farming. Farming families dealt with white ostracism and with the market-place to create successful enterprises as described in chapter 6. Although chapter 7 deals mainly with the large urban community of Vancouver, it is also about conflict between the ordinary Japanese labourers and the elite "bosses." Chapter 8 portrays the efforts made by the issei to "acculturate" their children and discusses the results of these efforts.

CHAPTER 2

THE HIROSHIMA HOMELAND

Hiroshima prefecture, on the main island of Honshu, has been aptly described as in "that portion of Japan associated with the Asiatic continent by virtue of easy communication along the axis of the Inland Sea and across the Tsushima Strait."¹ During the Edo era (1600-1867) the two hundred and eighty mile long Inland Sea passage connected the coastal villages with each other and with commercial centres such as Osaka and some castle towns of the domain lords. For centuries, cultural and technical knowledge from the Asian continent had come to the region to be disseminated and assimilated. The mild winters, abundant fisheries, and fertile land permitted a rise of population, which in turn provided a labour force that stimulated commercial and industrial development.² The population grew most rapidly in the rural areas. As Kodama Masaaki has shown, in the Edo era there was a greater increase in population in Aki domain, an area around the present-day Hiroshima city than in Bingo, the northeastern part of present-day Hiroshima prefecture or the rest of Japan. He attributed this difference to the prevalence of many Buddhists of the Jōdō Shinshū sect in that

¹Richard K. Beardsley, John W. Hall and Robert E. Ward, Village Japan, 1969 ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), p.14.

²Ibid., p. 15.

area, and claimed that numbers increased because population control through infanticide and abortion was against the beliefs of Jōdō Shinshū believers.³

Moreover, the mild winters and the long growing season permitted the use of the rice paddy fields for crops of winter wheat, barley and mat rush, all of which were sources of cash income.

In pre-modern Hiroshima as well as other parts of the country, while battles raged among the feudal lords, the lives of the farmers in the villages changed very little. Networks of rice paddies and common woodlands in a readily accessible area provided the families who lived in small clusters of houses with a subsistence existence. When battles waged by warrior clans ravaged their farms, the peasants suffered, rebuilt them, and carried on.

In 1600, the hegemon, Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616), through power, intrigue, and the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600 completed the unification begun by Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582) and Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598). In the semi-unified state he turned the country into, slightly less than three hundred feudal lords called *daimyō* acknowledged Tokugawa Ieyasu and his descendants as overlord. Ieyasu organized his *daimyō* into three categories: *shimpan*, relatives of the Tokugawa clan, *fudai*, those who had been followers of the Tokugawa family before the Battle of Sekigahara, and *tozama*. Ieyasu, distrustful of the *tozama*,

³Kodama Masaaki, Nihon iminshi kenkyū josetsu [Introduction to the Study of the History of Japanese Emigration] (Hiroshima: Keisuisha, 1992), p. 15. I have found no evidence to substantiate Kodama's claim, unless he meant that the people in that area had converted to Buddhism. The Jōdō Shinshū sect of Buddhism is not unique in its reverence for life.

situated their domains far from the capital Edo (present-day Tokyo) or between two *fudai* lords' domains. Present day Hiroshima prefecture then consisted of two domains. Aki, in the west stretched east as far as Mihara (see Map 1), a *tozama* domain held by the Asano clan. From 1710, the eastern portion of present-day Hiroshima, Bingo, was under a *fudai* daimyō, Abe.⁴

To insure firm control over the entire country, the Tokugawa regime maintained a rigid society, an adaptation of the Confucian Chinese four-class system. "The samurai [soldiers-officials] were to be at the top of the social hierarchy, the peasants were to remain on the land, and the artisans and merchants were to keep their places and behave in a manner expected of humble people."⁵ In each domain, the warriors, merchants and artisans lived in the *daimyō's* castle towns.⁶ The entire population of Tokugawa Japan, thus, depended economically upon the production of the peasants, who were about 80 percent of

⁴Before the 1600 battle, both Bingo and Aki had been part of the huge domain of the Mōri clan. Mōri Terumoto built the "carp castle," a replica of which stands today on its former site in what is now Hiroshima-city. The Mōri clan had been one of the leading contenders for national hegemony and had extended its domain from the south-western end of Honshu as far east as Bitchu (present day area around Okayama city). Since they had opposed him, Ieyasu seized Bingo and Aki and confined Mōri to the present day Yamaguchi prefecture. (Beardsley, et al. Village Japan, pp. 44-46. Also Chie Nakane and Oishi Shizaburo, eds., Tokugawa Japan, trans. Conrad Totman (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1990), p. 22.

⁵Hane Mikiso, Modern Japan (Boulder: Westview Press, 1986), p.23. Hideyoshi, who had preceded Ieyasu in trying to unify the land, had ordered men to choose between being classified as warriors or peasants.

⁶Sato Tsuneo, "Tokugawa Villages and Agriculture," in Tokugawa Japan, eds., Nakane and Oishi, p. 38.

the population. Cadastral surveys by Ieyasu's predecessor had recorded the financial worth of each village in terms of the estimated rice yield or *kokudaka*. The Tokugawa rulers continued to order such surveys and to make use of survey statistics and the status of the *daimyō* was determined by the *kokudaka* value of the entire domain. The Aki domain of the Asano *daimyō* with its castle town located in the present day Hiroshima city boasted a *kokudaka* value of 426,000 and Bingo, under the Abe *daimyō* with its castle at Fukuyama had a *kokudaka* value of 110,000 in 1867.⁷

Like domain lords throughout the land, the *daimyō* of Aki and Bingo were responsible for their samurai vassals and paid them rice stipends. By the mid-1800s, rising standards of living, increased consumption of "luxury" goods and services, and demands from the governing Tokugawa shogun, had impoverished the country's *daimyō* and the rest of the samurai class. The *sankin-kōtai* by which edict the *daimyō* of Aki and Bingo like other *daimyō* had to regularly alternate their residences between their Hiroshima and Fukuyama castles and Edo, while their families remained in Edo under the watchful eyes of the shogunate, further impoverished the *daimyō*. Thus like the other lords, the Aki and Bingo *daimyō* sought methods of supplementing their domain incomes. Within their domains, they encouraged cottage industries specializing in local materials and crops. Local

⁷E. Papinot, Historical and Geographical Dictionary of Japan. 1986 ed. (Rutland: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1910), p. 830. (*Kokudaka* was a system of land assessment based on the estimated yield. A *roku*—"a measure of volume, approximately 5.2 bushels: traditionally, a standard allowance of rice for one person for one year." (Beardsley, Village Japan, p. 487.)

entrepreneurs who organized such ventures, hired peasants to work in their own homes or at a nearby site. Aki and Bingo became known for their specialty products.⁸ Villages were gradually converted from subsistence farming to production for the market, usually concentrating on cash crops of local products including those that could be used in cottage industries. Some of these crops were grains, tobacco, sugar-cane, vegetables, cotton, mulberry, various beans, tea, and rapeseed.⁹ In Aki and Bingo, as elsewhere, peasants "typically grew what soil, climate, and price favored, regardless of what they themselves happened to need" because with cash they could now purchase what they lacked.¹⁰ The percentage of cash crops in the total crops grown varied from region to region. By the time of the Meiji era (1868-1912) the spread within the nation was between 10.2 percent and 26.8 percent and, in the area that included Aki and Bingo the proportion was 13.7 percent in 1877.¹¹

The desire for cash earnings made agriculture competitive during a gradual shift from cooperative to individual farming.¹² From the beginning of agriculture in Aki and Bingo, there had been cooperation in farming, often organized around

⁸Hane, Modern History, p.48.

⁹Hiroshimaken, Hiroshima kenshi, kindai I [The History of Hiroshima Prefecture, Modern Period I] (Hiroshima: Hiroshimaken, 1981), p. 775.

¹⁰Thomas C. Smith, The Agrarian Origins of Modern Japan (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), pp. 68-69.

¹¹Ibid., p. 72.

¹²Ibid., p. 5.

hierarchies of lineage. However, "well before the nineteenth century . . . farm families were buying all or part of the goods and services that the cooperative group had once provided—fertilizer, firewood, labour, thatch for roofing, lumber, food and clothing" with a resulting dependence on the market.¹³ Those who lost their land by foreclosure of loans survived by tenant farming and working as hired agricultural labourers and turning to other occupations. Thomas Smith noted that the account books of a large land holder in Aki province revealed the gradual increase in the use of day labour.¹⁴ Women worked in village handicraft industries owned and controlled by the richer landlords. Thus by the last decades of Tokugawa rule, the distance between the rural rich and the mass of the peasants was a wide one.¹⁵

Landless peasants and those who owned such small plots that they could not survive on farming alone often left home to find work to supplement their incomes.¹⁶ Although in Aki and Bingo as well as elsewhere women left home to work for an employer in a nearby village or town as maids and seasonal labourers,

¹³Ibid., p. 144.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 144-45.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 179.

¹⁶Kodama reminds us that *dekasegi* [going out to work] flourished in late Edo and early Meiji years. For example, in Ansei 5 [1859], 65.5%; that is, nineteen out of a total of twenty-nine employees working in Bitchu [later, western Okayama prefecture] at a plant that produced *bengara* [red-ochre rouge] were from Aki, and according to the 1871 records of Mitsugi county in Bingo, seventy-one of the residents were working in other areas such as Shikoku, Fukuyama and Tsuyama (Kodama, *Nihon iminshi*, p. 56).

they often stayed at home in agricultural activities "including cotton growing, sericulture, and various stages in the processing of silk and cotton threads and cloth."¹⁷ In the Bingo area the growing and weaving of reeds for *tatami-omote* [tatami covers] and the dyeing and weaving of a cotton fabric called *Bingo-gasuri* were major sources of income.

The Intrusion of the West

In the early seventeenth century the *Bakufu* [the government of the Tokugawa regime] severely restricted the country's contact with the outside world, especially the non-East Asian world. It forbade the building of boats large enough for ocean voyages and refused reentry to those who, carried by winds, had landed on foreign shores. It also strictly controlled trade with a small number of foreigners.

Although in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries there had been a number of challenges to the Tokugawa regime's seclusionist policy, nothing of lasting consequence came of these until the arrival of America's Commodore Matthew Perry with four warships off the coast of Uraga in Edo Bay in 1853. Perry forced the *Bakufu* in 1854 to sign the Treaty of Kanagawa, and soon European powers gained similar treaties. Japan thus entered the unequal treaty system devised by the Western imperialist powers. The commercial treaties the Tokugawa regime was forced to sign became the catalyst for turbulence

¹⁷E. Patricia Tsurumi, Factory Girls: Women in the Thread Mills of Meiji Japan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 19. See also p. 15.

throughout the country: by 1868 the *Bakufu* had been replaced by a new regime with young Mutsuhito, the Emperor Meiji, as a symbolic head, optimistically representing a supposedly united country.

At the time of Perry's intrusion, Abe Masahiro (1819-57), the *fudai daimyō* of Bingo, wielded considerable influence in the *Bakufu*. The Bingo domain was loyal to Tokugawa rulers.¹⁸ The Asano rulers of Aki, on the other hand, presided over a *tozama* domain. In the turmoil of the 1860s the Asano did not unequivocally support the challengers that defeated the Tokugawa rulers and thus were not able to use Aki's historical distance from the *Bakufu* to receive favours from the new state that ultimately emerged from the struggles.¹⁹ The vacillation of the Asano and Abe's *fudai* connection with the defeated Tokugawa forfeited both Aki's and Bingo's opportunities for leadership and power in the Meiji government.

The new government faced enormous problems. In order to regain Japan's autonomy by eliminating the unequal treaties that gave the Western powers extra-territorial and other rights, the Meiji rulers had to initiate drastic economic and

¹⁸Abe Masahiro, *daimyō* of Bingo from 1837-57, was *rōjū* [senior councillor] from 1843 to his death. He was *rōjū shuseki* [chief councillor] from March 1845 to November 1855. Peter Duus wrote that as the chief elder of the *Bakufu* from 1843 to 1855 he "undertook military and institutional reforms to deal with the formal problem realistically." He also handled the Perry negotiations. Peter Duus, The Rise of Modern Japan (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1976), pp. 60-62.

¹⁹Marius B. Jansen, Sakamoto Ryōma and the Meiji Restoration (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 312-33, and Conrad Totman, The Collapse of the Tokugawa Bakufu (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), p. 238.

social changes. The government converted domains into prefectures and pensioned off the former *daimyō* and samurai. Hundreds of young men and five girls of "impressionable ages" were sent overseas to study, while thousands of western "experts" were brought in to train others.²⁰ The government imported modern machinery, erected huge factories, developed mining operations and railways, introduced compulsory education—with the costs borne by the local areas—and conscription for males in all classes. The latter caused great hardships in the rural areas especially, since it deprived them of the labour of young men in their prime. These expensive ventures were all financed by the new government with revenue derived primarily from the revised land tax levied on the peasants who still comprised approximately 80 percent of the population.²¹ By early Meiji within Hiroshima prefecture, the degree of stratification among peasants differed from area to area. In the southern Bingo area, approximately 70 percent of the farmers owned less than three *tan* [1 *tan* = 0.245 acres] of land and had to rent land to survive. In other areas about half of the farmers owned less than three

²⁰Baroness Ishimoto Shidzue, *Facing Two Ways: The Story of My Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984, 1st ed. 1934), p. 362. A number of biographies have been written about these "experts," two of which are, Edward R. Beauchamp, *An American Teacher in Early Meiji Japan* (University of Hawaii Press, 1976), and Richard Rubinger, ed., *An American Scientist in Early Meiji Japan* (University of Hawaii Press, 1989).

²¹Fukutake Tadashi reports that it was the land tax which "provided the basis for a capitalist state." Fukutake Tadashi, *Japanese Rural Society*, trans. R. P. Dore (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 5. In the early 1870s, deeds were issued to the farmers that had worked the land for generations and they were also granted the right to buy and sell land. (Hane, *Modern History*, p. 93).

tan. There was also a significantly lower number of families of middle status, those that owned and worked five to ten *tan* in the Bingo area. In both areas there were comparable numbers of landowners who had amassed vast tracts of land.²² One person in what is now present-day Hiroshima city had acquired more than 44 *chō* nine *tan* by 1872, and three others, even more property in the present-day Fukuyama city area, near the border with Okayama prefecture.²³ Since these acquisitions of land preceded the Meiji tax law of 1873, it is clear that by late Tokugawa times land was a major investment for the wealthy who rented out land to tenants and hired agricultural hands.

The 1873 tax law required the holders of title deeds to pay taxes in cash at 3 percent of the assessed value of the land so the vagaries of the market brought about much hardship to peasants. And the 1876 revision in the law that decreased the tax to 2½ percent of the assessed value did little to alleviate the problem.²⁴ Moreover, by 1879, inflation had further accelerated the loss of land by non-tenant farmers, caused in part by the issuance of bank notes against bonds deposited by the *kazoku* [peers] and *shizoku* [ex-samurai] paid to them by the government.²⁵ The situation became worse when Matsukata Masayoshi, the finance minister, introduced in 1881 deflationary fiscal policies that brought about

²²Hiroshima kenshi I, p. 338.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 339. Ten *tan* equals one *cho*.

²⁴Hane, Modern History, pp. 93-94.

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 99.

a severe drop in the price of rice. This meant that in actual fact the peasants had to pay twice as much in taxes.²⁶ Meanwhile, local governments were forced by the central government to levy additional taxes.²⁷ Peasants' land losses soon reached alarming proportions. In Hiroshima between 1884 and 1886, 18.9 percent of the land in the prefecture had changed hands, while from 1884 to 1887, tenancy increased by 4.0 percent prefecture-wide.²⁸ By 1889, the tenancy rates ranged from 58.4 percent in Fukaasa county to 25.4 percent in Mitsugi county.²⁹

Another major cause of impoverishment, loss of land and increased tenancy, was the disappearance of markets for cash crops such as cotton and indigo used in cottage industries. Many cottage industries were ruined because the prices of the goods they produced could not compete with cheap machine-made imported goods that entered Japan under the unequal treaties system.

²⁶The effect on farmers was expressed very vividly by Stephen Vlastos. "All farmers suffered to some extent as a consequence of the Matsukata deflation. However, small-scale producers of cash crops, and especially farmers who customarily relied on short-term debt, were hit the hardest. Caught between the government and the local money-lender, saddled with drastically reduced income but high fixed costs, such farmers struggled to stave off bankruptcy. Even moderately well-to-do farmers caught in the same predicament often had to mortgage their land. . . . Bankruptcies soared . . ." Stephen Vlastos, "Opposition Movements in Early Meiji, 1868-1885" in The Emergence of Meiji Japan, ed. Marius B Jansen, (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1995), p. 256.

²⁷Hane, Modern History, pp. 99-100.

²⁸Hiroshima kenshi I, p. 340; Kodama, Iminshi, p. 14.

²⁹Hiroshima kenshi I, p. 343.

Ishikawa Tomonori studied the area around the Inland Sea [*Setonaikai*], its society and the economic background that led to eventual emigration. According to his findings, in 1884 and 1885 depression was extreme, prices fell, interest rates sank, money lenders went bankrupt, unemployment increased, and many farmers became destitute. By 1887, in this area there was a sharp decline in the market for cash crops such as cotton, indigo, sugar cane, tobacco, reed, and flax.³⁰ In Hiroshima prefecture, cotton had been grown from Tokugawa times and by 1877 had come to represent 11.1 percent of the value of agricultural commodities.³¹ Rural households supplemented their incomes by spinning and weaving cotton, but large scale spinning mills built in 1882 and 1883 in the Hiroshima city area with *shizoku* and government funding, using cheap imported cotton thread, deprived the villagers of their livelihood.³² In the Fukuyama area wholesale dealers had long provided employment for local females who wove *Bingo-gasuri* on narrow looms.³³ Despite conversions to large factories and looms, in 1907 sixty to seventy wholesale dealers still rented looms to agricultural families and at least

³⁰Ishikawa Tomonori, "Setonai chiiki kara no (shutsu) imin [Emigrants from the Inland Sea Area]," Shigaku kenkyū [History Research] 126 (1975): 68.

³¹Hiroshima kenshi I, p. 359.

³²*Ibid.*, pp. 418-29.

³³*Bingo-gasuri* is described as "a variety of pre-dyed cotton cloth with patterns predetermined by the spacing sequences given the weft threads before weaving. Warp (or the lengthwise threads) are also dyed and expertise of the weaver brings them to perfect matches creating two-dimensional designs." Amaury Saint-Gilles, Mingei: Japan's Enduring Folk Arts (Union City, CA: Heian International, Inc. 1983), p. 73.

some *Bingo-gasuri* weaving continued.³⁴ This area also made quick progress in the switch from growing cotton to vegetables and *igusa* [reed for tatami]. The production of tatami mats and woven cotton products also absorbed surplus labour.³⁵ Another small-scale enterprise which provided side employment to Hiroshima blacksmiths and farmers was the manufacture of files or rasps [*yasuri*].³⁶ This gradually became a modern steel industry after mechanization was introduced between 1908 and 1911, and by 1917 one person was able to turn out two hundred files in one working day.³⁷

The dense agricultural population of the Inland Sea area that in Edo times had survived by marketing cash crops and developing cottage industries had to find new ways to earn livings during the Meiji period. Many villagers moved to Osaka and other large cities, continuing the tradition of *dekasegi*. Urged by the government, some moved to Hokkaido. From 1882 to 1884, the part of Hiroshima prefecture that was now called Aki county was one of the leading areas from which there was relocation to Hokkaido.³⁸ After 1885 when emigration to

³⁴Hiroshima kenshi I, pp. 840-43. This may explain the survival to the present day of *Bingo-gasuri* as a folk-art.

³⁵Kodama, Iminshi, p. 67.

³⁶After a long arduous apprenticeship of seven to eight years, men learned how to make rasps from iron sand. Before mechanization, they could produce only about ten per day.

³⁷*Ibid.* pp. 858-60.

³⁸In 1882, Aki county provided the third highest number of Hokkaido settlers in the country (330 persons); in 1883, the highest (492); and in 1884, the second highest (635). (Kodama, Iminshi, p. 15). Yamato Ichihashi also noted that

Hawaii began, Aki county's number of Hokkaido settlers fell to ninth in Japan and lower. It appears that after emigration began those who might have chosen to move to Hokkaido went instead to Hawaii where wages were higher and to which transportation was provided free.

In some areas, projects that were part of the government's modernization efforts abruptly destroyed livelihoods and drove people to seek work elsewhere. This happened to the people of Nihojima in the south end of present-day Hiroshima city when a deep-sea port was constructed at nearby Ujina. Although there was much protest by neighbouring peasants and set-backs caused by high tides, storms, and lack of money, the port was finally completed on November 30, 1889. Nihojima inhabitants were forced to give up their occupations of raising oysters and harvesting seaweed since the dredging of the sea-bed and the construction of the piers destroyed the coastal beaches.³⁹ According to the local history of Sakamachi, an area on the Inland Sea just east of Hiroshima city, in the Meiji era the population in that area was 861 per square kilometre, more than

"between 1869 and 1884 some 105,593 persons left their homes and emigrated to that northern island." Yamato Ichihashi, Japanese in the United States (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1932), p. 6.

³⁹Hiroshima kenshi I, pp. 462-88. The port at Ujina was planned in 1878 as an enterprise to employ *shizoku*, but it was also thought necessary for promoting foreign trade. Although the planners had estimated that it would take thirty months, it required five years and three months, and cost more than 300,000 yen, more than three times the estimate. However, it proved to be very useful to the military during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904 and 1905 and, in the Pacific War it had the dubious distinction of being the port from which troops sailed to South East Asia.

four times the average population of Japan. Continual indiscriminate cutting down of trees eventually resulted in the big flood of 1907. Arable land was scarce and there was no side work available. When the Ujina harbour was being built, men paid five *rin* to go by boat to work for five *sen* a day.⁴⁰ Few in Nihojima went to school beyond the age of fourteen years and thus for many in this region there was no alternative except to go overseas to work.⁴¹

The situation was similar in many parts of Hiroshima prefecture. Thus in the early 1880s when Hawaii made repeated requests for workers in the sugar cane fields, emigration appeared to be a solution to Hiroshima people's problems. Not only would emigration provide a way out for peasants who went overseas; the income these sojourners were expected to remit to their homeland would help enrich a needy nation. However it must be noted that at this time there was less emigration from the Bingo area than from elsewhere in Hiroshima since enterprising merchants there had made quick adjustments to the needs of the market-place.

Although hitherto Japan had been reluctant to send its workers abroad, R. W. Irwin, the consul general for Hawaii had a close personal relationship with Inoue Kaoru, the Foreign Minister, and emigration agreements were concluded in

⁴⁰There are ten *rin* in one *sen* and one hundred *sen* in one *yen*. One *yen* was equivalent to 0.78 American dollars in 1891 according to Kodama, Iminshi, p. 226.

⁴¹Sakamachi kaigai katsuyakushi [History of the Overseas Activities of Sakamachi] (Hiroshima: Nakamoto Sōgōinsatsu Kabushikigaisha, 1985), p. 29.

September, 1884.⁴² The Japanese foreign office decided that if the safety of the emigrants was guaranteed and the problems of the "*gannenmono*" [literally, "first year people," referring to Meiji 1] was not repeated, they would permit temporary emigration. This fiasco had occurred in the dying days of the *Bakufu* when about one hundred and fifty men and women from Tokyo and Yokohama areas were secreted off to Hawaii to work in the sugar cane fields. Many were unable to cope with the hard labour and the Meiji government had to transport some of them back to Japan. The "Japanese officials concerned above all with national dignity, [were] willing to have an outlet for Japan's economically depressed agricultural population but only if it would not sully the national image."⁴³

In the first three groups of workers that departed for Hawaii on January 1885, June 1885, and January 1886 after the 1884 agreement was signed, the number of people from Hiroshima prefecture was the highest—963 out of a total of 2,859.⁴⁴ From 1899 to 1937 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [*Gaimushō*] statistics show that 96,181 people from Hiroshima went overseas.⁴⁵ Statistics also show that by 1940, Hiroshima prefecture, with a total of 72,486 individuals, led

⁴²Ichioka notes that Robert Irwin was a "special agent of the Immigration Bureau of Hawaii and Hawaiian consul in Yokohama," Ichioka, *Issei*, p. 41. See also Kodama, *Iminshi*, p. 11, and Yukiko Irwin and Hilary Conroy, "R. W. Irwin and Systematic Immigration to Hawaii," in *East Across the Pacific*, eds. Hilary Conroy and T. Scott Miyakawa (Santa Barbara, CA: Clio Press, 1972), pp. 40-55.

⁴³Ichioka, *Issei*, p. 41.

⁴⁴Ishikawa, "Setonai," p. 60.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, p. 60.

the whole of Japan in the numbers of emigrants. This meant that by that time, the equivalent of 3.88 percent of the total population of Hiroshima prefecture had left to live overseas. Only Okinawa prefecture with 9.97 percent, and Kumamoto prefecture with 4.78 percent exceeded Hiroshima in the numbers of their people who went to a foreign land. The percentage of the entire population that lived overseas was 1.03 percent.⁴⁶ These percentages include children who were born overseas but were registered in the family records in Japan.

Although major disasters such as the heavy summer rains and pest infestations that in 1889 ruined crops in Hesaka an area near Hiroshima city also precipitated emigration, a major lure for *dekasegi* to Hawaii was the amount of money that could be earned there.⁴⁷ Ishikawa Tomonori has compared the relative wages of workers in Hiroshima and Hawaii. In Hawaii a person could earn the equivalent of 17.65 yen per month, while in Hiroshima carpenters made 4.68 yen and labourers 3.38 yen per month.⁴⁸ Presumably by enduring three years in a foreign land some could solve their economic problems. Many of the early

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 62.

⁴⁷Yuji Ichioka, *Issei* (New York: The Free Press, 1988), p. 44, and Alan Takeo Moriyama, *Imingaisha* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985), p. 13.

⁴⁸Ishikawa Tomonori, "Hiroshima wangan Jigozen-son keiyaku imin no shakai chirigakuteki kosatsu" [Socio-Geographical Study of Government-Sponsored Emigrants of Jigozen Village, Hiroshima Bay] *Jimbun chiri* [Social Geography] 19:1 (1967): 84-85. According to Ishikawa, living facilities were provided in Hawaii and the only monthly expenses were for food—approximately \$6.00 (7.06 yen) for men, and \$4.00 (4.70 yen) for women.

Hiroshima emigrants were heads of households or first sons who "saved" their families by *dekasegi*.⁴⁹

The amount of money sent back to Japan by Hiroshima emigrants from 1926 to 1938 represented 22.4 percent (in actual value, greater than five million yen) of the total amount sent back to Japan by all the emigrants overseas.⁵⁰

Remittances by Wakayama prefecture emigrants came second, amounting to 12.9 percent of all funds sent to Japan by emigrants.

Why were so many emigrants from Hiroshima prefecture? Thomas Smith reminds us that *dekasegi* within the boundaries of Japan was a well established custom even in the Tokugawa period.

Migration in Japan was a selective movement. Men left their homes because they were restless and ambitious because they saw elsewhere an avenue of advancement but barriers blocking it where they were.⁵¹

In some areas this was more common than in others. Hiroshima farmers for centuries had gone to other parts of the country via the Inland Sea, and bold

⁴⁹Jigozen, the village discussed by Ishikawa has been called "*Amerika-mura*" [America village] by the local people and is well-known as a village from which a large number had gone overseas. I visited there in April 1993, and my guide, a reporter from the *Chūgoku Shinbun* whose special interest is emigration from Hiroshima, showed me the temple that had been rebuilt with donations from overseas villagers after it had been devastated by a storm. He stated that since the turn of the century many of the homes in the area had been built with western-style rooms and kitchens and that when villagers met on the street, they greeted each other with "Howdah" rather than "*Konnichiwa*."

⁵⁰Ishikawa, "Setonai", p. 65.

⁵¹Smith, *Agrarian Origins*, p. 213.

fishermen had sailed as far away as Korea.⁵² Was Hawaii the next logical step? As Yamato Ichihashi wrote in 1932, "the elements of adventure and ambition were a powerful factor in emigration. The inhabitants of Sanyōdō and Saikaidō (these areas include Hiroshima) have been noted for their adventurous enterprises."⁵³ Along the same lines, Alan Moriyama has suggested that "many residents of [the coastal area] had experience with sea travel and might therefore be persuaded to endure the long journey to Hawaii."⁵⁴ Ichihashi has also argued that Japanese emigrants were "impelled by a desire for improvement rather than by the necessity of escaping misery at home."⁵⁵ The inhabitants of Hiroshima area were certainly more willing to go overseas than were people in the far more destitute Tōhoku region. (See map 1.) In Tōhoku desperate peasants practised infanticide and sold their daughters to brothels but were extremely reluctant to go abroad.

There was a push-pull effect in emigration. In Hiroshima a major reason why emigration accelerated is because as soon as there was evidence of money from overseas in the villages, others were drawn to the idea of going abroad. "By December 1891, Hiroshima emigrants had remitted a total of \$732,000 from Hawaii. Of this amount, \$220,500 went into savings, \$172,000 went towards the

⁵²Kodama, Iminshi, p. 56. Kodama mentioned also that Hiroshima people had gone to work in the Kyushu mines.

⁵³Ichihashi, Japanese, p. 81.

⁵⁴Moriyama, Imingaisha, p. 60.

⁵⁵Ichihashi, Japanese, p. 90.

purchase of real property and household goods, \$272,000 was earmarked for repayment of debts, and \$67,500 went for miscellaneous expenses."⁵⁶ The magnitude of this amount is evident: the amount of money remitted in 1891 was the equivalent of 54.3 percent of the annual budget of Hiroshima's prefectural government during that year.⁵⁷

After comparing data on emigrants to Hawaii compiled by Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the years 1885 to 1894 on the choices made after the three year contracts were over, and similar information gathered by Yoshida Hideo on the Hiroshima emigrants during 1885 to 1893, Alan Moriyama concluded that once they emigrated, "compared to others, Hiroshima immigrants tended to stay overseas rather than return to Japan."⁵⁸ What did these Hiroshima emigrants choose to do in their new environment? But first, how did the Hiroshima emigrants who followed the first "wave" get overseas?

From 1894 until 1908 private companies organized what had been government-sponsored emigration. In order to avoid disorganized and unregulated emigration, the Japanese government drew up the Emigrant Protection Ordinance in 1894, followed by the Emigrant Protection Law in 1896.⁵⁹ According to Moriyama, prefectural authorities gradually took over more and

⁵⁶Ichioka, Issei, p.46 and Hiroshima kindaishi III, pp. 103-4.

⁵⁷Ichioka, Issei, p. 46; Hiroshima kenshi I, p. 1001.

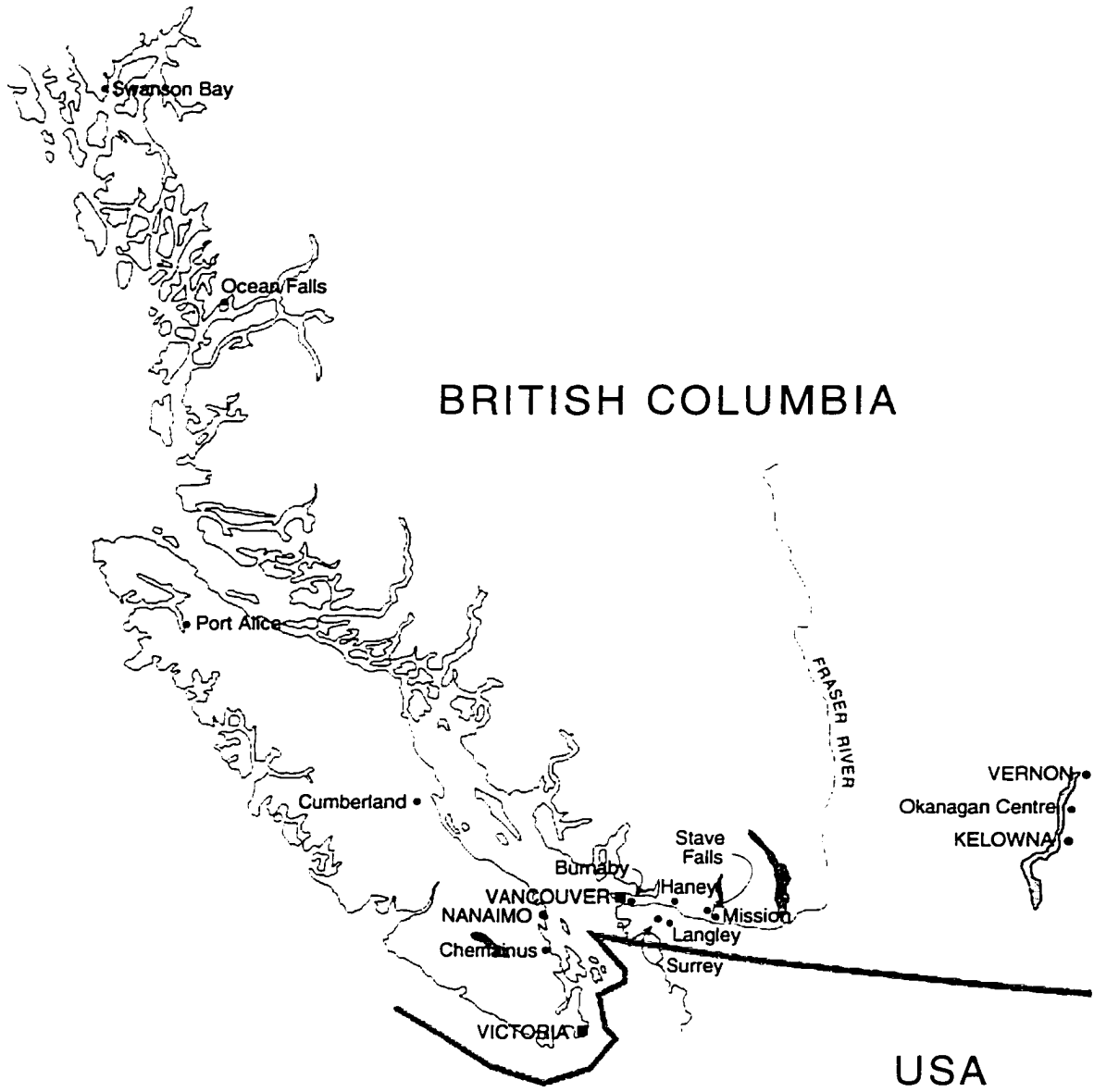
⁵⁸Moriyama, Imingaisha, p. 29.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 32.

more of the paperwork for emigration and "local authorities in certain prefectures such as Hiroshima encouraged overseas work and helped popularize it by issuing their own notices."⁶⁰ Private business enterprises shipped labourers to South East Asia, Hawaii, and the Western Hemisphere. In December 1891 before emigration companies were officially sanctioned, the Kobe Emigration Company (later known as the Meiji Emigration Company) began operations and sent one hundred labourers from Hiroshima prefecture to the Union Collieries in Cumberland, Vancouver Island. (See Map 3.) According to Sasaki Toshiji, when these men were sent to the Union Collieries, there were only two hundred Japanese in Canada. How many of the two hundred were from Hiroshima we do not know.⁶¹

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 48.

⁶¹Sasaki Toshiji, "Kanada-Yunion tanko to Kobe Imingaisha" [Canada, Union Collieries and Kobe Emigration Company], Han (September 1987): 177.



CHAPTER 3

THE FIRST ONES

It is difficult to determine with certainty who was the first immigrant from Hiroshima prefecture. Nakayama Jinshirō named Ueda Minoru, who arrived in 1886 as the "*senpai* [senior] from Hiroshima prefecture."¹ The brief biography in Nakayama's compendium of Japanese in Canada states that Ueda Minoru worked at Vancouver's Hastings Mill for six months, then in a variety of jobs at such places as Beaver and English Canneries in Steveston, and at hard labour in Seattle and Portland.² Hastings Mill, the sawmill located in Vancouver at the foot of Dunlevy Street on the Burrard Inlet, started its operations there in 1867 and had hired "Indians, Kanaka and Scandinavian deserters from the sailing ships and 'busted' refugees from the gold mines" and later Chinese and Japanese.³ The Japanese immigrants referred to the Hastings Mill as *otasuke gaisha* [saviour company] since it provided employment for many men when little other work was available. Powell Street which had earlier been "the 'gay' street, with the Tivoli

¹Nakayama Jinshirō, Kanada dōhō, pp. 337-38.

²"Working for a cannery" was a phrase which included fishing.

³Alan Morley, Vancouver: From Milltown to Metropolis (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1961), p. 32. "Kanaka" refers to Hawaiian pioneers in British Columbia. See Tom Koppel, Kanaka: The Untold Story of Hawaiian Pioneers in British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest (Vancouver: Whitecap Books, 1995), pp. 92-93.

and Cisne Saloons, Fook's Columbia Hall," where the footloose, the unemployed, and the men who laboured at Hastings Mill, gathered, drank, and were entertained, soon became the centre of the Japanese community.⁴ The area on Powell Street between Main Street and Princess Street gradually became completely occupied by Japanese shops, boarding houses and provided the Japanese immigrants with many of the amenities of their homeland. The Hastings Mill was on Dunlevy Street just a block north of Powell Street.

Nakayama tells us that Ueda later returned to Steveston to work under the labour contractor ("boss") at English Cannery and then himself became the "boss" at the Skeena Balmoral Cannery where he was in charge of sixty Japanese fishers. "While packing companies dealt with white fishermen as individuals, Japanese fishermen were under contract to a labour contractor."⁵ The special status of labour contractors like Ueda will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.

Ueda was lauded by Nakayama as a "pioneer" who in his later years was a "top-level Hiroshima person" who helped his fellow Japanese by serving in the Steveston Fisherman's Association in 1903 and in the same year also started publishing a magazine, *Shokumin no tomo* [The Settler's Friend]. According to Nakayama's biography Ueda discontinued the magazine when "the period was

⁴Morley, Vancouver, p. 78.

⁵Gillian Creese, "Class, Ethnicity, and Conflict: The Case of Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1880-1923," in Workers, Capital, and the State in British Columbia, eds. Rennie Warburton and David Coburn (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988), p. 66.

over," which leads one to guess that it was a publication of hints, instructions and information for new immigrants. Ueda opened a restaurant called the "*Umegaya*" on Main Street in Vancouver and while running it contracted annually to provide supplies for fishers. His address was listed as 238 Main Street and his Hiroshima roots as Narahara, Nakakurose village in Kamo county.⁶

Another early arrival from Hiroshima prefecture was Matoba Toyokichi. In the Tairiku 1909 list he is recorded as a labourer, married with two children and living at 223 Cordova Street in Vancouver. There is very little further information available, even from his descendants. According to his granddaughter, Raye Shin, Matoba came originally from the town of Onomichi.⁷ Matoba's wife, Nishimura Chiyoko, from Hikone city, Shiga prefecture, was one of the earliest women to come to Canada. There is no record of when she arrived, but it was prior to the births of her two sons in 1896 and 1898. One contact said that Matoba's son was the first Japanese child born in Cumberland, but Matoba's name does not appear on the lists of contract immigrants brought to Cumberland in 1891 and 1893.⁸ The Matoba family's second son, Tom Niichi, was born in Vancouver. Mrs. Matoba's life may have been unbearable because she took the

⁶Ueda's name does not appear in the "home" listing in Nakayama nor in any of the immigration records. In the Tairiku 1909 list, however, Ueda Minoru appears as the owner of a restaurant at 116 Westminster in Vancouver, with four employees, a wife and two children.

⁷Communication by letter, dated February 11, 1993.

⁸Information about son's birth was received from George Doi in an interview in Surrey, September 27, 1992.

drastic step of leaving her husband and sons in Canada and returning to Japan alone. Matoba remained and died in 1913 in a sawmill accident and his eldest son died of unknown causes three years later.⁹

Contract Emigrants for the Cumberland Mine

There have been brief references by Ken Adachi, Toyo Takata and Rigenda Sumida to the early Japanese labourers who came to work in the Cumberland coal mines.¹⁰ (See Map 3.) D. E. Isenor, et al., have noted in their book on the history of Cumberland that "the presence of Japanese is recorded in 1892, although Canadian Collieries notes indicate that passage money of Japanese miners was advanced by Dunsmuir probably in 1890 or 1891."¹¹ Information about these miners was very sparse until a series of three articles by Sasaki Toshiji appeared in the Japanese journal, Han [Pan], in 1987 and 1988. Sasaki has investigated the activities of the Kobe Emigration Company (later Meiji

⁹Since the only survivor of the family, the second son, rarely spoke to his children about his early days or his family, there is little further information available—not unusual among many Japanese immigrants. According to a July 1996 letter from the granddaughter, Raye Shin, her father "was reunited with his mother on his first trip to Japan as a member of the Seattle Ball Club. After that, he was in constant touch with her until her death." (See Chapter 8.)

¹⁰Ken Adachi, The Enemy that Never Was (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1976), p. 26; Toyo Takata, Nikkei Legacy (Toronto: NC Press Limited, 1983), p. 82; Rigenda Sumida, "The Japanese in British Columbia" (M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1935).

¹¹ D. E. Isenor, W. N. McInnis, E. G. Stephens, and D. E. Watson, Land of Plenty: A History of the Comox District (Campbell River: Ptarmigan Press, 1987), p. 32.

Emigration Company) which brought labourers under a three-year contract to the Union Collieries in Cumberland. Through careful search of the diplomatic correspondence of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he studied the actions of the emigration company officials, their contacts in Canada, the complex situation at the Union mines, and the listed names of emigrants and their home prefectures. Especially pertinent to this study is the fact that the initial group of hundred who came in December 1891 to work in the Cumberland mines were all from Hiroshima prefecture; a high percentage of those who emigrated through the Kobe/Meiji Emigration Company in 1893 were also from Hiroshima. My investigation has found the list given by Sasaki to be incomplete and not totally reliable, but his articles certainly fill a gap in the knowledge about events in the history of Hiroshima immigrants.

The men who were brought over to mine from 1891 started the movement of farmers that spread into the Comox Valley; and they became the first Japanese logging and sawmill owners as well as workers who moved later into many Vancouver Island communities. Many of the original "miners" broke their contracts and ventured to the mainland—to the Cariboo and into fishing communities and the embryonic Japanese urban community on Powell Street in Vancouver. Although individual Hiroshima immigrants had arrived before and continued to arrive later (especially from Hawaii in the 1900s), there is no doubt that the first group of contract labourers brought over by the Kobe Emigration

Company attracted others and was responsible for the high number of Hiroshima immigrants to Canada.

The Union Coal company, registered in 1872, was formed by seven Vancouver Island coal miners and was associated with the Union Pacific Railway in the United States.¹² It owned many coal deposits on Vancouver Island including the Comox coal seam. In 1881, Robert Dunsmuir and the Southern Pacific Railway of the United States bought out the company.¹³ Dunsmuir was elected as a member of the British Columbia legislature in 1882 and was one of the most powerful and wealthiest entrepreneurs in British Columbia. Through a number of astute negotiations with the Canadian government when he built the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway, he had acquired a land grant of 200,000 acres, which included "all substances whatsoever thereupon, therein, and thereunder."¹⁴ Robert Dunsmuir died in 1889 and his son James took over as head of the financial empire. It was James and his company that tried to circumvent the problems encountered with the use of Chinese miners by importing Japanese labourers.

To reduce labour costs, the Chinese had been employed in the mines by the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company from as early as 1867. Chinese

¹²Lynne Bowen, Three Dollar Dreams (Lantzville, BC: Oolichan Books, 1987), pp. 174, 292.

¹³Alan Grove and Ross Lambertson, "Pawns of the Powerful: The Politics of Litigation in the Union Colliery Case," BC Studies 103 (Autumn 1994): 11.

¹⁴Lynne Bowen, Boss Whistle (Lantzville, BC: Oolichan Books, 1982), p. 45.

workers were hired at half the wages of white workers. "Boys and Indians were paid \$1.50 per day; white mine workers received between \$2.00 and \$3.50 while the Chinese earned between \$1.00 and \$1.25. Contract miners, the elite workers in the mine who were paid by the ton, averaged between \$3.00 and \$4.00 per day."¹⁵ At first white miners tried to protect their interests by protesting that the employment of the Chinese was a safety issue, claiming that Chinese failure to understand English had been the cause of mining accidents. Although investigations failed to show that there were any grounds for such accusations, in February 1888 Nanaimo area mining companies agreed to exclude Chinese from employment below ground. Yet, by late 1888 Dunsmuir was employing Chinese in his new operation, the Union Colliery in Cumberland, maintaining that the February 1888 agreement only applied to the Nanaimo area. Subsequently, the British Columbia Coal Mines Regulations Act, which prohibited the employment of Chinese underground, was passed by the British Columbia Legislature in 1890. However, this legislation did not prescribe any penalties for unlawful employment of Chinese. The law had no "teeth" and the Dunsmuir group continued to use Chinese miners while attempting to repeal the act.¹⁶

The decision to import Japanese miners to work on contract in the Union mines was thus made by the Dunsmuir group to "hedge their bets."¹⁷ The Dunsmuir

¹⁵Bowen, Three Dollar Dreams, p. 251.

¹⁶Grove and Lambertson, "Pawns," p. 18.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 21.

representative, Frank Casper Davidge of Victoria, contacted Frank Upton of the Upton Steamship Company of Portland, Oregon, to make the required arrangements. The Daily Colonist of Victoria in 1892 contained daily advertisements by the Upton Line of Steamships for "round trips to Yokohama, Kobe and Hongkong [sic] . . . including stop-over privileges . . . sailing monthly from Victoria" with F. C. Davidge & Co., situated at 131 Government Street, Victoria, as agent.

Frank Upton was an Englishman who lived in Kobe.¹⁸ He drew up an agreement on March 3, 1890 with the director of the Union Pacific Railway Company of Portland, Oregon, to carry wheat between Portland and Kobe. But before he had all his ships ready he ran into direct competition with the Canadian Pacific Steamship Lines.¹⁹ He thus decided to venture into transporting labourers from Japan to the United States. He formed a partnership with two *shizoku* [ex-samurai] from Yamaguchi and Kagoshima prefectures, who had formed the Kobe Emigration Company.²⁰ An 1891 amendment to the United States immigration statutes excluded Japanese contract labourers, but the Kobe Emigration Company claimed that for fifty yen it would find work and be responsible for the emigrants

¹⁸Sasaki Toshiji, "Kanada-Yunion tankō to Kobe Imingaisha" [Canada-Union Collieries and the Kobe Emigration Company], Han 6 (September 1987): 167.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 167.

²⁰Ibid., p. 184.

until they had worked at least five months.²¹ The job promises were not fulfilled and while an investigation was being carried out by Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Kobe Emigration Company sent one hundred Hiroshima contract labourers to the Union mines.

It is obvious from careful examination of the agreements between the parties involved that the overriding concern in the agreement was to maximize profits for the Kobe Emigration Company. Especially important is the fact that the operations of the Kobe Emigration Company preceded the official transference of government-run emigration to private companies. In 1891, a special emigrant section was created in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Bureau of Trade and Commerce but it was much later that the Emigrant Protection Ordinance (1894) and Emigrant Protection Law (1896) were passed.²² Under this legislation, official permission was required for sending Japanese citizens abroad, security deposits were to be made and the companies dispatching individuals were to assume financial responsibility for shipping back the ill and those unable to return on their own.²³

Before these regulations were set in place, the first group of Hiroshima emigrants to Canada sailed from Kobe to Yokohama leaving Yokohama on November 11, 1891, two months before the company received official approval for

²¹Ibid., pp. 168-73.

²²Moriyama, Imingaisha, p. 34.

²³Ibid., p.35.

its enterprise.²⁴ Davidge of Victoria, as representative for Dunsmuir of the Union Colliery, the Upton Steamship Company and the Kobe Emigration Company on September 10, 1891 had drawn up a three-year contract for the miners.²⁵ The miners were to be paid \$1.25 for an eight-hour day and "outside the mine" [that is, above ground] workers \$1.00 per day for ten hours labour. The wages were the same as the Chinese; that is, half of what the whites were paid.²⁶ Thus, in Lynne Bowen's words, "Japanese had joined the Chinese as targets for the ire of British Columbians. . . . When the Union Colliery began to hire them in 1891, observers speculated that they would provide the same cheap labour as the Chinese did but would be exempt from the head tax, thus making them more attractive to their employer. Because the fifty dollar head tax was beyond the ability of a Chinese immigrant to pay by himself, it had become an added business expense borne by the employer."²⁷

From the tone of the newspaper articles that began appearing in west coast newspapers within days of the arrival of this first group of Hiroshima workers in December 1891, it is clear that their reception was not favourable. The Daily Colonist of December 15, 1891 in a news report from Comox stated:

²⁴Sasaki, "Kanada-Yunion," p. 182.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 177-78.

²⁶Grove and Lambertson, "Pawns," p. 12.

²⁷Bowen, Three Dollar Dream, p. 307. A Chinese head tax of fifty dollars was levied in 1885, later raised to one hundred dollars in 1900 and five hundred dollars in 1904.

A number of Japanese who arrived on the 8, Zambesi have gone up to Union to work in the mines in place of Chinamen. It is reported that the Zambesi will bring over 100 more Japs for the same purpose on her next trip.²⁸

The Zambesi was the ship that was used to transport the men, and according to the news report, it arrived on December 8. A long article in the Nanaimo Free Press of December 19, 1891 argued:

There is no question that the bringing in of the Japanese free of duty, while the ordinary so-called Chinaman has to pay \$50.00, is a nice distinction without a difference . . . If we want the Dominion of Canada to progress we have to provide a certain degree of protection to Anglo-Saxon labor against the Asiatic competitor, who will revel in luxury at wages that a white man would barely escape starvation.[sic]²⁹

Less than a month later, on January 9, in the same paper:

We now learn that these 100 Japs are being employed below and above the ground, in the Union Colliery and that a similar number of white men and Chinamen have been thrown out of employment . . . If the Japanese are allowed to get a foothold in the Union Colliery, they will soon permeate every industry in the land.³⁰

An article in the San Francisco Examiner of January 13, 1892, datelined January 12, Victoria, B.C., noted:

²⁸Daily Colonist, 15 December 1891, p. 3.

²⁹Nanaimo Free Press, 19 December 1891.

³⁰Nanaimo Free Press, 9 January 1892.

Recently there arrived here 100 Japanese to work in the Union Coal Mines at Comox, a similar number of whites and Chinamen having been already discharged. Two hundred are expected on the steamship Zambesi's next trip. This in view of the probable anti-Chinese legislation next session over which there was vigorous contention last session. Great indignation is felt among the miners of the province, who propose vigorous action in connection with other labor organization, feeling that this is but the beginning of an influx of Japanese labor. The poll-tax [more commonly referred to as a head tax] paid by the Chinese is not applicable to Japanese, and hence the influx is expected to be great, now that the opening has been provided. It is feared that they will get into every other industry and prove as dangerous to white labor as the Chinese.³¹

Criticisms such as these agitated the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and thus to ensure pride and honour, steps were taken to control emigration. But from actual experiences of this initial group of Hiroshima labourers, it is clear that the grossly exaggerated newspaper articles bordered on fear-mongering.

According to a June 2, 1892 communication by the Japanese consul in Vancouver to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tokyo, only five or six of the Japanese miners sent to Cumberland had previously worked underground and unfortunately, the others could not be trained readily due to their inability to understand English. Thus, the majority of the hundred Hiroshima men were working above ground in the beginning. From April the availability of such work gradually decreased and at that time only thirty Japanese men were still employed. Their wages were just one dollar per day. The consul reported that more than fifty of the hundred had fled during the month of April, one had died in a logging accident and another of illness. The consul reported that Dunsmuir

³¹San Francisco Examiner, 13 January 1892.

was critical of the irresponsible attitudes of the Japanese labourers and their desertions, but had promised to provide jobs elsewhere in the mines and the nearby lumber camps until experienced miners arrived from Japan to train the men for work underground.³²

This June 2, 1892 report noted also that some of the men who had left had returned and there were sixty-five Japanese at the Union Colliery. However, the mine closed on June 21, 1892 due to a slump in the San Francisco market.³³ The Dunsmuir policy of "only mining when there was a buyer meant that the miners were laid off when the markets were poor."³⁴

1892 was a critical time—without jobs the immigrants could not survive and neither could their families in Japan. Representatives of the unemployed Japanese travelled to Vancouver to petition the Japanese consul for aid, and some asked to be returned to Japan. This episode was reminiscent of appeals made by peasants to their lords in the Tokugawa period and to the Meiji government later. Like such peasants, the stranded emigrants "looked to the state for benevolence."³⁵ The Japanese consul did step in and give some aid but later much more help was necessary.

³²Sasaki Toshiji, "Yunion tankō: dainiji keiyaku imin" [Union Collieries: Number Two Contract Emigrants], Han 7 (December 1987): 171.

³³*Ibid.*, p. 173.

³⁴ Bowen, Three Dollar Dreams, p. 243.

³⁵Stephen Vlastos, Peasant Protests and Uprisings in Tokugawa Japan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), p. 152.

Before the closure of the mines, a request for experienced miners to teach the first arrivals, resulted in the recruitment of seventy-three miners from Fukuoka prefecture. However, the closure prompted Davidge to try to halt their coming. In spite of four telegrams sent by him between June 24 and July 11, 1892 as well as a report by the Japanese consul sent on June 23 (which was received only in mid-July) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning the closure, the Fukuoka men sailed on July 11.³⁶

Detailed information on the accommodations, food, hours of labour and wages are included in the application to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs made by the officials of the Kobe Emigration Company for the emigration of the experienced miners from Fukuoka. This gives us a picture of what was probably provided for the earlier immigrants too. The accommodations were western-style bunkhouses costing fifty cents per month, each sleeping twenty and described as "better than our average."³⁷

The Kobe Emigration Company claimed that the living expenses would be approximately ten dollars per month; that is, seven dollars for food and three dollars for personal expenses and sundries. The prices they quoted were five to six dollars for one hundred pounds of rice and they noted that the average worker would eat less than fifty pounds, or two fifty to three dollars worth. Beef and pork costs were expected to be fifteen cents per person and the cost of vegetables,

³⁶Sasaki, "Kanada-Yunion," p. 188.

³⁷Ibid., p. 185.

three dollars per month per person, amounting to a cost of seven dollars per person each month. Thus, the company claimed that each person could have a surplus of twelve to thirteen dollars per month, of which he should be able to send back three to five dollars to their families.³⁸ Sasaki, however, has calculated that since the Kobe Emigration Company claimed thirty-seven cents from each dollar earned, the surplus was actually less than three dollars per month rather than the twelve to thirteen dollars suggested by the company. The company was obviously painting a rosy picture to gain the confidence of the Japanese government.

With the arrival of the experienced miners, the situation that was already serious because of the mine closure was now critical. Without issuing promised blankets and clothing, the Kobe Emigration Company representative had disappeared in Yokohama before the ship sailed for Canada.³⁹ The Japanese consulate found it necessary to become more and more involved in the provision of money and aid. Again, representatives of the troubled immigrants travelled to the consulate in Vancouver on October 1, 1892 requesting that they be returned to Japan. This was refused since the costs would have been prohibitive. Whenever small sums were obtained from the Kobe company, Davidge took his percentage, leaving very little for the Japanese. This was extremely greedy and

³⁸Ibid., p. 186.

³⁹Sasaki, "Yunion," p. 174.

insensitive, but since he was acting for the Dunsmuirs who had provided the passage money, his actions were justified, although heartless.⁴⁰

The operations of the mine gradually resumed so that on November 7, some of the Japanese started to work at sixty cents a day and by December 21, all the men who had remained in the area were working. However, they often protested with strikes and petitions to the Japanese consul about unwarranted pay deductions for mining equipment, and about the lack of Japanese bath-houses and poor working conditions. Many deserted. By February 1893, there were 2,309 white miners, 483 Chinese (17 percent) and seventy Japanese (2.5 percent) at the Union Colliery.⁴¹ The seventy Japanese were all who remained of the first hundred emigrants from Hiroshima prefecture and the seventy-three from Fukuoka prefecture.

Of the original hundred Hiroshima immigrants, Sasaki noted that only thirteen settled in Cumberland and worked diligently. In the later years when many Japanese labourers again came from Japan and elsewhere in British

⁴⁰Sasaki is extremely critical but he does not appear to be aware that the Dunsmuirs had provided the passage money. D. E. Isenor states that "Canadian Collieries' notes indicate that passage money of Japanese miners was advanced by Dunsmuir probably in 1890 or 1891." D. E. Isenor, E. G. Stephens, and D. E. Watson, One Hundred Spirited Years: A History of Cumberland, 1888-1988 (Campbell River: Ptarmigan Press, 1988), p. 32. If Isenor is correct, then the actions of the Kobe Emigration Company are even more unprincipled and avaricious than Sasaki has argued.

⁴¹Sasaki, "Yunion," p. 193.

Columbia to work in the mines, these veterans, "as seniors, gave guidance to the newcomers."⁴²

In 1893, the Kobe Emigration Company now renamed Meiji Emigration Company decided that there was no profit in the recruiting and sending of contract labourers and decided to concentrate instead on recruiting independent emigrants.⁴³ Before the government passed legislation to regulate the activities of private companies in 1894 and 1896, the Meiji Emigration Company sent a total of 458 labourers to the United States and Canada as shown in Table 1. We see that between January and July of 1893 the number of Hiroshima emigrants who used the services of the Meiji Emigration Company decreased while those from other prefectures increased. The reason for this may have been that Hiroshima people were becoming aware of the unreliability of this particular company. The numbers going to the United States also decreased. This development is likely due to more careful checking by the United States authorities of the immigrants from Japan to ensure that they were not contract labourers. In 1885 contract labour had been outlawed there. "Strictly defined, a contract laborer was any person who signed a contract to work at a job before he or she emigrated and whose passage was prepaid by someone else."⁴⁴ What finally halted the activities of the Meiji

⁴²Ibid., p. 194.

⁴³Sasaki Toshiji, "Meiji Imingaisha ni yoru jiyūtokōsha no okuridashi" [Meiji Emigration Company and the Sending of Independent Voyagers], *Han* 8 (April 1988): 157.

⁴⁴Ichioka, *Issei*, p. 53.

Emigration Company was the refusal of the United States Immigration authorities to admit fifty-five men on August 20, 1893, necessitating their being sent to Victoria a few days later.⁴⁵

Table 1						
JAPANESE EMIGRANTS TO CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES IN 1893						
Sailing date	Canada from Hiroshima	Canada from Japan	United States from Hiroshima	United States from Japan	Both countries from Hiroshima	Both countries from Japan
January 7	2	2	2	2	4	4
February 23	36	36	27	27	63	63
March 25	14	34	61	61	75	95
April 12	19	25	2	2	21	27
May 13	44	75	1	4	45	79
June 4	24	41			24	41
June 24	6	61			6	61
July 29	13	88			13	88
Total	158	362	93	96	251	458
Source: Sasaki Toshiji, "Meiji Imingaisha ni yoru jiyūtokōsha no okuridashi," <i>Han</i> 8 (April 1988): 162-64.						

The company had protected itself by demanding from each emigrant a guarantor who either paid at least a five yen tax or had made a deposit of one hundred yen in a secured bank in Kobe to ensure passage home in case of an emergency, and in addition, at least twenty yen for western-style clothes.⁴⁶

Recruiters claimed that jobs were plentiful and for a commission of three yen they

⁴⁵Sasaki, "Meiji," p. 164.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 158.

would find jobs for the men at wages of at least \$1.50 to \$1.60 per day—a considerably inflated sum, since there was a depression and much unemployment. Wages were more likely to have been seventy-five cents per day at the most.⁴⁷ Sasaki wrote that greed, misrepresentation, corruption, and failure to fulfill their promises eventually sealed the fate of the company so that after four years' operation it closed in 1893. Moriyama on the other hand, claimed that between 1894 and 1900 seventeen emigration companies operated and sent 4,048 to Canada of which the Kobe Emigration Company and two others were most active.⁴⁸ But Ichioka noted, "In 1893 the Meiji Emigration company shipped 88 labourers to Canada. Upon their arrival in Victoria, British Columbia, these laborers learned that their wages and terms of employment were considerably different from what they had been led to believe."⁴⁹ The number sent on July 29, 1893 is eighty-eight, so perhaps Ichioka found the records for that date but not the others that Sasaki studied.

A Japanese consulate report from Vancouver to Tokyo dated October 12, 1893 deplored the arrival of Japanese emigrants into a depressed economy, where unemployment was rampant. It complained that the new arrivals were called *guriun Jappu* ["Green Japs"] and were hired at the lowest wages, for the most

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 169.

⁴⁸Moriyama, *Imingaisha*, p. 153.

⁴⁹Ichioka, *Issei*, p. 47.

unskilled jobs.⁵⁰ The consul who wrote the report regarded this name calling of the Japanese emigrants as a national shame. Doubtless, consular reports such as this sealed the fate of the Kobe/Meiji Company.

While the job destinations of the 158 Hiroshima men brought to Canada in 1893 by the Kobe/Meiji Emigration Company are not specified, it is likely that a substantial number went to the Union Colliery at Cumberland while others went to work on railways, in sawmills, in lumbering and fishing. Many of those first would-be miners from Hiroshima sent to Cumberland also found various ways of surviving when the emigration company promises were not fulfilled.

Thanks to Sasaki, we know the names of most of the men who were sent to Cumberland by the Kobe Emigration Company—those that broke their contracts and left, those that stayed in the area and sought work elsewhere, and those that agreed to new contracts and remained. Of the first group of one hundred Hiroshima men, thirty-one had left by April 1892 and their whereabouts were unknown; two had died, one in a lumbering accident and one in June due to an illness; seventeen had made private settlements with the company on November 6, 1892; and ten had negotiated new contracts. There were still forty who had left for other jobs after the closing of the mine on June 21, 1892. Since thirty-one are described as "whereabouts unknown" it may be assumed that the whereabouts of

⁵⁰Sasaki, "Meiji," p. 169.

these forty were known. Eventually only thirteen of the first one hundred stayed in Cumberland to work in the mines.⁵¹

Doi Umatarō (1870-194?) was listed as a member of the first Hiroshima group who renegotiated his contract and remained in Cumberland after 1892.⁵² Doi Umatarō was the eldest of a family of seven sons and one daughter that farmed in an area about four miles east of Hiroshima city, Kaitaichi in Aki county.⁵³ Doi had spent three years in Hawaii and returned to Japan, only to leave almost immediately for Canada with the first group of labourers who went to the Union Colliery. At that time he was twenty-one years old. Doi Umatarō lived in Cumberland for approximately forty years. There is no record of his wife Tomiyo's (1875-?) arrival in Canada, but Chiyono, a daughter, was born in 1900 and a son, Kenichi, in 1902. According to his grandson George, there was another daughter who died when she was three years old. At any rate, Tomiyo returned to Japan for a short while with Chiyono and Kenichi. While there she

⁵¹Sasaki, "Yunion", pp. 164-65.

⁵²It has been possible to learn about him and his descendants. Doi's nephew, Manabu Doi has been a long-time friend of mine, and a grandson, George Doi, the son of Umatarō's eldest son, Kenichi, now retired, has been delving into his family's past. Moreover, the descendants of the Doi brothers who had emigrated to North America had a family reunion in August 1989 in Surrey, B.C., so the shared stories have added considerably to the Doi family memoirs. They were shared generously with me.

⁵³The suffix "*ichi*" often appears in Japanese place names. It means "market," and was thus the locale of regular spots where the farmers went to buy and sell produce and other goods.

gave birth to a daughter, Shimayo, whom she left behind when she returned in 1908 with the two Canadian-born children.⁵⁴ Shimayo joined her family in 1917.

The economic status of the Doi household is difficult to assess, but there was undoubtedly a need for the sons to seek independent livelihoods. There was also, however, a daring and adventurous streak in the family that drove two sons, the eldest Umatarō (1870-194?) and the youngest Denjirō (1896-?), to emigrate to Canada, the third son Chiyojirō (1879-?) to the United States and another, the sixth Yūji (1887-1964) to Mexico and later the United States. The story of Yūji (1887-1964), still a teenager, who eloped to Mexico in 1906 with his young wife who had been betrothed to another, and their difficult escape from their contracted work camp, walking at night and sleeping during the day, depending on the generosity of the Mexicans during their flight into Texas was taped by Yūji's son (1911-?) and a copy is in my possession.

Umatarō's youngest brother Denjirō arrived in Cumberland in 1917 to work in the mines at age twenty-one, according to immigration records. Denjirō's son Manabu said that Denjirō's life was difficult in Kaitaichi and Denjirō felt he had to emigrate. On Denjirō's first attempt to emigrate, he had been rejected by the Japanese authorities due to an eye infection, so he stowed away. However,

⁵⁴Records of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirm this information received from George.

ten minutes after the boat got underway from Kobe, Denjirō was discovered and sent back.⁵⁵ Denjirō's wife Fusayo arrived in 1926.

Iwaasa Matsutarō (1869-?) was from Higashishiwa village in Kamo county, an area just east of Hiroshima city. Nakayama stated that Iwaasa Matsutarō was among the first group of contract immigrants to Cumberland in August 1892.⁵⁶ However, his name does not appear in Sasaki's list and neither does the August 1892 date agree with the arrival of the first contract labourers from Hiroshima on December 8, 1891. Nakayama claimed that when the contract immigrants became unemployed, Iwaasa was one of the prime negotiators to tackle the mining company, and that Iwaasa also approached the Japanese consulate in Vancouver for help. Clearly, he assumed leadership during the difficult period when the Hiroshima "miners" were not employable in the mines and later when the mine was closed temporarily. It was an extremely difficult time and the men were desperate. Iwaasa petitioned the Japanese consulate for monetary aid and for help dealing with the Kobe Emigration Company that was ignoring the Japanese requests for assistance and were denying their responsibilities. After a period of working at the Hotel Vancouver (although in what capacity is not specified but considering the times presumably in a menial job) he returned to Cumberland and opened a boarding-house and a grocery store. Matsutarō's relative Kōjun (1882-?) came to Canada at the age of fourteen to help in these Iwaasa

⁵⁵Manabu did not know when this had occurred.

⁵⁶Nakayama, Kanada dōhō, p. 332.

businesses. In 1907, Kōjun moved to Southern Alberta to farm and became a pioneer leader in the Japanese community that took shape there.

Nakanishi Kanekichi was in the first group of contract labourers from Hiroshima. In Sasaki's first paper, Nakanishi is listed as one of the forty men who left the mines and went elsewhere.⁵⁷ In a short biography in Nakayama, his home was given as Kawauchi village in Asa County, just north of Hiroshima city.⁵⁸ Apparently Nakanishi went to the Cariboo for three years and later was living in Vancouver where he ran a real estate business, a lumbering business, and also operated as a labour contractor.⁵⁹

Nakanishi Kanekichi and Doi Umatarō are the only individuals identified by Sasaki as in the first group of Hiroshima emigrants that it has been possible to get information about. As noted, Iwaasa Matsutarō was not on Sasaki's list nor does his name appear on the list of people that the Kobe/Meiji Emigration Company brought over to Canada in 1893. But it is likely that this is the result of an error of omission.

⁵⁷Sasaki, "Kanada-Yunion", p. 185.

⁵⁸Nakayama, Kanada dōhō, p. 366.

⁵⁹Roy Ito refers to Nakanishi in his book, Stories of my People: "Tadaichi Nagao . . . [sold] cigarettes and newspapers in Hotel Vancouver. A Cariboo mine owner staying at the hotel asked Nagao if he could hire Japanese workers for him. Nagao with Kanekichi Nakanishi recruited ten men. Nagao found the work too hard and returned to Vancouver. Nakanishi prospered as the 'boss' of the mine workers." Roy Ito, Stories of my People (Hamilton: Promark Printing, 1994), p. 39.

This initial venture into the Union Colliery in Cumberland was disastrous for the first Hiroshima "miners." But although only thirteen of the initial group stayed on, their presence attracted many friends and relatives to the Cumberland area who worked at the mines and in the adjacent lumber camps. For example, Iwaasa Matsutarō's fellow villager, Okuda Kasaku (1879-1969), arrived in Canada in 1900 and within a few years went to Cumberland to work at the Iwaasa store.⁶⁰ From 1911 he began to produce *miso* [fermented bean paste] and *kōji* [a type of yeast made from rice used to make *miso*, soy sauce and sake] and sold ice cream. He also worked in the mines.⁶¹ Kasaku's wife, Haruka (1892-1975) came from Japan to join him in 1914 and they had two sons and a daughter.

Another immigrant from Kamimizu village in Saeki county, west of Hiroshima city, was Hirose Tokuji. He was the fourth son of a prominent family. Yet, seeking adventure he went to Portland, Oregon at the age of eighteen. The following year, in October 1898, he settled in Cumberland where he worked in the mines and by 1900 had become the Japanese labour "boss" for the men who worked in Number Five Mine.⁶² The "boss" was the one who acted as a liaison

⁶⁰Nikka Jihōsha Hōkō, Kanada zairyū dōhō sōran [General Survey of Compatriots Resident in Canada] (Tokyo, 1920), p. 328.

⁶¹Interviews with Hiroshi Okuda in Montreal, by phone in June 1991 and again in person, October 1992.

⁶²The first mine in which the Japanese worked was Number One Mine. The men and their families lived in what was called Number One Jap Town. Number Five was a mine which opened in 1895 and the adjacent living quarters was referred to as Number Five Jap Town. Bowen, Boss Whistle, pp. 77-79.

between the mine management and the Japanese workers and arranged jobs and work schedules.

The initial influx of contract labourers to the Union Collieries and the others who joined them later produced two Japanese communities in Cumberland, referred to as Number One Jap Town and Number Five Jap Town. Although Comox Valley historian, D. E. Isenor claims that the designation "Japtown" was "more a shorthand rather than derogatory term or indication of racial tension," the nisei who had grown up there that were interviewed by Cheryl Thomas in the late 1980s were sensitive to the term "Jap town" and requested that she refer instead to Number One Village and Number Five Village.⁶³ Other residential settlements at the mine were named "Coontown" where the blacks lived, and "Chinatown" where the Chinese lived.⁶⁴ The Canadian-born sons of the Hiroshima emigrant miners did not work in the mines but in lumbering in nearby areas instead, but the families of such sons continued to live in the two Japanese "towns" at Cumberland until their war-time removal in 1942.

Farmers in the Comox Valley

Nakayama's book and Nikka list at least ten Hiroshima men as farmers in the Courtenay area in the early twenties.⁶⁵ Their immigration dates to Canada

⁶³Isenor, One Hundred, p. 32; Cheryl Maeva Thomas, "The Japanese Communities of Cumberland British Columbia 1885-1942: Portrait of a Past" (M.A. thesis, University of Victoria, 1992).

⁶⁴Bowen, Boss Whistle, pp. 68-78.

⁶⁵Nakayama, Kanada dōhō and Nikka Jihōsha, Kanada zairyū.

range from 1892 to 1907. All had spent some time mining in Cumberland, some continuously while others had also spent periods fishing out of Steveston. Some began farming by leasing land from white farmers requiring an investment in farming tools and implements. Some, by shifting regularly to the most lucrative jobs and saving carefully, had been able to buy considerable acreage outright. Some grew potatoes and turnips, others wheat and hay, still others kept poultry and dairy cattle.

Kishimoto Yūkichi from Kinomura village in Saeki county was one of the most successful of these Comox farmers.⁶⁶ In 1921 he had thirteen to fourteen hired farm-hands of various races, 130 heads of cattle and provided milk for the two Cumberland Japanese towns and a variety of hotels, restaurants, homes, as well as the Courtenay Condensed Milk Company. He maintained more than twenty horses for his deliveries.

Another farmer, Kobayakawa Gōichi, from Zōka village in Kamo county came to Vancouver Island in 1892 as one of the first contract miners. Again, his name does not appear in Sasaki, but because of the detailed record of his early experiences, there is little doubt that he was among the earliest arrivals. According to Nakayama, Kobayakawa arrived in Victoria on October 1892, but this date cannot be correct.⁶⁷ It must have been December 1891, with the initial group because it is recorded that Kobayakawa was distressed with only part-time work

⁶⁶Nakayama, Kanada dōhō, p. 328.

⁶⁷Ibid., pp. 321-22.

and an idle life and made representation to the Japanese consul on behalf of himself and his fellow "miners", in response to which they received help in the form of twenty cents a day. This probably happened since Sasaki documented the Japanese consulate's assistance at various times during 1892 until the mines reopened and full time employment was available for the Japanese workers who remained in Cumberland. Kobayakawa left Cumberland and went on to other jobs in lumbering and fishing but eventually returned to Cumberland, where he resumed mining, made and sold *tofu* [bean curd] and started a Japanese-style bath house with the help of his wife. In 1908 he purchased a hundred and sixty acres in the Comox Valley for six thousand dollars. This was a substantial amount of money at that time and acquiring it definitely entailed much hard work and diligent saving. He acquired twenty-eight head of cattle, five horses and grew grains. In 1912 he bought more land and a house.

Although some Hiroshima people thus remained in the Cumberland-Courtenay area and farmed or worked in lumbering, others, like Nakanishi, moved to Vancouver and its environs. Some fished out of Steveston, but many stayed in the Powell Street area, to work at Hastings Mill, and later became part of the rapidly growing Japanese community there.

CHAPTER 4
SOJOURNING AND BEYOND

Vancouver's Japanese community developed on and near Powell Street because Powell Street was near the Hastings Mill, situated at the foot of Dunlevy Street. Hastings Mill was one of the first large-scale steam-powered sawmilling operations on the west coast. It "was the focus of Vancouver's worker-community during the years 1866-1886."¹ "The mill workers [were] . . . an ethnic and social mix . . . including native Indians and half-breeds, Chinese immigrants, 'Scandinavian deserters from the ships and 'busted' refugees from the gold mines" who all lived nearby on scows and shacks.²

By the 1890s Hastings Mill had become one of British Columbia's two largest export lumber mills.³ In these pioneer days of Vancouver before the 1890s, "Cordova Street was the select [choice, exclusive] residential district" and the adjacent streets provided hotels, boarding houses, entertainment houses, saloons and shops, as noted in the previous chapter.⁴ But during the depression

¹Allen Seager, "Introduction," in Working Lives: Vancouver 1888-1896 (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1985), p. 9.

²Ibid., p. 9.

³Robert McDonald, "Working" in Working Lives, p. 25.

⁴Alan Morley, Vancouver, p. 78.

of the 1890s, the small merchants along Cordova Street and Powell Street went bankrupt, the buildings emptied, and the Japanese slowly moved in, establishing their own community.⁵ The Japanese community evolved there because the Hastings Mill had provided employment for them.

Even at the time of the arrival of the first group of Hiroshima contract labourers to the Union Colliery in December 1891, "Little Tokyo" had already begun to form on Powell Street. A February 1891 communication from the Japanese consul to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tokyo stated that there were approximately two hundred Japanese in Canada at that time of which thirty to forty were sawmill workers.⁶ This information does not agree with the data compiled by the Canadian Japanese Association, as discussed by Audrey Kobayashi and Peter Jackson. They state, "By 1890, there were some sixty to seventy Japanese Canadians working in Vancouver sawmills, increasing to around 460 throughout the province in 1901."⁷ However, there seems to be no doubt that Hastings Mill was the first mill to hire Japanese labourers in 1883. The Japanese called it *otasuke-gaisha* [saviour company].⁸

⁵Ibid., pp. 111-12.

⁶Sasaki, "Kanada-Yunion," p. 175.

⁷Audrey Kobayashi and Peter Jackson, "Japanese Canadians and the Racialization of Labour in the British Columbia Sawmill Industry," *BC Studies* 103 (Autumn 1994): 40-41.

⁸Although Kobayashi translates the term as "helping company" (ibid., p. 43) and Roy Ito in *Stories of my People* as "Helping Hand Company" (p. 18), the actual article by Uchida Kinuko from which this information was obtained refers to Hastings Mill as *otasuke-gaisha* (Nakayama, *Kanada dōhō*, p. 139). Partly

The reason for hiring them was bluntly put by Richard H. Alexander, the manager, in a 1902 report to the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration:

The Japanese supplies the want of the proportion of cheap labour that is necessary to compete in the markets of the world. I submit that there is great necessity that they should be here to supply that proportion of cheap labour in order that we may employ a larger number of whites. The point is this: We have always had a certain proportion of cheap labour, and in order to operate successfully we must have it yet, and having that cheap labour we are enabled to employ white men in the higher branches of industry.⁹

Alexander stated that the Japanese employed at the Hastings Mill were "all in inferior positions, with the exception of the lath mill, at which there are six or seven of them at the cut-off saws and trimmers."¹⁰ They were generally used "in and about the mill trucking lumber and piling it."¹¹

Alexander reported that the Mill at that time employed 164 whites and ninety-three Japanese. The "proportion of cheap labour" that the mill had always had included first, Indians; later, Chinese; and then, Japanese. The Indians had

because of the honorific "o" and also because of the sense of the expression, I would prefer to translate it as "saviour company."

⁹Canada, Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration, Report (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1902) (reprinted New York: Arno Press, 1978), p. 382.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 103.

¹¹Ibid.

been paid seventy-five cents a day and board, equal to one dollar a day.¹² The Royal Commission of 1902 summarized the situation in sawmills thus:

The Japanese are paid from 90 cents to 1.00 a day and board themselves; in a few instances they are paid as high as \$1.50 to \$2 and for semi-skilled from \$2 to \$2.50, and skilled labour from \$2.50 to \$3.50, and in a few instances \$4.50 to \$5,___ the fact being that nearly all of the strictly common labour in and about the mills and yards is performed by the Japanese and Chinese.¹³

Thus, although the Japanese called the Hastings Mill, "saviour company", the Mill itself was "saved" by the Japanese who not only provided cheap labour but their own "boss".

Most Japanese Canadians were recruited to the mills through 'bosses' who played a kind of broker's role. By the time Yamada Suteya assumed the position of 'boss' in the mill in 1899, he was placed in charge of more than 200 workers, the dominant language within the mill was Japanese, and employee records were maintained in Japanese.¹⁴

It was only through the "boss" or "*bosu*", as the Japanese pronounced it, that jobs could be obtained at the mill. A very interesting bit of information regarding this emerged during my research. According to a letter written in 1981 by Uyeno Ritsuichi (1889-1994), a pioneer from Hiroshima who arrived in Canada in 1907, to a later immigrant, Kazuta Kiyosō (1899-), Uyeno recalled that when he arrived it was difficult to get a job in a sawmill unless one was from Shiga

¹²Ibid., p. 367.

¹³Ibid., pp. 393-94.

¹⁴Kobayashi and Jackson, "Japanese Canadians," pp. 42-43.

prefecture.¹⁵ This suggests that in 1907 Japanese sawmill "bosses" were mostly from Shiga prefecture because the "bosses" tended to hire men who shared their prefectural origins. In the majority of other industries in which the Japanese could find work, it was always through all-powerful "bosses" that one found employment. The benefits to both the immigrant Japanese as well as to the hiring companies can be appreciated. The hiring companies were assured a good supply of cheap and docile labour; the new arrivals, whether sponsored by a friend or relative or "on the run" like the Union Colliery deserters, found a lifeline.

To the new immigrant, local language, dress, working and living conditions were all an enigma, and without a knowledge of English or help from a compatriot who knew English, jobs could not be obtained nor learned. The situation was similar in the United States:

Labor contracting flourished from 1891 to 1907, coinciding with labor immigration to the U.S. Newly arriving laborers, unable to speak English and unfamiliar with American labor practices, relied upon their fellow countrymen who were labor contractors for initial employment. The exceptions were those who obtained jobs through employment agencies or personal contacts. Labor contractors funneled laborers principally into the agricultural, railroad, mining, lumber, and fishing industries.¹⁶

But as Adachi has noted:

¹⁵Uyeno died in 1994 at the age of 104 years and until his final few years he was very alert so his recollections are very reliable.

¹⁶Ichioka, Issei, p. 57.

In British Columbia, if such workers were dissatisfied, they just moved along. Not long separated from the settled way of life in Japan, the early immigrants demonstrated an astonishingly high rate of mobility, occupational as well as geographic, spending years without definite occupations, shifting from job to job, place to place.¹⁷

This was because early Japanese Canadian society was predominantly a society of sojourners, a situation not unique to Japanese immigrants. Vancouver itself had a migrant population early in the century, its sex ratio was 3:2 male to female in 1911 with a seasonal fluctuation in the city's population.¹⁸ Vancouver was where the men flocked from the province's resource industries elsewhere in the province when winter closed these operations.¹⁹ It was also a place where woodsmen shopped for work and sought a haven for "a mandatory release from the isolation, wetness and arduous toil of coastal logging camps . . . [where in the first two days they got] . . . 'good and drunk.'"²⁰ Harboring a transient society with seasonal rhythms, Vancouver was "the place from which workers headed to coastal fish canneries and logging camps."²¹ When in the city, single mobile workers "lived in a relatively self-contained world defined by waterfront-area

¹⁷Adachi, The Enemy, p. 28.

¹⁸Eleanor A. Bartlett, "Real Wages and the Standards of Living in Vancouver, 1901-1929," BC Studies 51 (Autumn 1989): 7.

¹⁹Robert McDonald, "Working," in Working Lives, p. 26.

²⁰Ibid., p. 35.

²¹Robert A. J. McDonald, "Working Class Vancouver, 1886-1914: Urbanism and Class in British Columbia," BC Studies 69-70 (Spring-Summer 1986): 39.

rooming houses and saloons."²² The world Robert McDonald thus described included Powell Street where many of the rooming houses provided cheap rooms for the white as well as Japanese transients. Even in the late thirties, Powell Street rooms were rented for a dollar a night.

A description of the Japanese in Powell Street as seen by white eyes appeared in the April 1911 issue of British Columbia Magazine:

For half a mile of its length the men of cold bosom [?] have printed their pleasant-sounding names on the shop windows of Powell Street, in English, and in their own symbols, but they have not printed the marks of their individuality upon it, as the Chinese have on Pender Street—they have not cared to. They are not here to do that sort of thing. There is no money in it, and they are here to make money, as much as they can. Money is at the back of every Japanese motive. At first glance only the window signs and the dried devil fish [?] and straw sandals and sake bottles in the window themselves tell you that you are in the Japanese quarter. . . . Look for something picturesque and having Oriental character on Powell Street . . . and you will look in vain. You will see no Japanese wearing a single rag of the costume of his country. . . . Powell Street is a monochrome, there is no colour. There is not a suggestion of the Japanese architecture in any of the buildings. The shop windows have little in them that's interesting or curious. Little of the stuff is Japanese. . . . There are plenty of Japanese real estate offices on Powell Street, and they do a good business.²³

Some of the real estate offices on Powell Street catering to Japanese immigrants were probably selling farmland to those Japanese who by 1911 were beginning to farm in the Okanagan, the Comox Valley, and the Fraser Valley. The only Hiroshima immigrant who was specifically noted in the Nikka

²²Ibid., p. 40.

²³British Columbia Magazine (April 1911), pp. 311-12.

publication as being a real estate broker was Saeki Tadaichi.²⁴ There was little information other than the fact that he came in 1894 from Kameyama village in Asa county. Saeki had been a real estate broker from 1905 but was by then in a trading business with white partners.²⁵ Saeki was especially involved with his fellow immigrants in the gradual settlement of Japanese in the "exemplary" farmland in the vicinity of Vancouver.²⁶

There were other highly visible Japanese realtors like Miyake Ryūkichi (1879-1953) who had a real estate business together with Nakanishi Kanekichi from 1909 to 1910 but they went bankrupt.²⁷ Miyake had come from Asa county's Kabe village that is now a suburb of Hiroshima city. His father had started a *terakoya* [literally, temple school] to teach basic reading and writing to commoners in the late Tokugawa period.²⁸ Miyake Ryūkichi came to Canada in 1900. On arrival in Canada he learned English by working in white homes and in

²⁴Nikka, Kanada zairyū, p. 340.

²⁵Nakayama, Kanada dōhō, pp. 316-17 and Nikka, Kanada zairyū, p. 340.

²⁶Nakayama, Kanada dōhō, p. 317.

²⁷Nikka, Kanada zairyū, p. 239. Nakanishi is mentioned in Chapter 3.

²⁸Yoshida and Kaga in Japanese Education state: "From the eighteenth century on, common education in the form of Terakoya schools (writing school) flourished widely. In these Terakoya schools the teachers gathered the children of the neighbourhood and focussed their teaching upon the simple requirements of everyday life, reading, writing and arithmetic." K. Yoshida and T. Kaigo, Japanese Education (Tokyo: Japan Travel Bureau, 1937), pp. 14-15. See also, Kazuko Tsurumi, Social Changes and the Individual: Japan Before and After Defeat in World War II (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 215. For a thorough description of *terakoya* schools, see R. P. Dore, Education in Tokugawa Japan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), chaps. 8 and 9.

a hotel. He then started a "servants' registry," which was presumably an agency in which a Japanese would register qualifications in order to find positions as servants or workers in white establishments or homes. However, that venture failed as did his next one, the real estate venture with Nakanishi. Miyake then became a foreman at a cedar shingle bolt camp near Stave Falls.²⁹ He returned temporarily to Japan in 1921, married and then returned to Stave Falls with his wife. When his eldest child was born a few years later, he moved back to Vancouver and worked for the Canadian Japanese Association as secretary and became very active within the Japanese community.³⁰

The migrant population of Powell Street was reflected in the services that were provided there. The bachelors who lived in primitive shacks and bunkhouses in logging and fishing camps and in boxcars when working on the railway, all straggled back to Powell Street when their contracts were over. There they went to boarding houses where they could obtain beds, hot baths, get their laundry done and perhaps find other jobs.

²⁹Mrs. Imada wrote in her memoir that in November 1918 when she went to Stave Falls with her husband and family, Miyake was the "boss." Michiko Midge Ayukawa, "The Memoirs of Imada Ito, A Japanese Pioneer Woman" (B.A. essay, University of Victoria, 1988), p. 64.

³⁰Interview on telephone with Miori Mayeda, eldest daughter of Miyake Ryūkichi, in October 1992. The Canadian Japanese Association was established in 1897, mainly as an aid to Japanese immigrants. In 1934, it was reorganized and became the coordinating agency for all Japanese associations. Adachi, *Enemy*, p. 123.

Since the earliest, most enterprising arrivals saw the potential in providing food and lodgings for fellow countrymen, they brought wives over from Japan to help run boarding houses. My research has turned up four such boarding houses that were run by Hiroshima emigrants. Hiroshima people definitely preferred to frequent the establishments run by Hiroshima owners. There one felt more at home with familiar food, one's own dialect and perhaps one's own friends. A Hiroshima emigrant could barely understand the speech of people from Wakayama or Kagoshima prefectures.³¹ Favourite food dishes also varied according to what was commonly available in the different regions in Japan. A close kinship developed among the Hiroshima people in Canada.³²

To a Japanese bachelor immigrant, the boarding house provided him with a home—regular meals, a bed, companionship and recreation. Bedrooms were often shared by three others and although this may have led to friction, close friendships were formed also. The proprietor's wife looked after the laundry, cleaned the rooms, and served as a surrogate mother. Kazuta Kiyosō, who was interviewed in 1991 by Nishimoto Masami of the Chūgoku shinbun of Hiroshima city, recalled that in 1917 when he arrived in Canada he stayed at a Hiroshima

³¹In Japan, for generations there had been little movement outside of immediate village areas except for *dekasegi* as noted in chapter 2. Thus, the regions had developed their own language. The standard Japanese that is universally used in present-day Japan had not yet become widely used.

³²In my own family, because my parents did not have any siblings or relatives in Canada, another Hiroshima emigrant, Uyeno Ritsuichi, was our surrogate relative, like an older brother to my father.

boarding house in Vancouver and paid about sixteen dollars per month for room and board and ten cents to have a bath at a local public Japanese-style bath house. He said he did not feel as if he were in a foreign country.³³ Kazuta also recalled that the people who worked in the logging and sawmill camps, and in fishing, returned to Powell Street on the off-season to "cure their solitude," but that "many were destroyed by sake and gambling."³⁴ Kazuta became an active member of the Japanese community and especially of the young men's branch of the Hiroshima Prefectural Association [*Hiroshima kenjinkai*], the *Kōryō seinenkai*.³⁵

One of the boarding houses was run by Kurita Shōjirō (or Sōjirō) (1877-?) who arrived in 1897 at the age of twenty.³⁶ There is no information about his early years in Canada except that he became a contractor for the fishing industry in the Skeena area. In 1917 he eventually came to own the Maple Rooms at 391 Powell Street and the following year he went into partnership with another person and bought the Imperial Hotel located at 403 Powell Street.³⁷

³³Chūgoku shinbun, *Imin*, p. 125.

³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 125.

³⁵I interviewed him in the fall of 1995 and at the age of ninety-six he was hard of hearing, had just recently stopped driving but was still very alert and well. His recollections and written records of the Japanese Canadian community of the twenties and thirties are invaluable. His earliest days in Vancouver were spent in the boarding houses.

³⁶Nikka, *Kanada zairyū*, p. 202.

³⁷There is a 1890 photograph of the Imperial Hotel, an imposing three-storied building on a corner lot. It was interesting to discover that it was formerly the Secord Hotel, a boarding house for single men and workers at Hastings Mill. See *Working Lives*, p. 94.

Fukui Yajū and his wife Chika opened a boarding house and grocery store at 433 Alexander Street in 1911. The Fukui boarding house was often mentioned in interviews that I conducted. Fukui Yajū was from Mikawa village in Asa county, an area from which a number of immigrants came. This could readily explain the popularity of his establishment. The Fukui boarding house charged one dollar for one night's stay and three meals.³⁸ When the Fukui opened their business in 1911, the average pay of a Japanese labourer was about two dollars a day. According to the February 1912 Vancouver Daily Province, this amount of money would have bought a hundred pound sack of potatoes.³⁹ Two decades before, a hundred pounds of rice cost approximately five dollars but it is difficult to determine what the price was in 1911.⁴⁰ The meals would have been simple—rice and *miso* soup for breakfast; rice, vegetables and some fresh or dried fish for supper. Meat was still rarely part of the diet.

Fukui arrived in Victoria in 1900 and started to work in a sawmill that one can confidently assume was the Hastings Mill.⁴¹ He then worked in a sawmill in

³⁸Chūgoku shinbun, Imin, p. 138.

³⁹Michiko (Midge) Ayukawa, "Neither *Wataridori* nor *Dekasegi*: Early Japanese Women Building New Lives in Canada," Japan in Focus, ed. Jacob Kovalio (North York, ON: Captus Press, 1994), p. 274.

⁴⁰Sasaki, "Kanada-Yunion," p. 186.

⁴¹The information that Uyeno gave about the difficulty of getting work at the Hastings Mill unless one was from Shiga Prefecture mentioned earlier, was for a later period, 1907, when there were hordes of Japanese immigrants arriving from Japan and Hawaii. Presumably with many to choose from, preference was given to men from Shiga prefecture.

Seattle for a few years, returned to Japan and served in the Japanese army during the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-5. He could have avoided induction into the Japanese military by remaining in North America since "all Japanese men living abroad enjoyed deferments, but lost their deferred status if they returned for more than thirty days."⁴² Subsequently, he returned to Seattle and worked in a store operated by a Caucasian. When his wife was refused entry to the United States due to an eye disease, he and she moved to Vancouver.

Another boarding house, the *Hiroshimaya*, was run by Satō Mohei (1869-1934). Satō arrived in 1899 from Hikino village in Fukayasu county, now within Fukuyama city on the eastern border of Hiroshima prefecture. He was the eldest son of an "average" peasant family; that is, they owned enough land to grow enough for their survival.⁴³ He had married in 1897. But dreaming of going abroad and making a fortune, he gave the land and home that he was to inherit as eldest son to his married sister and emigrated, leaving his wife and baby daughter behind temporarily. He must have saved his money conscientiously for in 1901 he opened the *Hiroshimaya* in Market Alley. Market Alley was west of Main Street, between Hastings and Pender. This location was a few blocks from the centre of

⁴²Ichioka, *Issei*, p. 164.

⁴³The term "average" was used by Satō's daughter, Rose, in an interview in Toronto in October 1993. The first contract emigrants to Hawaii from the area close to Hiroshima city owned less than 1.5 *chō* (1 *chō* = 2.45 acres). Fukuyama and Hiroshima cities had been castle towns and were thus heavily populated and the landowners nearby owned smaller plots of land. Thus, farmers in Fukuyama would be in comparable situations to the first contract emigrants. In other words, the family probably owned at least five acres of land.

the Japanese area so later he moved his business to 230 Alexander Street. His wife and daughter joined him in 1904. A photograph of his establishment taken in 1912 shows a sign that says "Grocer" so it appears that he sold groceries at his boarding house too.⁴⁴

There were other early arrivals who went into the boarding house business. Taniguchi Kumatarō was from Yahata village in Saeki county. He emigrated in 1893, worked in a sawmill in the Seattle area for several years, fished on the Fraser River, and in Chemainus laboured in a sawmill but also owned a food and sundries store. Then he established himself on Powell Street in 1900.⁴⁵ Thus Taniguchi worked as a lumbering contractor (possibly in partnership with a Takahashi) while his wife ran the Taniguchi Inn. Through him it was possible for sojourning bachelors to obtain jobs in lumber camps.

The Taniguchi Inn was the inn where Imada Ito (1891-1987) and her husband Imada Kaichi (1884-1947) stayed when she first arrived from Japan in November 1911. She wrote: "People said that he [Taniguchi Kumatarō] was the most successful of all the Hiroshima Prefecture immigrants at that time."⁴⁶ A few

⁴⁴Tamio Wakayama, Kikyō: Coming Home to Powell Street (Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing, 1992), p. 15.

⁴⁵Nakayama, Kanada dōhō, p. 360. A photograph of his inn has been erroneously described by Kobayashi as the Takahashi Boarding house. Audrey Kobayashi, Memories of Our Past: A Brief Walking Tour of Powell Street (Vancouver: NRC Publishing, 1992), p. 16. The Japanese language sign identifies the building as Taniguchi Inn and the barely legible lettering on the store front reads "Takahashi Labor Agent."

⁴⁶Ayukawa, B.A. essay, p. 25.

days after her arrival in Vancouver, after a day of housework in a white home and a mile and half walk back in a dense fog, Imada Ito started to work at the Taniguchi Hotel.⁴⁷ She wrote:

The female boss [presumably Mrs. Taniguchi] and I made the beds, cleaned and cooked. It was unsanitary. I was shocked at the many lice in the beds where the white men stayed. I encountered these only after I came to this country. . . . We had to use cold water for our cleaning. The people who stayed there went to the bath-house and did the laundry there. . . . I worked at this rooming-house for two months, from December to January but I did not get paid. My husband and I just received free room and board.⁴⁸

With regard to these boarding houses and the services that they provided to the immigrants, Yoshida Ryūichi said: "If the owner knew you, if you seemed to be an honest person, they would advance the room and board until you had a job."⁴⁹

Both as a "home" among fellow Hiroshima people and a source of potential jobs, boarding houses and their proprietors provided a lifeline to which the newcomers reached out eagerly and gratefully. This was so not only in Canada but also along the American Pacific Coast, where there was free movement back and forth across the United States-Canada border until the summer of 1908 when the United States strictly enforced a "right" of the 1908 Gentlemen's Agreement between the United States and Japan; that is, "the right to deny admission to any

⁴⁷Imada Ito used the term *ryokan* which is often translated as "hotel."

⁴⁸Ayukawa, B.A. essay, p. 25.

⁴⁹Rolf Knight and Maya Koizumi, A Man of Our Times: The Life-History of a Japanese-Canadian Fisherman (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1976), p. 20.

laborer whose passport was issued for any destination other than the United States."⁵⁰ Until then, between the years 1897 to 1901, 15,280 Japanese arrived in Canadian ports, and of these about 10,000 travelled to the western American states.⁵¹ In the years following, there was an even greater influx of people with passports for Hawaii who took advantage of the free movement until it was stemmed by the 1908 Gentlemen's Agreement between the United States and Japan and the Lemieux-Hayashi Agreement of 1908 between Canada and Japan. Many Hiroshima emigrants took advantage of the laxity in the immigration laws to reach lifelines on both sides of the border.

Sandra Uyeunten tells us that in the United States,

For men without family ties, prefecture networks became an important substitute. . . . Quickly-established friendships with men from the same prefecture, who shared a common dialect, food preferences, and religious and regional holidays, minimized the hardship of migration. . . . Japanese operated hotels and boardinghouses became important points of contact . . . and served as initial places of residence as well as employment agencies.⁵²

Thus, regardless of where the Japanese emigrated, they turned to people who were from the same prefecture for aid and friendship. For people from a prefecture such as Hiroshima from which substantial numbers emigrated, there

⁵⁰Ichioka, Issei, p. 72.

⁵¹Adachi, Enemy, p. 13.

⁵²Sandra O. Uyeunten, "Struggle and Survival: The History of Japanese Immigrant Families in California, 1907-1945" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, San Diego, 1988), p. 36.

were numerous opportunities for both contractors and their potential clients. To increase their business, bosses and inns run by people who came from prefectures from which comparatively few emigrated ran advertisements offering their services to people from prefectures adjacent to their own.

The "boss," briefly referred to earlier with regard to Hastings Mill, was a general term that often designated the labour contractor who operated out of a large office on Powell Street or the person who worked as liaison between the white operator of a mill, camp or cannery, and the group of Japanese workers the operator employed. Some bosses who worked on the sites alongside the men under them may have been hired by the contracting business on Powell Street. Nevertheless, the main criterion for being a "boss" was experience in the workplace and facility with the English language. Thirteen Hiroshima men were listed in the Nikka publication as being labour contractors. The fields in which these men specialized—lumbering, railroads, fishing, canneries—were also listed.

Such labour contracting was not restricted to Japanese immigrant labour. Vic Satzewich has discussed the labour contractors who imported Chinese labourers, underbid on the price of white labour and exploited the unfree Chinese labourers. It was not just the white contractors, but Chinese also "who migrated as, or after a period of time in Canada became, petit bourgeois merchants, traders, shopkeepers and labour contractors."⁵³ Such employment agencies were

⁵³Vic Satzewich, "Racisms: The Reactions to Chinese Migrants in Canada at the Turn of the Century," International Sociology 4-3 (September 1989): 313.

not unique to the Asian community as Robin Anderson's study of Vancouver's male employment agencies in the period from 1898 to 1915 reminds us.⁵⁴ In major employment and immigration centres such as Vancouver there were "anywhere from thirty to sixty of them operating at peak seasons. . . . They were small, marginal, delicate businesses which operated in an intensely competitive environment only during periods of labour shortages, and whose operators emerged from and often returned to the same background as their working clients."⁵⁵ Anderson notes that "the business attracted those hoping to escape wage labour."⁵⁶ This may also apply to Japanese males who also wanted an easier life, but unlike those that Anderson wrote about, the Japanese labour contractors usually rose socially and economically above their clients.

In her memoir, Imada Ito wrote about Katō Tōsaku who was the first "boss" that she worked for.⁵⁷ She remembered that Katō was nicknamed "commission boss" because he took a commission of twenty-five cents from every

⁵⁴Robin John Anderson, "Sharks and Red Herrings: Vancouver's Male Employment Agencies, 1898-1915," *BC Studies* 98 (Summer 1993).

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 83.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷In the Nakayama listing of Hiroshima emigrants, Katō was listed as from Kawamoto village in Toyota county, with a wife, Naka, second, third and fourth sons, Hideo, Kazuo, and Gunji, and a second daughter Yoshiye. Since the eldest son and eldest daughter are not mentioned, presumably, they were in Japan. Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs records showed that Tōsaku emigrated in 1899 at the age of thirty-three years, Naka in 1899 at twenty-one years, but also again in 1905 at twenty-seven. It appears that she may have had two children and taken them to Japan and returned in 1905.

cord of shingle bolts that a worker cut. This appears to be extremely high since according to the report of a Japanese contractor for shingle bolts who gave testimony to the Royal Commission in 1902:

I contract to get out bolts, \$2.05 per cord delivered on the scows. I pay \$2 per cord and get 5 cents and what I make on supplies. The men do not have to buy in my store; they can buy in any other place. I take out about three thousand cords a year. We employ all Japanese, 36 men in the camp. . . . I buy groceries at the wholesale store. I keep store and buy \$2,000 a month; \$360 a month goes into camp. I supply them with overalls and working clothes. I buy some from white men and some from Chinese.⁵⁸

The summary of this Royal Commission hearing stated that "The Japanese contractors pay the Japanese the contract price within a few cents and make their profits on their supplies."⁵⁹

Katō thus appears to have deserved his nickname. Imada Ito was first hired by him to cook and do the laundry for forty men at a shingle bolt camp two hours by a small rowboat beyond Indian River on the north shore of the Burrard Inlet. Later Katō asked her to go to a camp at Seymour Creek. She wrote at length about her duties, the difficulty of cooking for twenty-seven men, rising at 4:40 A.M. to cook fifty pounds of rice for their breakfasts and packing lunches. She described the main foods as rice and dried foods. She wrote about skimpy rations for men paying a great deal of money for their food.

⁵⁸Royal Commission 1902, C. Uchida, p. 370.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 371.

The only fresh vegetables were potatoes, carrots, onions and cabbages. The rest was all dried. Everything was almost always cooked with *iriko* [small parched sardines]. In the five months period, meat came only once and after only two or three meals it was consumed. It could not be kept long at any rate, because it was in April or May. The dried foodstuffs were burdock, lotus root, long white radish, gourd, kelp, dried bean curd and devil's tongue that I made myself. Canned fish, each can contained about six to seven pounds, came just once in a while, so everyone bought such things as eggs and ham and every morning they fried their own and ate it. Thus, the cost of food was low: for each day it cost only six or seven dollars to feed all these men.⁶⁰

Stories abound of glib contractors who painted pictures of lumber camps where the facilities were good, the food plentiful and nutritious, and the pay better than average. The reality fell far short of the promises. Some camps supplied poorer, smaller quantities of food than the workers were charged for and made a profit from the difference.⁶¹ Others profitted by the gambling carried out in the camp. There was a great deal of gambling in these camps. Yoshida told Rolf Knight and Maya Koizumi:

Camps were always full of fights—fights and gambling. Men played cards, especially Black Jack. Fights would start over gambling. . . . Some people in those camps gambled from supper until it was time to go to bed.⁶²

⁶⁰Ayukawa, B.A. essay, p. 29.

⁶¹Tamura Norio, Suzuki Etsu: Nihon to Kanada o musunda jaanalisuto [Suzuki Etsu: The Journalist Who Linked Japan and Canada] (Tokyo: Liburopōtō Publishing Co., 1992), p. 195 and Knight and Koizumi, A Man, p. 38.

⁶² Knight and Koizumi, A Man, p. 35.

Yuji Ichioka wrote at length about contractors and foremen promoting gambling among the Japanese American labourers in the Alaska salmon canneries. The labourers gambled on credit and at the end of the season, some ended up owing money to the contractor.⁶³

Some contractors may not have promoted gambling but were nevertheless completely unreliable and unscrupulous and victimized their clients. When Maehara Takuji from Yoshino village in Kōnu county came to Canada in 1907 after two years in Hawaii, the Canadian Nippon Supply Company [*Nikka yōtatsu kabushiki kaisha*] which had an exclusive contract with Canadian Pacific Railway, sent Maehara and others to Maple Creek, Saskatchewan. When they arrived, they discovered that there were no jobs and no one gave them any assistance for returning to the coast. Maehara had no alternative but to walk back to British Columbia. It took him forty-two days to reach the Okanagan Valley. He settled there and eventually became a successful apple grower.⁶⁴

It is apparent from stories that I was told as well as from the memoir of Imada Ito that the labour contractors who operated agencies in a city such as Vancouver had underlings who handled their affairs in the isolated areas. There were also many small-time operators who hired some men and worked with them. Imada Ito mentioned a number of the latter type of "bosses". Her husband at

⁶³Ichioka, *Issei*, pp. 78-80.

⁶⁴Interview with Mitsuko Ito, daughter of Maehara Takuji, October 1993 in Hamilton; Gordon G. Nakayama, *Issei* (Toronto: NC Press Limited, 1984), pp. 89-101.

times worked as one too.⁶⁵ Imada Ito offered us a glimpse of her brother-in-law, Imada Heiichi from Hatsukaichi in Saeki county, who had come to Canada at the age of eighteen, learned English, and contracted small lumbering operations here and there.⁶⁶

Sunada Naotarō (1879-1962) from Suzuhara village in Asa county, emigrated to the United States in 1899 at the age of twenty. After a few years he moved to Canada and became an independent logging contractor in such spots as Minstrel, Lasqueti, and Bowen Islands. Unfortunately for him the 1902 legislation that prohibited the employment of Japanese on Crown land was vigorously applied in December 1924 and in 1927 he was unable to continue in this line of work.⁶⁷

Nakanishi Kanekichi, among the first Hiroshima labourers at the Union Collieries in December 1891, broke his contract but later returned and became the "boss" of the mine workers there. The Tairiku 1909 publication listed him as a contractor and residing at 421 Powell Street with one employee. Since

⁶⁵ Ayukawa, B.A. essay, p. 42.

⁶⁶ Ayukawa, B.A. essay, pp. 58-59.

⁶⁷ Interview with Sunada's second son, Masato, Lethbridge, October 1993. A thorough study of the April 15, 1902, British Columbia legislature resolution pertaining to the use of Asian labour on Crown land, Section 50 of the "Crown Lands Act," is complicated legislation that is difficult to unravel. It appears to have been enforced on and off after 1903. See Adachi, Enemy, pp. 139-42, and Norman MacKenzie, Lionel H. Lang, eds., Canada and the Law of Nations (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1938), pp. 265-68.

Nakanishi even went to Japan to recruit workers, presumably the employee looked after the business when he was absent.⁶⁸

It should not be assumed that all new arrivals required the aid of others, although many of them may have needed some assistance at first. Uyeno Ritsuichi (1889-1994) who was the second son in a family of six children was an independent adventurer. He was from Misono village in Kamo county, the present site of Hiroshima University that is now a part of the urban complex that is Higashi Hiroshima city. After eight years of elementary school and higher elementary school, he apprenticed as a carpenter for four years before going to Hawaii in 1906 and then to Canada in 1907. When Uyeno Ritsuichi was in his senior years, his third son, "Mori," spent many hours with him trying to trace his early years in Canada. With the help of the dates on Vancouver poll-tax receipts, Burnaby and Delta road tax receipts, and British Columbia revenue tax receipts, (Vancouver, Comox, and Golden), and other items, "Mori" managed to gather together much information from his father. Uyeno probably used the facilities of the labour contractors in the early years when he worked for sawmills and fish canneries and the CPR in Golden. However, in 1913 he went to Skagway, Alaska.

⁶⁸One issei, Kado Shizuo (1904-), from Kawauchi village in Asa county said that his father, Kado Toramatsu and his brother, Kado Junjirō, were two of ten men brought to Canada by Nakanishi in 1900 to work in a North Vancouver rock quarry. Kado said that the rocks that were excavated were used to build the roads in Vancouver. Toramatsu returned to Japan after three years but his son Junjirō stayed behind. Another son, Gunjirō, later also went to Canada and Shizuo followed in 1927. Interview with Kado Shizuo, November 1992, in Vancouver.

He crossed Atlin Lake by dog sled to the Atlin Gold Mine, where he worked as a flume carpenter for two years.⁶⁹ Mining operations were dependent on the rivers for washing down the gravel in the flumes in order to recover the gold.⁷⁰ At the Atlin Gold Mine, Uyeno built the wooden channel which carried the river water to the sluices into which the gravel was shovelled. The sluices in turn would "disintegrate the gravel and free the gold."⁷¹ These sluices were also made of rough lumber and were likely built by Uyeno. He told his son that the company trusted him, and did not worry about his stealing any of the gold nuggets that appeared when the sand was washed down the flume.⁷²

Uyeno became a Canadian citizen in 1914. Many Japanese had become citizens but it was usually in order to fish. Uyeno had no intention of fishing, so taking his citizenship was obviously an affirmation of his expectation to make

⁶⁹Perusal of the British Columbia Legislative Assembly Sessional Paper for 1913 showed that there was considerable activity in the Atlin Lake area gold mines.

⁷⁰Mining reports mention water-supply flumes as long as 800 feet, and 1200 feet. John D. Galloway, British Columbia provincial mineralogist wrote that in placer mining "water is supplied to the head of the sluice by a pipe, ditch, or a flume. . . ." John D. Galloway, Provincial Mineralogist, "Placer-Mining in British Columbia," Bulletin No. 1, 1933 (Victoria, BC: British Columbia Department of Mines, King's Printer, 1933), p. 20.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 19.

⁷²Interview with "Mori" Uyeno, October 1993 in Toronto.

Canada his home. Back in Vancouver in 1917 he married the daughter of a Shiga prefecture immigrant, Matsumiya Kuye (1896-1989).⁷³

Another pioneer with an unusual life was Hoita Rikuzo (1892-?). He was from Hiura village in Asa county and arrived in Canada in 1909. Unlike others, he did not seek the companionship of fellow Japanese, but went to Cranbrook where he attended school by working as a house-boy. Then he worked in a white man's store for four years, served in the Canadian army and was decorated. He later attended the University of British Columbia, presumably taking advantage of his educational right as a veteran and through the Soldier Settlement Board, he bought twenty acres of land.⁷⁴

There are those such as Uyeno and Hoita who readily settled in Canada and made positive moves towards this end. However, there were also those who clung to their dream of returning to Japan. Although undoubtedly some did manage to return to their country of origin as planned, many others failed to do so. My paternal grandfather, Ishii Chōkichi (1862-1918), came to Canada from Hisayamada in Mitsugi county, near Onomichi, via Hawaii in 1907 and later induced my father Kenji (1895-1971), to join him in 1912 when my father was seventeen and had completed his apprenticeship as a carpenter. They worked together in various jobs until my grandfather became ill and returned to Japan.

⁷³They celebrated their seventy-first wedding anniversary before she died in 1989 at the age of ninety-three. Uyeno died in April 1994 in his 105th year.

⁷⁴Nikka, p. 95.

The year of his return is uncertain, but it was before 1918 when he died, according to the family records kept at the municipal office in Onomichi. Family lore is that when my grandfather returned to Japan, his wife was very angry and refused to receive him since he had not sent back any money during his stay in Canada. My grandfather's large family had great difficulty surviving on their little terraced rice paddy in a mountainous area north of Onomichi. On my latest trip to Japan, a cousin of mine, the daughter of the eldest son of Chōkichi, and therefore living in the home to which he should have returned, recalled that as a young girl she had often visited her grandfather at the home of her uncle in Onomichi. It was her opinion that our grandfather had lived there because it was closer to medical help and not because his wife had refused to care for him. No matter which is the actual truth, there is no doubt that my grandfather had not been able to aid his family in the way that he had dreamt of doing. He had been in a group of ten from the Onomichi area who had gone to Hawaii. Undoubtedly there are many other stories like his.

If returning to Japan after a sojourn in Canada was the sign of success, then the tale of Nakashima Kumakichi (1868-?) is a great success story. He was from Hatsukaichi in Saeki county and in 1889 went to the United States, after which he boarded a coal ship and disembarked at Nanaimo. He worked in a number of jobs such as fishing out of Steveston during the summer months and in a sawmill in Chemainus during the winter months. He was soon in charge of more than two hundred Japanese at a lumber camp on Saltspring Island. In 1899,

he went to Hiroshima prefecture and brought back more than ten people. Since the Ministry of Foreign Affairs records note that he left Japan in 1900 at the age of thirty-two, this is likely to be when he returned with the men. His biography in Nakayama does not explain how he managed to accomplish all this, but Nakashima must have had a great deal of drive. He worked steadily throughout the seasons; that is, he worked in a sawmill when the fishing season was closed. He must have been able to lead and to gain confidence and trust—how else can one explain the fact that he was in charge of two hundred men in Saltspring Island? As a "boss" he would have been able to take a percentage of the wages of the others and that would have easily financed his trip to Japan to bring back the ten men. His son Giichi came in 1906 to help him and Giichi's wife came in 1907 at the age of sixteen. In the Tairiku 1909 list, Nakashima Kumakichi is recorded as running a general store in Chemainus, married, with two employees and four children. Nakayama's 1921 work tells us that Kumakichi and his wife Naki returned to Japan in 1914. Nakayama listed Giichi, his wife, Shio, and four children, but it is extremely difficult to know if all these youngsters were born in Canada since in Japan adults are adopted into the family readily.⁷⁵ At any rate, by the time Nakashima Kumakichi returned to Japan in 1914, the enterprises that

⁷⁵Nakayama, Dōhō, pp. 312-14. Inquiries to people who had lived in Chemainus have not been fruitful.

his son Giichi took over consisted of a store, a boarding house and an eighty-acre farm—all in Chemainus.⁷⁶

Upon his return to Japan, Nakashima, went to Itsukaichi, now a suburb of Hiroshima city. He leased some waterfront land, reclaimed more land and operated a beach playground with boats, a waterfall created with a steam-engine and grand buildings. This became an extremely popular spot in summer.⁷⁷

Nakashima's triumphant return to Japan was a rarity. For most emigrants the sojourner period of pioneer life gradually led to permanent settlement. Although some managed to return to Japan able to buy land and rebuild their homes there, others were unable to do so. Rigenda Sumida has documented the fact that before 1909, 22.8 percent of Japanese labourers in Canada had recorded two domiciles.⁷⁸ That is, they lived alone in Canada and sent money to support their families in Japan. They soon realized the impracticality of supporting such an expensive arrangement and had their families join them in Canada so they could stop travelling back and forth across the Pacific. Many bachelors, unable to achieve their dreams of a glorious "return," asked their families to find wives for

⁷⁶According to Catherine Lang, Nakashima Giichi sold this "store and surrounding property" to Kawahara Gihei in 1924. Catherine Lang, O-bon in Chimunesu (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1996), p. 62. Lang also noted that Nakashima Giichi owned a number of "shacks along Oak Street and a 'ranch' past the railway station." (Ibid., p. 246).

⁷⁷The existence of this park has been confirmed by Nishimoto Masami, the reporter to the Chūgoku Shinbun who has been very helpful in my research.

⁷⁸Rigenda Sumida, "The Japanese in British Columbia" (M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1935), p. 77.

them. These wives became the picture brides, the harbingers of the settlement period.

CHAPTER 5

THE WOMEN COME

In 1893 the men outnumbered the women thirty to one; by 1910, the ratio was five to one and in 1920 it was two to one.¹ These ratios clearly show the transition through the three stages of Japanese immigration that Audrey Kobayashi has discussed in "For the Sake of the Children."² During the first sojourner stage, approximately between the years 1880 to 1908, the Japanese population in Canada was predominantly male and those few Japanese women who were present had been brought over to help with their husbands' enterprises. This chapter covers the years from 1908 to 1924 when the women came, and began the settlement stage in the immigration history of the Japanese in Canada. Table 2 offers a profile of the female immigrants from 1907 to 1934.

Prior to 1900, the Canadian government did not keep any statistics on Japanese immigration at all, and separate records were not kept for women until 1907 and even after that time not in the years between 1927 and 1930. It appears from the totals that the number of male emigrants far exceeded the two to one

¹Audrey Kobayashi, "For the Sake of the Children: Japanese/Canadian Women/Mothers," in Women, Work, and Place, ed., Audrey Kobayashi (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), p. 55.

²Ibid., pp. 53-55.

Table 2 IMMIGRATION OF JAPANESE WOMEN, 1900-1934		
Year	No. of Female Immigrants ^a	Total No. of Immigrants ^b
1900		6
1901		-
1902		-
1903		-
1904		354
1905		1,911
1906		2,142
1907	242	7,601
1908	566	858
1909	153	244
1910	134	420
1911	217	727
1912	362	675
1913	424	886
1914	447	681
1915	338	380
1916	233	553
1917	310	887
1918	370	1,036
1919	530	892
1920	389	525
1921	338	481
1922	300	395
1923	197	404
1924	233	510
1925	269	424
1926	214	443
1927	-	511
1928	-	535
1929	-	179
1930	-	217
1931	65	174
1932	48	119
1933	40	106
1934	25	125
Total	6,444	25,412

Sources: ^aRigenda Sumida, "The Japanese in British Columbia" (M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1935), p. 40.
^b Ken Adachi. The Enemy that Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), p. 412.

ratio of men to women in 1920 mentioned by Kobayashi. The apparent discrepancy is due to the inclusion in the numbers of men who moved on to the United States as well as those who returned to Japan. The table also shows the pattern of immigration. The great increase in the number of Japanese immigrants beginning approximately in 1905 "was attributed to the desire of Canadian corporations for cheap contract labour, to the fact that Japanese who were denied entry to the United States were very frequently permitted to enter Canada. . . ."³ Since the United States government had passed regulations which made it no longer possible for Japanese immigrants to Hawaii to go to the mainland of the United States many came to Canada via Hawaii as well as directly from Japan. As this happened white labour groups that became more and more vocal against this "invasion" attracted the concern of the municipal, provincial, and federal politicians. The Asiatic Exclusion League, patterned after similar leagues in the United States—but a "purely Canadian organization"—met in August 1907 to agitate for "a white man's country."⁴ A demonstration held by this league on September 7 at the Cambie Street grounds included a parade to City Hall that suddenly turned ugly. The angry mob surged into Chinatown, wrecking havoc, and then went on to the Powell Street area, where it was repelled, but not before

³Charles H. Young, Helen R. Y. Reid. The Japanese Canadians (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1938), p. 10.

⁴Roy, White Man's, p. 190.

many shop windows were broken.⁵

Negotiations between the Japanese and Canadian governments led to the 1908 Lemieux-Hayashi Gentlemen's Agreement. The terms of the Agreement are unclear, since there was no clearly written agreement.⁶ However, there appears to have been a general agreement that Japan would restrict the number of passports issued to male labourers and domestic servants to an annual maximum of four hundred. This number did not include "returning residents and their wives, children or parents."⁷ However, the major restriction was that "labourers under specifically worded contracts (giving terms of contract, type of work, names and standing of employers) [had to be] approved by the Canadian government."⁸ This condition brought an end to the immigration of contract labourers. Thus, the numbers of male immigrants plummeted in 1908 as can be seen from Table 2.⁹ It was not just the restriction on the numbers of male immigrants, but also the age of most of the men who were in Canada, which brought about the influx of women and thus changed the ratio of men and women. Years of hard labour, low

⁵Ibid., pp. 90-95. See also, Adachi, Enemy, pp. 73-75.

⁶See Roy, White Man's, pp. 207-13.

⁷Adachi, Enemy, p. 81.

⁸Ibid., p.81.

⁹In 1923 there was another change in the Gentlemen's Agreement whereby the numbers of male immigrants were decreased from 400 to 150. In 1928, there was a further modification and wives and children were included in the 150 immigrants. An agreement was also made to terminate the picture bride system of marriage. (Adachi, Enemy, pp. 137-38).

wages, and miserable living conditions, had frustrated men who squandered their earnings on sake, prostitutes, and gambling. Both the families in Japan and the bachelors in Canada felt that wives would make the lives of the sojourners more comfortable and help counter their wastrel ways. The earnings of two would also perhaps hasten the achievement of the "returning" dream. Moreover, men who had emigrated in their late teens and early twenties were of highly marriageable age. Although some bachelors journeyed to Japan to marry, not all could afford to take the necessary time off work, to pay for the boat fare, or to finance a formal wedding in Japan. In Japan males also faced the possibility of being inducted into the military. Males temporarily out of the country were entitled to a deferment of the conscription every Japanese male was normally subject to, but this deferred status was lost if a man returned to Japan and stayed there for more than thirty days.¹⁰ Therefore, in the majority of cases, brides were selected by the families in Japan. Each of the two families involved, with the help of a go-between, screened the other family's wealth, genealogy, and the education and health of the future bride or groom. Photographs and often letters were exchanged by the pair. If both principals had been in Japan they would have been able to meet briefly before the wedding ceremony. In rural society it was not unusual for the family to wait until their daughter-in-law was pregnant or was

¹⁰Ichioka, *Issei*, p. 164. The first conscription law in 1873 granted exemptions to "heads of families, sole sons and grandsons, adopted sons, and others," or those who paid a fee of 270 yen in lieu of military service. But amendments in 1879, 1883, and in 1889, made every male subject to conscription. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

otherwise deemed acceptable before entering her name in the family register. But, in the case of a picture bride, the Japanese regulations stipulated that the bride had to be entered in the register of the groom's family at least six months before her passport application.¹¹

Thus, an adventurous woman who wanted to travel to "Amerika" could only fulfill that dream through marriage. Nakamura Tami (1896-1986) who emigrated to Canada in 1916 explained:

I didn't care what my husband would be like. I didn't even have marriage in mind. As long as I could go, that was all I wanted. I just wanted to go to a foreign country, because I wouldn't have to wear a pompadour.¹²

Nakamura Tami had wavy hair which would have been impossible to arrange in the proper married woman's pompadour style. This concern about hair which was curly or wavy was not uncommon. There are other picture brides who mentioned this perceived flaw. Of the thinking in Japan at the turn of the century Inouye Jūkichi wrote that "women esteem glossy-black, straight hair. Curly hair is held in such horror that it is said to spoil any face however comely in other respects."¹³ The *marumage*, pompadour, or "round chignon" of married women required an abundance of straight hair and was usually dressed "with a large tuft of false hair

¹¹Ichioaka, Issei, p. 165.

¹²Tomoko Makabe, Picture Brides: Japanese Women in Canada, trans. Kathleen Chisato Merken (North York, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1995), p. 131.

¹³Inouye Jūkichi, Home Life in Tokyo, 1985 ed. (London, UK: KPI Limited, 1910), p. 118.

. . . and formed by spreading out the hair."¹⁴

There were other seemingly trivial reasons why women chose to become picture brides. Ishikawa Yasu (1896-?) came from Aburagi village in Jinseki county, which is approximately eighty kilometres directly inland from Fukuyama city. She was the fifth child of twelve children in a merchant family. The family had a yard goods shop to which she contributed her labours by sewing, although she was never allowed to serve the customers. She stated that her dream had been to be a medical doctor but her mediocre academic record prevented her from pursuing that goal.¹⁵ Ishikawa Yasu's elder sister had attended midwifery school so Yasu decided to do so too. Ishikawa Yasu said that after eight years of higher elementary and one year of supplementary education, she went to midwifery school in Osaka for two years and upon graduation practised in her village.

Ishikawa Yasu said that even up to the age of twenty, which was considered old by the standards of the day, she had not had any marriage

¹⁴Ibid., p. 112. My mother has often spoken with pride of how her hairdresser used to praise her abundant tresses.

¹⁵In the period that Ishikawa Yasu was dreaming of being a doctor, the early 1910s, the Tokyo Women's Medical School had been open for about ten years. In 1908, its students were allowed to write medical examinations and in 1912 it became the Tokyo Women's School of Medicine [Tokyo joshi igaku semmon gakkō]. Until then it had been extremely difficult for women to obtain proper medical training since women were excluded from the male-only higher schools. (Shibukawa Hisako, *Kyōiku: kindai nihon josei shi-1* [Education: History of Women in Modern Japan-1] (Tokyo: kashima kenkyūjo shuppansha, 1970), pp. 194-214.

proposals. She was homely and all her siblings teased her. She made up her mind to go overseas, to practise midwifery, to earn a great deal of money, and to prove her worth. However, she, like Nakamura Tami, discovered that she could only go as a bride. A villager heard of Yasu's wishes and made all the arrangements although Yasu's parents objected strenuously. They argued that they did not know the family of the prospective husband, but Yasu was adamant and they finally relented. Ishikawa Yasu said:

I had no idea what kind of person I had married, and what kind of life he was leading. Anyway, I had my heart set on coming here, and that was all I could think of. That was my dream, and I thought things would turn out all right. I was just a child, you see.¹⁶

Yasu came to Canada in the summer of 1919 when she was twenty-two. She later marvelled about the fact that she had even brought her *biwa* [Japanese lute]. What had been her expectations? Upon disembarking from the Kagoshima-maru in Victoria, she was shocked to meet her husband. He was handsome, just as in the photograph, but he was clearly feeble-minded. She said she had no alternative but to stay with him for a year. Then she left him, but it was a year and a half later before she was able to get a divorce.¹⁷ Her almost daily letters to her parents bemoaning her situation did not draw any sympathy, only a reprimand—she had made the decision on her own so she was not to write

¹⁶Makabe, Picture Brides, p. 108.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 107. She did not mention Canadian law, but only stated that it took that long to remove her name from her husband's family register.

about it again. She never returned to Japan to see her parents. The Vancouver Japanese community criticized her separation from her husband, yet, undeterred, she survived by working as a midwife. Eventually, she married another emigrant from Tottori prefecture and led a happy life, continuing her midwifery.

Many picture brides may have decided to marry strangers feeling they were "marrying *Amerika*," but they were nevertheless emigrating as wives of men whom they had never met. They were often very disappointed with the spouses they met upon arrival in British Columbia. Glowing letters from prospective husbands (at times written by more educated friends), photos taken in dark suits with white "high collars," homburgs, and snapshots posed in front of a mansion or even the Hotel Vancouver, certainly contributed to their unrealistic expectations.

Some women emigrated in order to replace a deceased sister or relative who had died in Canada leaving young children. At times, they went in aid of a relative. Kuwabara Shigeno had a sweetheart so she was reluctant to comply with her father's request to go to Canada as the second wife of a widowed cousin who had two young children. She did finally agree however, and not only lovingly raised the two step-children, but had six more children of her own with her husband Kuwabara Bunpei (1889-1939). Kuwabara Bunpei had many jobs but he eventually worked for thirty-seven years as a part-time interpreter for the Canadian Department of Immigration. Almost every Japanese immigrant's recollection of his or her first days in Canada mentioned Kuwabara and the Immigration Building, situated at the corner of Ontario Street and Dallas Road in

the James Bay district of Victoria.¹⁸ Bunpei's eldest son, Masao, said that his father's income from his job as an interpreter was far from adequate for supporting his growing family.¹⁹

Kuwabara Bunpei's first wife, Masano, died in 1913 at the age of twenty-nine, and Shigeno came in 1918. In the interim, Bunpei's sister looked after the family. This sister had come as a picture bride herself but upon discovering that her husband was much older than she had been led to believe, she refused to remain with him. Later she married a veteran of the first World War, Hoita Rikuzo (1890-?), mentioned in the preceding chapter.²⁰

Such stories as Ichikawa Yasu's, whose decision to marry a man completely unknown to her and her family are rather rare, but numerous women accepted the sometimes unreliable information about prospective partners from people

¹⁸There is a photo of the Immigration Building in an article by Chuen-yan David Lai. It was built in 1908 and used as a "Detention Hospital" for Asian immigrants until 1958. It was demolished in 1977 (Chuen-yan David Lai, "A 'Prison' for Chinese Immigrants," The Asianadian: An Asian Canadian Magazine, 2,4 (Spring 1980): 16-19.

¹⁹Shigeno's husband, Kuwabara Bunpei, from Miiri village, Asa county, had emigrated in 1898, disappointed and angry because he had been refused admission to law school because he had a cleft palate. In Victoria, he studied English at night school while working first on a potato farm in the Saanich peninsula, and later in a Japanese general store which was owned by Nagano Manzō, purportedly the first Japanese immigrant in Canada. Later, when Bunpei worked for the Department of Immigration, to supplement his income, he fished for rock cod in the waters near Albert Head and Oak Bay and sold his catch to the Chinese restaurants. He moored his fifteen foot boat with a four horsepower engine in a boat house at the foot of Fisgard Street. His son, Masao, born in 1910 recalled helping him after school. (Interview in Hamilton with Bunpei and Masano's eldest son, Masao, summer, 1991.)

²⁰Ibid.

whom they trusted. Often decisions were made by the families, but women also actively made choices within the sometimes limited options available to them. Generally, spinsterhood was socially unacceptable within Japanese culture except in circumstances involving the natal family's needs.²¹ Thus, some women who felt that their particular opportunities for marriage were scarce accepted marriages to overseas men.

Kudō Hatsue (1895-198?) was teaching school and was considered past the ideal age for marriage. She was the eldest in a *shizoku* (ex-samurai) family of ten daughters and one son. Her father, a county clerk in the Hiroshima prefecture public service, who was often transferred to different postings, had been a well-educated man and had supplemented the studies of his children by teaching them the Chinese classics at home. Hatsue graduated from the Onomichi girls' higher school and when her father was transferred to Hiroshima city, she attended teachers' training school there. After graduation, she taught at Honkawa elementary school in Hiroshima city.

Twelve years younger than her husband, Hatsue was twenty-four years old when she arrived in Canada in 1919. When she married Kudō Minoru (1883-1957), she was aware that he had already settled permanently in Canada. Kudō Minoru who had come to Canada from Ariho village in Takata county in 1906,

²¹Sharon Nolte noted that "throughout the twentieth century fewer than one percent of Japanese women remained single for life." Sharon H. Nolte, "Women's Rights and Society's Needs: Japan's 1931 Suffrage Bill," Comparative Studies in Society and History 28:4 (1986): 695.

worked for the Japanese language newspaper, Tairiku Nippō, in Vancouver while also studying English. The stress of work and study led to a health breakdown and he settled into a quiet life as a farmer after purchasing seven acres at Mission in the Fraser Valley in 1911. Hatsue settled down with him on the farm. Later, in 1928, the Japanese school teacher who had been brought in from Japan in 1926 returned to Japan and the Kudō were asked to take over. Kudō Minoru and Hatsue and their children moved from the farm to the Japanese school building in town and Minoru and Hatsue both taught there until the closure of the school after Pearl Harbor.²²

It was not only women wishing to avoid spinsterhood who became picture brides but divorcees did so too. In pre-World War Two Japan, divorce was often a relatively simple matter and not necessarily a disgrace. Although prejudice against divorce in the samurai class was still carried into the Meiji era, "peasants had different attitudes. Even wealthy peasant daughters married repeatedly; in fact, some peasants practised what might be called serial marriage. As long as the woman remarried, divorce did not carry the stigma it did in Japan's ruling class or in Japan today."²³ Some of the women whose lives I investigated had been divorced. Some like Yoshida Hina from Koi in west Hiroshima city, had been

²²Interviews with Roland Kudō, Owen Sound, Ontario, August 1992; Jack Kudō, Vancouver, August 1992; Alice Kudō, Montreal, October 1992, and Kathleen Kudō Merken, Montreal, October 1992.

²³Anne Walthall, "Devoted Wives/Unruly Women: Invisible Presence in the History of Japanese Social Protest," SIGNS 20:1 (Autumn, 1994): 130.

married but later returned to their natal home. Although Yoshida Hina was making a good living sewing kimono for geisha and actors, when she was asked to "rescue" a widower with five children living on Vancouver Island she agreed to undertake the rescue operation. Yoshida Tomekichi (1881-1970) from Ōsuga in north Hiroshima city, had emigrated in 1911 followed two years later by his first wife, Okie. In 1927 Okie died, leaving behind five children, and Tomekichi remarried twenty-eight year old Hina. At first Hina lived in Genoa Bay, Vancouver Island, where her husband worked in the sawmill. Hina gave birth to a son in 1931. Later she mused that she had endured hardships, but she had had no choice—she could not return to Japan.²⁴

The extent to which remaining single often was not a viable option is seen starkly in the fact that a number of *shizoku* [ex-samurai] women who had been married, divorced and sent back to their natal homes were subsequently urged to marry peasants who had emigrated. These women were sometimes willing to become picture brides and to marry peasants rather than remain single. Iwaasa Ito (1893-?) had been divorced and returned to her natal home, along with her two children. She had received an exceptional education. Not only was she a graduate of a secondary school for women [*Joshi kōtōgakkō*] but she played the koto and the samisen, wrote poetry, sang and did calligraphy. She was urged to marry a peasant, a relative, Iwaasa Kōjun (1884-?), whom she knew only slightly.

²⁴Interviewed in the 1990s by Catherine Lang for her book, O-bon in Chimunesu, on the Japanese community in Chemainus.

He had emigrated and was farming in southern Alberta. In April 1915, Ito and the wife and daughter of Kōjun's neighbour, a Mr. Tamaki, sailed from Kobe. When they arrived in Victoria, they waited anxiously for a few days for Iwaasa Kōjun and Tamaki, but when Iwaasa finally came, he was alone. The two men had decided to save money and thus only one of them came to fetch the womenfolk. Iwaasa had even had to borrow a suit for the trip.

Mrs. Tamaki was incensed that her husband had not missed her enough to come in person to meet her at the boat after a separation of four years. Mrs. Iwaasa was incensed because he had been late to meet his new bride by some two days. On the train to Raymond, Mrs. Tamaki and Mrs. Iwaasa sat on one bench, while Mr. Iwaasa sat alone another two or three seats back.²⁵

Iwaasa Ito recalled years later that:

Her first home consisted of an old granary with a curtain in the middle to separate the kitchen from the bedroom. In order to provide more room during the day, the bed had to be rolled up and put away. During the winter the cold would penetrate the single-walled building freezing the water in the stove reservoir and making the walls white with frost. During the day, while her husband was away in the fields, she used to climb to the top of a nearby hill just to be able to see the smoke from the chimney of a neighbour some two miles away.²⁶

However, Iwaasa Ito adjusted to her new life and together with her husband raised nine children as active members of a vibrant Japanese Canadian community

²⁵David Iwaasa, "Canadian Japanese in Southern Alberta, 1905-1945" in Two Monographs on Japanese Canadians, ed. Roger Daniels (New York: Arno Press, 1978), p. 31.

²⁶Ibid., p. 32.

in southern Alberta.

Takata Misayo (1900-) was a member of a family that had been headmen in Sanba, a village near Onomichi and in the Tokugawa days had been the most prominent family of the area, the collector of the rice tax for the *daimyo*.²⁷ Misayo had married the eldest son of a family of similar status but had been brought home by her father due to the profligate ways of her husband. Eager to make a new start and to have some adventure, she married a person of lower status who would take her to "Amerika." She had been provided with a substantial trousseau, but it was left behind because her new husband, Ishii Kenji, had assured her that they would be returning to their homeland in five years' time. This was never to be and she often mused about what had happened to her trousseau. She is my mother.

Although picture brides included older women and divorcees, there were many of them who were daughters of well-situated families, highly educated, and too independent to agree to enter the families of the eldest sons who would have been "suitable" matches for them. A life of subservience to a mother-in-law and possibly sisters-in-law was an unimaginable fate for these spirited, adventurous, strong-willed women.

²⁷They had the *yagō* of Okaneya. In 1870 the Meiji government gave "permission" for commoners to assume family names, and in the 1871 house register law prescribed every household to be registered in the local government file. "In addition to the newly acquired and legally registered family name many households retained an old *yagō*, the legally unrecognized but often better known house name . . ." Takie Sugiyama Lebra, Japanese Women: Constraint and Fulfillment (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985), p. 21.

The women who had the most difficult time in farm families . . . were young wives married to eldest sons, since they had to live with at least three, sometimes four, generations of the husbands' families. A young wife was treated as an outsider and as the lowliest member of the family until her mother-in-law got too old to run the household. She was referred to as the *yome* ["bride"] and was expected to lead a life of total subservience.²⁸

The women who consciously avoided such situations, insisted that they had "married *Amerika*, not the man." Many had been extremely well-educated.

My research turned up an unanticipated number of women who had graduated from girls' higher school [*kōtō jogakkō*] despite the fact that such graduates were relatively rare in the 1910s. In 1900, there were still only fifty-two higher schools for girls in the whole country, and the total registered enrolment in them was twelve thousand.²⁹ Furuki Yoshiko noted that, although these institutions of higher learning "were called 'high school' they were academically equivalent to boys' middle schools."³⁰ In fact, the academic standard of these schools were clearly lower than that of middle schools for males.³¹ The girls'

²⁸Hane, *Peasants*, p. 82. Sharon Nolte and Sally Hastings also noted that the "good wife and wise mother was rarely privileged to live in a situation where she could care for only her husband and her children." Sharon Nolte and Sally Ann Hastings, "The Meiji State's Policy Toward Women, 1890-1910," in *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945*, Gail Lee Bernstein, ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991) p. 174.

²⁹Furuki Yoshiko, *The White Plum* (New York: Weatherhill, 1991), pp. 102-3.

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 102.

³¹Shibukawa Hisako, *Kyōiku: kindai nihon josei shi-1* [Education: History of Women in Modern Japan-1] (Tokyo: Kashima Kenkyū shuppansha, 1970), pp. 27-28.

schools emphasized "development of national morality and the cultivation of womanly virtues."³² And yet, entrance examinations, tuition fees, and distances from homes made girls' higher schools prohibitive for many. Other options for higher education for females were few, although there were normal schools (teachers' training schools).³³ Thus, by the period when the majority of these women who became picture brides were growing up, that is, in the 1910s, post-elementary education was still within the reach of very few young women. It is easy to surmise that to spirited women, emigration may have been a willing choice.

Although they may have embarked on the adventure eagerly, they could not have anticipated what awaited them. The usual experience of the picture bride was as follows. After waiting approximately a year while the necessary papers were processed, a picture bride received the fare from her groom, endured an arduous voyage of many days across the Pacific, and arrived at the port of Victoria. Even before she faced her "stranger" husband and her new life, she was bombarded by a barrage of startling situations. Imada Ito recalled:

³²Yoshida K. and Kaigo T. Japanese Education (Tokyo: Japan Travel Bureau, 1937), p. 55.

³³Government-sponsored normal schools for women produced mainly primary school teachers. The school founded by Tsuda Umeko in 1900 (later Tsuda College) offered a course for teachers of secondary schools. (Shibusawa, Kyōiku, p. 182.) A private medical school for women was founded in 1900. (Ibid., p. 208.) There were later specialty schools for women beyond women's higher school but it was not until post-World War II that the national universities admitted female students. (Ibid., p. 73.)

When I arrived at the Immigration Building, I thought it most peculiar that green grass was growing all around it. I had only seen long grass in Japan. I wondered why grass only one inch long was growing here. Inside the Immigration Building, everything I saw was completely strange and puzzling.³⁴

Imada described her encounter with the "white person who was as big as a giant" who taught her and another picture bride how to use the window blinds and the toilet which had an overhead water tank. The two young women, puzzled and curious, tested everything and then spent anxious moments as the window blind rolled up completely, and the water in the toilet appeared to run continuously. Fortunately, the food in the dining room was reassuring because it was rice and fish.³⁵ Imada's first meeting with her husband was full of anguish. "How embarrassing and awkward it was. There was no one to even introduce the new husband and wife to each other."³⁶

Embarrassment turned out to be the least of the troubles of these brides, because many were taken directly to remote lumber camps, sawmill towns, fishing villages, and untamed farms in the Fraser Valley, the Okanagan and southern Alberta. Isolation and hard work was their common experience. They faced harsher lives than they had ever imagined in Japan. The women who emigrated in the early years of the century especially, faced the back-breaking labour of caring for the daily needs of as many as forty workers in lumbering or fishing

³⁴Ayukawa, B.A. essay, pp. 21-22.

³⁵Ibid., p. 23.

³⁶Ibid.

camps. This involved not only hauling water, washing and cooking many pots of rice, and preparing side dishes from dried fish and root vegetables, but also laundering with washboards work clothes covered with pine pitch or fish offal.³⁷ Those living in urban areas managed or otherwise worked in boarding houses with tasks that included cooking, changing the linen, and doing all the laundry by hand.³⁸ Some did housework for white families, struggling with the language barrier.³⁹

Harsher than the strenuous labour that these women had to endure was their isolation. Away from their friends and family, the women lacked the support system that they would have had in their native environment. The birth of children added to their already heavy burdens. If they were fortunate they were attended by midwives, but more frequently husbands assisted during childbirth that took place in their lonely wilderness shacks. Imada Ito wrote about the birth of her first child in the sawmill camp in the Fraser Valley.

It was a difficult experience and I suffered for twelve hours. In this area there wasn't a single woman and the doctor was said to be ten miles away. I felt helpless and lonely, but somehow, thanks to the gods, I gave birth and was very happy. With no female beside me, in the woods without a doctor nearby me, I gave birth like a cat or a dog . . . I felt desolate.⁴⁰

³⁷Ibid., pp. 25-30.

³⁸Ibid., p. 25.

³⁹Ibid., p. 24.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 33.

This childbirthing experience stood in stark contrast to the customary practices in Japan, where often women returned to their natal homes to be cared for by their mothers. How different it was, to experience the pangs of labour in an isolated cabin like Iwaasa Ito. "Her husband told her to bang a steel tub that hung outside the door with a wooden spoon when she thought that the baby was about to be delivered. This way he could hear it in the field and come to take her to the midwife."⁴¹

In Japan, convalescence might be for at least three weeks for women like Iwaasa Ito who were not from bitterly poor families, but in Canada, women usually resumed their daily labour within a week of the birth of a child.⁴² Farmers' wives went out to work in their berry farms, strapping their babies on their backs or leaving them alone indoors in their wicker-basket cots. When Imada Ito and her husband were working together in a cedar bolt camp near Stave Lake, chopping down cedar trees and sawing them into shorter lengths, they left their two sons both under the age of six alone in their cabin all day long.⁴³

Traditionally, grandmothers or grandfathers might take care of the young while the parents laboured in the rice paddies or elsewhere. More affluent families hired wet-nurses and maids. My mother, Ishii Misayo, who would have had a great deal of help and support in Japan, lived in an isolated sawmill camp

⁴¹Iwaasa, "Canadian Japanese in Southern Alberta," p. 32.

⁴²Ayukawa, B.A. essay, p. 34.

⁴³Ibid., p. 65.

in Abbotsford. Her first born cried constantly. Extremely concerned, the baby's parents consulted a doctor, who diagnosed the cause as hunger. Inexperience, stress, and anxiety, had hindered my mother's ability to produce sufficient breast-milk.⁴⁴

Children, their care, and later, their need for an education added further complications to immigrant lives. In the early years of immigration, children were often sent to Japan to be cared for by their relatives so that mothers could continue to work. In some cases the children were sent there to be educated when they reached school age. In Vancouver a Japanese school following the curriculum of the Ministry of Education in Japan was established in 1906 at 435 Alexander Street.⁴⁵

Because early Japanese immigrants in particular intended to return to Japan, they wanted their children to have an education identical to what they themselves might have received in Japan, including the instillment of *Yamato damashii* [Japanese spirit].⁴⁶ The curriculum and the textbooks of the Alexander Street school were therefore identical to those prescribed by the Ministry of Education in Japan. The teachers who taught in this school were assigned to

⁴⁴In her advanced age of 96, the recollection of her first years of motherhood still gives her shivers.

⁴⁵Sato Tsutae and Sato Hanako, Kodomo to tomo ni gojūnen [Fifty Years with the Children] (Tokyo: Nichibō shuppansha, 1969), p. 113.

⁴⁶Sato, Fifty Years, p. 114.

Vancouver by the Japanese Education Ministry.⁴⁷ The subjects taught included reading, writing, composition, mathematics, science, history, geography, ethics, music, and physical education. English was a special course added to the curriculum.

By 1914, as the goal of returning to Japan became increasingly remote or ill-advised, a reform movement to convert the school to a language-centred curriculum that supplemented the regular Canadian public schools was underway. It was not until 1919, however, that this was officially accomplished and for a few years both types of education co-existed in Vancouver as well as other Japanese communities in British Columbia. By the mid-twenties, all the children who went to Japanese language schools did so for an hour and a half after attending regular Canadian schools.

The perceived need to educate children was the driving force for the establishments of permanent homes. Most of the Japanese immigrants had been educated in their home villages. Thus they had been inculcated with the Meiji ideology that stressed the importance of education. Besides, the British Columbia regulations required all children from seven to fifteen years to attend school regularly and the Japanese were law-abiding people.⁴⁸ At times, the mothers were the more determined of the two parents. Imada Ito was driven to labour

⁴⁷Hiroko Noro, "The Japanese Language Schools in Canada," working paper.

⁴⁸Henry Johnson, A History of Public School Education in British Columbia (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1964), p. 56.

alongside her husband, leaving her two young sons alone in the cabin, in order to earn the money for a down payment on land in Maple Ridge so that her eldest son, who was of school age, could attend school there.⁴⁹

But even after Imada Ito acquired the farm land in 1921 so that the family had a permanent home, her labour continued. The farmers' wives worked night and day.

The distinctive feature of labour on the Japanese berry farm is the women's share in it. The picture bride worked with pick and shovel with her husband when they cleared the bush land to plant strawberries. Then hoeing and cultivating the berry patches beside her house chores. She would get up very early in the morning and go to bed at eleven at night. Upon arising in the morning, she fed the chickens and horses, then prepared breakfast; washed the dishes; after which she followed the family to the field where she may drive a horse with her husband, behind a plow or cultivator. She would come in shortly before dinner, prepare supper, and clean up then return to the field. During the berry picking season, she picked the berries or packed them, from dawn to dusk, taking very little time for the household chores. After the berry season was over some of them would work in the fruit cannery or hired [sic] out as a domestic worker.⁵⁰

Although the never-ending labour for the farmers' wives was difficult, for the wives of non-agricultural labourers there were many fears and concerns. The majority of male Japanese immigrants were engaged in hazardous unskilled work

⁴⁹Imada Kaichi, Ito's husband, did not share her feelings about the value of education. Eight years later, although Kaichi had promised his eldest son Toshio that he would allow him to go to high school if he did well in elementary school, he refused to allow Toshio to continue in school even though "the principal wrote to us twice urging us to send him to high school." Ayukawa, B.A. essay, p. 73.

⁵⁰Yamaga Yasutaro, "My Footsteps in BC," UBC Special Collections. Box 1.1.

in forestry, in mining and on the railway. The wives of these men had to live with the constant worry that their husbands might be injured or killed. Mrs. Ishihara Kikuno (1894-1969) from Tosaka village in Aki county had a difficult life due to her husband's misfortunes. He and a partner had run a business that provided gravel, but the company funds had been gambled away by his partner. He then worked in a sawmill but lost his fingers in an accident there. Although he received some workman's compensation, his family of nine children had great difficulty surviving. The Ishihara lived with other Japanese families in a *nagaya* [longhouse] in Vancouver East, an area known as "Heaps", with other Japanese families. The *nagaya* was a cooperative where many facilities were shared. In order to support her family, Ishihara Kikuno took in laundry and ironing.⁵¹ The *nagaya* was an adaptation of cheap housing in the poorer districts of urban areas of Japan.

Cheap houses are built in long blocks; . . . they are of one story, or if of two stories, the second has a very low ceiling. . . . The smallest of these houses is only twelve feet by nine. A block may be made up of a dozen such houses, six on either side with a wall running through the middle from end to end.⁵²

The *nagaya* could provide some of the support available in a family and a village in Japan—support that was sadly lacking in the environment of many Japanese

⁵¹Telephone interview with Joe Horibe, husband of eldest daughter, Ruth, in Montreal, October 1993.

⁵²Inouye Jūkichi, *Home Life*, pp. 24-26.

immigrants. Here is a memory of a *nagaya* in the Heaps district of Vancouver.

For the many families who lived in the *nagaya* it provided the kind of support to young families that housing co-ops try to generate for their members. I remember the nine years from 1924 to 1933 when I was four to thirteen years old as relatively stable years as we had five other mothers keeping an eye on us when our own mother had to be somewhere else. My sister and I were the oldest among the children, and we passed many happy and productive weekends and summers, playing 'school' and organizing games, while minding the younger ones.

Those years were difficult for our parents as our father had his left leg crushed in a logging accident shortly after we moved to the *nagaya*. He was in and out of hospital for the next nine years. Without the support of the other mothers, our mother would not have been able to survive. . . .

On the ground floor where our family lived there was a central corridor with four large rooms on the west side and a more open space at the back where a sink, two toilets, and a space with a kitchen stove and counter, were located. . . . On the east side were five rooms. Each room had a door into the corridor, and some of the rooms had interior doors connecting the rooms. The two families living on this floor rented three rooms each, using one room as a kitchen/dining area, and in the case of our family, one room as a bedsitting room with a simplified Murphy bed for our parents, and the third room with an adjoining door, as a bedroom for the three children. Three rooms at the back were occupied by single men who cooked on hot plates in their own room, except for the man occupying the rear room. He was able to use the stove in the alcove at the back. The facilities were pretty basic. We carried water from the sink to our kitchen, and heated water for dishwashing on the stove, using the kitchen table to do that chore. We took turns cleaning the toilet, sink area, and corridor. A telephone was installed in the front unit, and all the residents in the *nagaya* shared the cost. A *furo* [Japanese bath] was available in the basement and was maintained co-operatively. Water from the *furo* was used the following day for laundry by some of the families, but I can recall that our mother did her washing in the kitchen with water heated on top of the stove.

In our *nagaya* there was a fairly stable population of six families during the nine years we were there. When a vacancy occurred, another family moved in soon after. Two of the single rooms were occupied by the same men. In the third single room, students from Japan seemed to come

and go.⁵³

Especially unfortunate were women who became widowed. Imada Ito noted that when she returned to Japan temporarily in 1918, so did many widows with one or two children whose husbands had died in the influenza epidemic. "I was on the same boat with these women so I think we were all poor."⁵⁴ But for many widows, returning to Japan was rarely an option since their impoverished families there would have been unable to support them.

The situation in Japan was evident in the story that Imada Ito told of her return to Japan in 1918 with three little children after she had been in Canada for seven years. Her husband had told her to go.

He said that the following year the eldest child would have to go to school. Besides, with a big family it would be hard to move around often. Also, if he alone worked and I loafed, we could not save any money. He said he would send me money. . . . When I thought of the misery of going here and there like a migratory bird with the three children, and how hard I had worked, I was sure that if I worked that hard when I returned to Japan, I would be able to bring up the children.⁵⁵

But she had to stay with her sister and her family, and she soon realized that it would be extremely difficult to live in Japan alone with her three children. So, when her husband urged her to return to Canada after she had been in Japan for

⁵³Kyoshi Shimizu who lived in a *nagaya* in the Heaps district of Vancouver for ten years in her childhood provided me with this interesting information in a letter, June 1995.

⁵⁴Ayukawa, B.A. essay, p. 62.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 61.

six months, she did, leaving her eldest, a daughter, behind with her sister.

There were some women in special situations who were able to survive in Japan. In 1910, Niiya Tsuruyo (1886-?) joined her husband Kōtaro (1873-?) in Canada. Kōtaro was the adopted husband [*yōshi*] of Tsuruyo.⁵⁶ They were from Saka village in Aki county, one of the areas that had been devastated by deforestation and landslides. Kōtaro's three elder brothers had all emigrated to the United States so he wished to do so too. He went to Hawaii first and then to Canada and worked in a lumber camp in North Vancouver. Tsuruyo joined her husband at the lumber camp and worked as a cook and washerwoman. She gave birth to three sons in three years, but the first son died. When she was pregnant with her fourth child she returned to Japan, believing that if she worked in Japan as hard as she had in Canada, she would be able to survive. She was one of the fortunate ones since she could work in her family's enterprise with her father. Her family grew wheat and barley and made noodles for sale and they did well.⁵⁷

Japanese women in Canada, especially the ones who were without husbands, had very few options. They struggled to survive in a world that assumed that all women were or should be part of a financial unit that included a man as a major earner. Kenichi, the husband of Nakata Ume from Kanon village

⁵⁶It has been a custom in Japan to adopt a husband for a daughter if there are no sons in the family. The husband takes the wife's family name and takes on the responsibilities of a househead, although most often his wife is "the boss."

⁵⁷Her second and third sons returned to Canada in 1929 and 1928, respectively. Her husband joined her in Japan in 1935. Interview with the second son, Niiya Yukio, in Montreal, October 1992.

in Saeki county was a fisher, but he was run over by a train when Ume had an infant daughter born in 1904 and was again pregnant. She somehow survived, doing housework and working in a fish cannery. Later, until the expulsion of all Japanese Canadians from the west coast, Nakata Ume lived with her daughter's family in the Fairview district of Vancouver but went to the Skeena during the fishing season to cook for the fishers and to work in the cannery.⁵⁸

Some widows remarried, but often for those who did so life continued to be difficult. Miyamoto Sute (1887-1983) joined her husband Naosuke (1883-1918) in 1910. Naosuke from Miiri village in Asa county had emigrated in 1900 and worked in the mines in Cumberland. Sute operated a boarding house while also bearing and caring for four children, three sons and a daughter. In 1918, when the youngest was less than a year old, the Spanish flu claimed Naosuke as one of its victims. Sute later married Kaga, an emigrant from Okayama prefecture and she bore four more sons. Yet, one misfortune after another besieged her. Her two eldest sons died in logging accidents in 1932 and 1939, and her second husband Kaga, in 1936. Her son Tom, Kaga's son, said that his mother had not received any formal education, but had memorized Buddhist sutras and visited the Cumberland cemetery where her sons and husbands were buried to offer prayers everyday. She also taught herself how to write *kana* [simple Japanese syllabary] in

⁵⁸Telephone interview with her granddaughter, Chieko Endo, in Montreal, October 1993.

order to correspond with her sons when they were away at work.⁵⁹

Although some widows such as Sute remarried and her children by Miyamoto all received the step-father's name Kaga, there is the difficult case of Enomoto Mume (1880-1970). Enomoto Tsunetaro (1869-1921) emigrated in 1899 at the age of thirty from Matsukawa in Hiroshima city. Mume followed in 1907 at the age of twenty-seven leaving her seven-year-old daughter behind with her parents in Chigiya district in Hiroshima city. A son, Steve Shūichi, was born in 1909, and a daughter, Suzue, in 1911. When Suzue was not quite ten years old, Tsunetarō died. He was at that time working in a sawmill at Fraser Mills, so perhaps an accident at the mill killed him. Tsunetarō had been an only son, so when Mume went to Japan with his ashes ten years after his death and asked Tsunetarō's family for permission to remarry, the request was granted. However, they refused to allow her new husband to adopt the children. They insisted that Steve was to carry on the family name and responsibilities.

It was not just widows who struggled to survive in a world which favoured men. Two sisters who had both been well-educated showed amazing independence. It is difficult to surmise why their father had arranged their marriages to emigrants, although it may have been because they were already known locally for their independent ways. It is also possible that the family resources may have been diminished to the extent that the family welcomed the opportunity to not have to incur "the heavy outlays of marriage required by

⁵⁹Interview with Tom Kaga in Taber, Alberta, October 1993.

Japanese social custom."⁶⁰ By marrying and going overseas, the need for an extensive trousseau would be circumvented, although in rural areas the requirements for marriage formalities were not as elaborate as described by Inouye for Tokyo brides in well-to-do-families.

Chests of drawers and several boxes containing her dresses, bedding, toilet articles, various utensils needed for tea-making and flower arrangements, a koto, and work-boxes, and sometimes even kitchen utensil.⁶¹

Depending on the status of the families of the bride and groom and the customs of the area, there would still have been the need to provide a trousseau. Judging from the amount of education that the two daughters received, this particular family, the Yokota of Kamo county, had been well-to-do and elaborate weddings would have been expected.

The two sisters, born in 1902 and 1906, grew up in a privileged family in a part of Kamo county which is now Toyota county. According to an interview with the younger of the sisters, Kotoma (1906-), the Yokota family owned substantial land but they themselves did not farm.⁶² Hired people worked their land. Their father, who had seven children, had been widowed and remarried. Haruko (1902-1989), the other sister, left some memoirs which are now stored in the Japanese Canadian Museum and Archives in Vancouver. In these she described her natal

⁶⁰Ichioka, Issei, p. 164.

⁶¹Inouye, Home Life, p. 181.

⁶²Interview with Kitagawa Kotoma in Vancouver, September 1992.

family but it was hard to clarify which of the seven children were born to which wife. The two sisters, Haruko and Kotoma were of the second wife, however. The eldest brother was a stern superintendent of schools for the county, who frightened his sister Kotoma to such an extent that she said she was even afraid to call him when supper was ready! The second brother was an agricultural engineer. Kotoma referred to the next brother as a *dōraku* [prodigal son] whom she blamed for the financial ruin of her family.

Haruko wrote about her idyllic childhood, her natal home with its persimmon trees, lovely multi-petalled cherry blossom trees, chestnut trees, and pine mushrooms growing under the trees. When she was thirteen, her mother became ill with stomach cancer and died, ending her happy childhood. Haruko soon after left the village to attend girls' higher school in Hiroshima city. Her father hired a woman who was over fifty years old, "*Baayan*" [this seems to be a word of a local dialect similar to "grannie"] to look after the family. Whenever she returned home from her higher school, "*Baayan*" and the neighbours told Haruko about her difficult younger sister who constantly defied the housekeeper.

At the time I interviewed Kotoma, I had not read her sister's compositions, but Kotoma said that when she was sixteen, her "prodigal" brother persuaded her father to sell everything and move to Korea. Japan had annexed Korea in 1910 and imposed military rule. The Japanese rulers confiscated farms from the Koreans and sold them cheaply to Japanese land development companies and immigrants and also undermined Korean industries by importing Japanese goods.

It was into this milieu that the Yokota family moved. Kotoma was not clear about what subsequently happened except to say that she attended girls' higher school in Seoul and that her family eventually lost everything.

The elder sister, Haruko, did not mention Korea, so the family likely moved there after she was married to Kobayakawa Masao, the Canadian-born son of Kobayakawa Gōichi of Courtenay. (See chapter 3.) Masao went to Japan to marry her. Kobayakawa Haruko told her sister she was startled when he awoke from his nuptial bed and said, "What time is it?," in English. On arrival at her in-laws' farm in the Comox Valley, Kobayakawa Haruko discovered that she was required to live with them and labour on the farm. Her husband worked elsewhere as a mechanic but all his earnings were turned over to his parents.⁶³

In 1982 Kobayakawa Haruko spoke to an interviewer of her loneliness during her first few years in Canada, when the sound of the train whistle stirred her emotions.⁶⁴ Her duties on her in-laws' dairy farm were heavy. Although the men used mechanical seeders for planting the corn, turnips, and hay, which were fed to the animals, her jobs all required hand labour. She rose at 6:00 A.M. to milk the one hundred cows by hand. She also washed the milk bottles, took the cows to the pasture, rounded them up again at 4:00 P.M. with the dogs, and milked them again. Milk was taken to the Cumberland Dairy and with some of it

⁶³Interview with Kitagawa Kotoma.

⁶⁴An interview conducted in Japanese with Kobayakawa Haruko is stored in the Special Collections at the University of British Columbia, tape 23:83.

she made butter. Then she warmed buttermilk and skim milk to feed to the baby calves. In addition she cooked for six or seven people and grew vegetables for home consumption. Order takers who regularly came from Japanese stores in Vancouver were the source of Japanese soy sauce, rice, *miso* and canned goods.⁶⁵

After five years of growing frustration with their lack of independence, she insisted to her husband that they move out and set up their own home. Her in-laws were furious, but Masao and Haruko left, penniless.⁶⁶ The young couple managed to borrow some money from Iwaasa Matsutaro in Cumberland and finally set up their own household and Haruko taught Japanese school.

Yokota Kotoma was twenty-one years old when she emigrated in 1927. Her father urged her to marry a man recommended by her sister, saying that she would be good company for Haruko. In the interview Kotoma said that by the time her one-year waiting period was over, she had changed her mind, but she was persuaded to go. Kotoma and her husband Kitagawa Kensuke (1894-1974) settled in Duncan where her husband had a tailor shop until the outbreak of the Pacific War.⁶⁷ Kitagawa Kotoma did not have any children and worked in the shop alongside her husband.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Kobayakawa Haruko did not give many details of why they had left the farm in her interview in 1982, but her sister Kitagawa (Yokota) Kotoma was more candid in the interview with me.

⁶⁷The wartime writings of Kitagawa Kensuke have been published in Keibo Oiwa, ed. Stone Voices: Wartime Writings of Japanese Canadian Issei (Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1991), pp. 93-113.

Other immigrant wives also became vital parts of their husbands' businesses. Kumamoto Toshiko (1906-1994) was the only child in her family, the Kumamoto who were the main house [*honke*] of the Kumamoto family of Kameyama village in Asa county. The family's *yagō* was Hamadaya. Toshiko's cousin, the seventh son of a branch line of the Kumamoto family [*bunke*] was adopted by her father and this cousin and Toshiko were raised together. This cousin, Kumamoto Jun, became Toshiko's husband.⁶⁸ He joined his three blood brothers in Canada in 1917 at the age of seventeen, and Toshiko arrived in 1926 at the age of twenty. Before she left Japan she had graduated from the girls' higher school in Kabe, Hiroshima prefecture. Jun worked at various jobs, in a restaurant, and in lumber camps, while his wife studied sewing. Kumamoto Toshiko received her room and board at the sewing school by helping with the cleaning and doing odd jobs. Later the couple had a dry-cleaning and alteration establishment on Richards Street in Vancouver. There were many such Japanese businesses in the Vancouver area, and their successes were due in large part to the sewing abilities of the women.⁶⁹

⁶⁸That is, Jun became a *yōshi* husband.

⁶⁹When I interviewed Kumamoto Toshiko in August 1992, she was widowed and wore a pacemaker but was very alert and eager to share the story of her life. She said she and her husband had been repeatedly asked by her family to return to Japan, but that they had chosen to remain in Canada. She said that she learned to drive a car when she was 68 years old when her husband's Parkinson's disease had prevented him from driving. In the livingroom of her home, there were her paintings of her natal home and her husband. In 1992 she still attended Japanese brush painting [*sumie*] classes every two weeks.

While Kumamoto Toshiko said because she had grown up with her cousin Jun there was affection if not romantic love between the two of them at the time of their marriage, and close emotional attachment developed over the years; in the following case, there was clear evidence of early attraction. Takeyasu Nobuichi (1889-1966) who had emigrated to British Columbia in 1906 via Hawaii was a second son of samurai descent. He was from Yoshina village in Toyota county. He met Shimazu Shizuyo (1889-1988) in a hospital in Hiroshima prefecture where he had gone for some medical care soon after World War I. She was a nurse at the hospital. Shizuyo was the daughter of a wealthy importer-exporter of Akitsu town in Kamo county. Her family's main branch [*honke*] was located in Onomichi. Takeyasu Nobuichi and Shimazu Shizuyo married in 1919 and left for Canada right away but they returned to Japan for a while after she became pregnant with her first child. They remained in Hiroshima city until 1927 during which time Takeyasu took training in Japanese medicine, while working as a reporter for the Asahi Shinbun, a major Japanese newspaper. Shizuyo contributed to the family finances by running a boarding house for students.

Her family begged them to remain in Japan and even offered to build a hospital for Takeyasu.⁷⁰ However, they returned to Canada. Their son George remembered that although his father could have been adopted into the Shimazu family and later inherit the family's wealth, he preferred life in Canada. His mother was willing to follow her husband anywhere. In her later years, when

⁷⁰This is not unusual—small private hospitals are often created this way.

asked why she had come to Canada, Takeyasu Shizuyo told her son that she had come the first time for "romance and adventure" and the second time, because her husband was here.⁷¹ Takeyasu Shizuyo, according to her son George, had a nursing diploma and put her nursing experience to good use in Ocean Falls where the young couple had first gone on arriving in Canada in 1920. There was a smallpox epidemic in an aborigine community and she was able to help them. In gratitude, she was made an Indian princess and she received a letter of commendation from the Governor-General.⁷² The Shimazu family was insistent that Shizuyo return to Japan. A compromise must have been made with the Shimazu family, however, since George said that he had always been told by his mother that he was to study Japanese diligently because he was to go to Japan after graduation from high school to be adopted into the Shimazu family. Shizuyo and Nobuichi also made a great effort in the home to speak "proper" Japanese rather than the Hiroshima dialect. Thus, although this strong-willed woman made her own decision regarding a husband and also chose to accompany him to Canada, she realized her family responsibilities and agreed to assuage her natal family with the promise that her son would return to continue the family line.⁷³

Those women whose lives are described here and others like them were the invisible ones. They are not the ones who were celebrated by the chroniclers of

⁷¹Letter from George Takeyasu, October 1993.

⁷²Letter from George Takeyasu, July 1995.

⁷³George was in grade ten of high school when the Pacific War started. All the plans that the Takeyasu family had made were for naught.

the early twentieth century Japanese Canadian community. The printed words about the Japanese in Canada during that period extolled the virtues of a handful of women who lived more comfortably. As Anne Walthall concluded about the women who participated in rice riots and peasant uprisings in the late Tokugawa period, the public praise for women in the Japanese Canadian community "leaves the reader with the impression that women did nothing but offer support in the shadows."⁷⁴ They are "defined not as individuals but in relation to others within the household" and "it would appear that whenever women acted, they did so at least ostensibly on behalf of men."⁷⁵ Nakayama's 1921 publication included the brief biographies of fifty-four women, of whom a number were Hiroshima emigrants. Satō Matsuyo, her daughter Masae, and Kaminishi Shigeno were praised for their devotion to duty, their feminine modesty and their leadership roles in the women's association of the Buddhist Church and the Japanese Women's Association. Satō's daughter was also lauded for aiding her mother selflessly and was admired for the many marriage proposals that she had had.⁷⁶ Nowhere was there any mention made of their exhausting physical labours and management skills that kept the boarding houses afloat. Even their activities within the women's associations were presented as undertakings done to enhance their husbands' social positions.

⁷⁴Anne Walthall, "Devoted Wives," p. 131.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 127.

⁷⁶Nakayama, Kanada dōhō, pp. 562, 568.

While in Nakayama and other official and semi-official rhetoric within the Japanese community some women were depicted as devoting themselves to "service to the community and their families," women's activities that secured or enhanced family survival were not mentioned. Those women who cooked and washed in the camps, farmed, canned fish, and worked in white homes were ignored. We need to search for the stories about these women and to listen to the voices of the ones who struggled so hard to earn livings and to provide stable homes for their children.

CHAPTER 6

THE FARMERS

During the period from 1908 to the outbreak of the Pacific War, the area around Vancouver's Powell Street grew into a vibrant Japanese community with shops, social and sports clubs, schools, churches, and temples. Other similar but much smaller communities emerged in coastal areas of British Columbia. Audrey Kobayashi refers to this period as the third stage in Japanese-Canadian immigrant history, when "permanent immigrants established what we now know as Japanese-Canadian society."¹ These communities evolved gradually as economic circumstances prevented the attainment of the initial dreams of returning to the homeland.

On the other hand, there were immigrants who from the beginning had permanent settlement in mind. Some of these men and women went to Canada to farm; others, to become involved in trade and commerce between Canada and Japan; a number were just looking for adventure. This chapter deals with those who came intending to buy land and farm. They achieved this goal in the Fraser Valley, in the Okanagan Valley and in Southern Alberta. In many cases, the

¹Audrey Kobayashi, "For the Sake of the Children: Japanese/Canadian Workers/Mothers" in Women, Work, and Place, Audrey Kobayashi, ed. (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), p. 55.

earliest of these farmers became the leaders in the rural areas where they settled; inspiring, persuading, and smoothing the way for later Japanese immigrants.

Thanks to their encouragement and guidance, newcomers whose original intent may not have been to settle permanently, did so. The establishment of family units and the total commitment of all the members of every family, ultimately led to the financial success of most of the farmers. Of course not all of the Japanese immigrants who came determined to put down roots were from Hiroshima prefecture but many of them were.

The Fraser Valley

One of the most influential Hiroshima pioneers in the Fraser Valley was Yamaga Yasutaro.² Yamaga was born in 1886 in Toyohama village in Toyota county on a small island with a circumference of only five *ri* [approximately twenty kilometers], ten *ri* south of Kure. It is one of many small islands in that area. While a few inhabitants on the island farmed, the majority survived by fishing. Yamaga arrived in Canada in 1908 with "a dream of becoming the owner of five

²We have an excellent picture of early lives of the berry farmers through his writings in both English and Japanese languages. His papers are stored at the University of British Columbia Library, Special Collections and University Archives Division, Boxes 1-7. There are personal reminiscences, essays, minutes and business papers of the Maple Ridge Berry Growers' Association. In particular, his book, Hene'e nōkai shi [The History of the Haney Agricultural Association] is an invaluable source of information on the settlement in the Fraser Valley of the Japanese, their efforts to retain a good relationship with the white population—in the schools, the community, and the market place as well as in farming.

thousand acres of golden field in the Canadian Prairies."³ Initially he worked as a labourer in a shingle bolt camp. While doing so, he was inspired to buy ten acres in Haney by Inoue Jirō, a Waseda University graduate from Saga prefecture who had bought twenty acres of land in 1906 in Haney and had been writing articles in the vernacular press in Vancouver urging others to follow suit.⁴

In his history of Japanese agriculturists in Haney, Yamaga wrote about the *kusawake* [literally, "the ones who parted the grass"], the Japanese pioneers who farmed in the various parts of the Fraser Valley. The earliest recorded Japanese farmer was a man from Yamaguchi prefecture in Pitt Meadows in 1904.⁵ There were no *kusawake* pioneers in the list that I recognized as being from Hiroshima but by the early 1910s many individuals from Hiroshima were contributing a great deal to farming in the Fraser Valley.

The relative ease of getting started and the desire for self-employment attracted many would-be farmers from Hiroshima. It was possible to lease five acres of rough bushland with an agreement to clear the land within seven years.⁶ Although the lessee could clear small plots, plant strawberry plants and reap a

³University of British Columbia Library, Special Collections and University Archives Division, Yamaga Yasutaro Papers, Box 1-2.

⁴Toyo Takata, *Nikkei Legacy* (Toronto: NC Press Limited, 1983), p. 72.

⁵Yamaga Yasutaro, *Hene'e nōkai shi* [The History of the Haney Agricultural Association] (Tokyo: Kasai shuppan insetsusha, 1963), p. 69.

⁶Investigations have led me to conclude that these leases were with private individuals, and must have involved some share-cropping arrangement, as is discussed below with regard to Okanagan Valley land.

harvest within a year, it was necessary to supplement agricultural income with earnings from seasonal labour in the salmon fisheries and the lumber camps. Those who leased, cleared their land in the winter months. But this was a slow and arduous process and seven years often passed before the land was more than half cleared. When this happened, the land was forfeited because the contract demanded that the whole property be cleared within seven years. Settlers soon realized that it was more prudent to use their summer earnings to buy land on the instalment plan. Five or ten acres could be purchased at fifty dollars per acre, with a quarter down and the rest to be paid within three to four years at six percent interest.⁷

The individuals buying land could live rent free because they built their own homes immediately. Yamaga wrote in one of his English-language recollections:

We could not afford to buy lumber to build our houses so we helped each other by felling large cedar trees and bucking it [sic] into three feet lengths to make cedar shakes for the walls and roof of a shack. The unwritten law was for everyone to go to help their new neighbours, carrying their own tools and lunches. We cut out long and straight poles for studs and rafts [sic]. Thick shakes were laid on the ground for the floor. Bed and furniture were also made by hand; an apple box for a chair, etc. We used straw for our mattress.⁸

⁷Yamaga, Hene'e, p. 12.

⁸Yamaga, My Footsteps in B.C., 1958, UBC Special Collections.

The only materials purchased were windows and nails. House building and well-digging were cooperative ventures that were also social events, with a great deal of eating and drinking. Yamaga tells us:

Money was scarce and our labor was cheap in those days. Often times we could not afford to buy stumping powder so we dug around the stumps of many feet in diameter with a mattock and shovel. In the hole dug underneath we would build a fire and burn it day after day. Some stump roots would take two weeks to burn. We planted strawberries as we cleared the land . . .

We settlers were all husky young men and seldom saw the opposite sex of our own race. We all felt the loneliness and emptiness of this life. Some found their way out of this by drinking, some by gambling.⁹

Yamaga's memoir went on to give a vivid description of early bachelor life, the drinking of sake, free-for-all fights, and raucous participation in the Armistice Day parade in 1918. "We sang at the top of our voices Russo-Japanese war songs which were the only songs we knew."¹⁰

Eventually, after ten to fifteen years, a bachelor was able to build a frame house with lumber, and he was ready to send for a wife.¹¹ Not only did the wives work tirelessly alongside their husbands, but women such as Imada Ito took the full responsibility for farming. On all these farms, rough bushland was painstakingly cleared and planted with strawberry plants and raspberry canes. Throughout the year, every member of the family including young children,

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹As we saw in Chapter 5, Yamaga paid tribute to the farmers' wives and their unceasing labour.

worked long and hard. As Andreas Shroeder wrote regarding the area around Mission: "The Japanese added an enormous amount of new acreage to the [berry] industry, because they were willing to buy unused, poor or stump-covered land and make it productive through an immense amount of hard work and frugality."¹²

The efforts of the early Japanese farmers in the Fraser Valley, however, did not meet with the unmitigated approval of their contemporaries. White farmers protested that "these industrious immigrants would soon squeeze them out of markets. The Japanese farmer bought cheap land which the white man would not touch, cleared and drained it, and the following year harvested a crop equal if not superior to that of his white neighbour."¹³

When markets were good, as they were during World War I when the price of strawberries soared from four cents a pound to twenty-one cents, there was little antagonism from the white farmers.¹⁴ However, after the end of the war, when the prices plummeted and growers competed for a limited market, anti-Japanese feelings grew. In such circumstances Japanese farmers persevered to organize as a group, not only to cooperate among themselves but also to improve relationships with producers outside their ranks. Inoue Jirō, dubbed the "Haney Village Headman" by Japanese, feared that an organization of Japanese farmers

¹²Andreas Shroeder, Carved from Wood: Mission, B.C., 1886-1992 (Altona, MB: D. W. Friesen, 1991), p. 109.

¹³John Cherrington, Mission on the Fraser (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1974), p. 120.

¹⁴Yamaga, Footsteps in BC, p. 20.

would make them more visible and draw attention to their activities. Despite his qualms, the Haney Japanese Agricultural Association was organized in the spring of 1919.¹⁵ Soon after, representatives of Haney, Mission, Whonnock and Hammond Japanese Agricultural Associations met and held a conference.

The subjects discussed included measures to combat frosts, agricultural labourers from Japan, and wages for pickers. More pressing than these problems was a search for ways to dispel rising anti-Japanese sentiment. The representatives agreed that they would admonish everyone to abide by the Lord's Day Act against working on Sunday, to warn against women working with babies strapped on their backs doing heavy labour such as clearing land, and also to ask the farmers to conduct themselves in such a way that they would not arouse unfavourable public opinion.

The executive of the Haney Agricultural Association met every month. Yamaga noted that the most difficult challenge the executive faced was the animosity against the Japanese farmers who worked on Sundays. One illustration of this feeling was described in detail by Yamaga.

One Sunday, a certain Japanese man was working from early morning clearing his land using blasting powder. A white woman, dressed in her Sunday finery came by on her way to church. She said gently to the man, "Today is Sunday. You should be resting." It seems as if this man thought that only Christians needed to rest so he retorted, "Me Buddhist, you no policeman. I don't care." The lady phoned the police immediately. She must have understood his English babble. A policeman came and gave him a tongue-lashing. "Even Buddhists—everyone in Canada has to obey the

¹⁵Yamaga, Hene'e, p. 22.

Sunday law." He warned the farmer that since this was the first offence, he would be excused, but that next time he would give him a fine.¹⁶

This incident aroused a great deal of concern among the association's leaders who realized it was next to impossible to prevent their fellow Japanese from working on Sundays. They urged their members to work inconspicuously and quietly, away from public view.

Although the Lord's Day Act was cited by the threatening policeman, it appears that the toiling man had not actually broken any law. The Act had been brought in primarily to "regulate Sunday trading."¹⁷ The Lord's Day Act was a criminal law, and once enacted by the federal government, it applied automatically to all the provinces. While it was possible for provinces and municipalities to opt out of certain sections, the law could not be made more extensive.¹⁸

Contemporary newspaper articles reported debate in some municipalities in British Columbia over Sunday store closing and accusations of "prosecution of culture and music." It is doubtful that a farmer clearing his own agricultural land was prohibited under the Act's Regulation Number Four:

It is not lawful for any person on the Lord's Day, except as provided herein, or in any provincial Act or law in force on or after the first day of March 1907, to sell or offer for sale or purchase any goods, chattels, or

¹⁶Ibid., p. 24. Slightly edited translation.

¹⁷David N. Laband and Deborah Hendry Heinbuch, Blue Laws: The History, Economics, and Politics of Sunday Closing Laws (Lexington, MA.: D. C. Heath and Co. 1957), pp. 215-19.

¹⁸Information received from Ross Lambertson.

other personal property, or any real estate, or to carry on or transact any business of his ordinary calling, or in connection with such calling, or for gain to do, or employ any other person to do, on that day, any work, business or labour. R.S., c.171, s.4.¹⁹

Whether the policeman believed he was upholding the law or not is difficult to determine. Yet, public opinion surely believed the farmer to be breaking the Lord's Day Act. In his history of the Mission area, John Cherrington claimed that the white community "viewed their [Japanese] entry into the valley as a threat to Protestant customs and beliefs. Japanese violated the Lord's Day Act by working on Sundays."²⁰ In a similar vein, a Vancouver Daily Province article on April 3, 1928, reported a complaint against "Oriental farmers":

We have nothing against them racially, but we want them to live up to our standards. On the second Sunday of July last year I personally counted twenty-six trucks of vegetables in charge of Orientals on the Ladner ferry which was too crowded to carry white mens' pleasure cars. When Orientals who ignore the Sabbath are hauled into court they avoid the penalties of the Lord's Day Act by stating that those who labor in their fields are their brothers or partners and not employees.²¹

The "Orientals" depicted in the article were most likely Chinese market gardeners, but the white public did not differentiate between the Chinese and Japanese.

The Haney Agricultural Association was also sensitive about the white neighbours' disapproval of the conspicuous hard labour of Japanese farming

¹⁹Ibid., p. 216.

²⁰Cherrington, Mission on the Fraser, p. 121.

²¹Vancouver Daily Province, April 3, 1928.

women. The long hours these women spent clearing land, working in the berry fields, and chopping wood—often with babies strapped on their backs—had drawn much local criticism. Since warnings about this at meetings fell on deaf ears, the executive decided to hold gatherings at different sites in the Haney area in order to alert everyone in the Japanese farming community to the danger involved in continuing to fuel such criticism. (It is likely that the men in the households were the ones who attended the Association meetings and did not tell their wives about how the white neighbours felt about Japanese women working so hard.) Inoue and Yamaga agreed to organize the series of sessions. They did so and since the women did comply to some extent Yamaga thought that this endeavour had good results.

The Haney Association tried to improve Japanese relationships with non-Japanese agriculturists by encouraging its members to learn English. Leaders felt it was imperative that English be taught to the Japanese agricultural workers known as *yobiyose*, [literally "called over" men], brought in under the agricultural worker stipulation of the Gentlemen's Agreement. The Association decided that it would arrange twice weekly English language classes for these employees with their host farmers paying the tuition. It was felt that learning English would facilitate their workers' adjustment to Canadian life. The *yobiyose* were a special category of immigrants; that is, "emigrants brought in under contract by Japanese resident agricultural holders in Canada and especially required for the promotion of such agriculture; such contract to be accompanied by the certificate of Japanese

consular authority in the district where the labourers are to be employed."²² The farmers paid the fares for the men involved who were usually relatives or fellow villagers; each was given room and board and a stipend under a three-year contract.

Fudemoto Chiyoto Frank (1915-1993) came as a *yobiyose* in 1934 from Asa county near Hiroshima city. His three-year agreement required him to work for the sponsoring farmer who was to provide Fudemoto with room and board and ten dollars a month. In his case, however, he was released from his obligation after two years because the farmer could not afford to pay his monthly stipend.²³

The Haney Agricultural Association members also concerned themselves with Japanese language schools. Yamaga emphasized the need for the Japanese farmers to adjust to the Canadian way of life but he also believed that Japanese language instruction was necessary for the Canadian-born children. Because their parents had a poor command of English, he felt it was only through Japanese language that children could converse at home. Moreover, when the children matured and left home for further education or work, parents would naturally wish to correspond regularly with them. This was obviously a widely shared view, as parents certainly did not begrudge expenditures of time and money for this education.

²²Howard H. Sugimoto, Japanese Immigration, the Vancouver Riots and Canadian Diplomacy (New York: Arno Press, 1978), p. 263.

²³Interview in Ottawa, October 1992.

Unlike all the other Japanese schools in British Columbia that used textbooks issued by the Ministry of Education of Japan, the Maple Ridge (Haney) Japanese language school employed books which had been developed for use by the Japanese language schools in California.²⁴ The Haney school had begun as informal classes held in a family home in 1913, but by 1915 was held in the Haney Japanese Community Hall. The California texts had been adopted in 1927 because the goal of the school was not only to teach Japanese but also to produce good Canadian citizens and not to inculcate Japanese nationalism. Ariga Chōkichi, who became the principal in 1933 enthusiastically followed this philosophy.²⁵ A nisei who had attended that school remembered the textbooks:

The major difference was in the setting . . . they would be American rather than Japanese, street scenes, classrooms, etc. I also recall some stories of American heroes, George Washington and the cherry tree, Abraham Lincoln and the slaves, etc. And Ariga would supplement these text books with articles he had written himself about Canadian heroes. His approach was not above criticism. In my own home, my father thought that anything not approved by the *Mombusho* [Japan's Ministry of Education] was faulty. My mother tended to be less critical.²⁶

²⁴Yamaga, *Hene'e*, p. 43. Adachi noted in *Enemy* that "only one school in the Fraser Valley town of Haney adopted the California texts," p. 129. Gordon Nakayama in *Issei* wrote, "The Haney Japanese Language School used texts compiled by the Department of Education in the State of California, USA," p. 53.

²⁵Yamaga, *Hene'e*, pp. 42-43. For a short biography of Ariga, see Roy Ito, *We Went to War* (Stittsville, ON: Canada's Wings, Inc., 1984), pp. 247-48.

²⁶Personal written communication, Tony Tateishi, Ottawa, July 1995. His father's criticism may be related to the fact that he had graduated from teachers training school in Japan.

Yamaga acknowledged that there were families who did not take much interest in the education their children were receiving in the Canadian public schools and wanted the Japanese school to provide moral training and proper behaviour; that is, Japanese ethics and ideas.

The Association also established kindergartens in order to ease entry into public schools for the Japanese children who understood little or no English. Also, on the suggestion of "devout Baptist" Mr. William Hall and his daughter, Mary, a Sunday school for a mixed group of Japanese and white children was organized in 1917 and held at the Japanese Hall. It began with about fifteen children but by 1920 included eighty children while about twenty adults, both white and Japanese were holding prayer meetings together.²⁷

Yamaga urged the Japanese women to participate in the Parent Teacher's Association at Robinson School in Haney, a public school that by 1924 had a student population which was 50 percent Japanese. He often drove Japanese women to the PTA meetings and interpreted for them. He said that the children were pleased to see their mothers working alongside the white mothers at school functions. Yamaga encouraged participation in PTA activities at other schools in Maple Ridge too. What the Japanese women who went to PTA functions thought

²⁷Yamaga, Hene'e, p. 46.

about this experience unfortunately we do not know; neither do we know if their PTA participation reached beyond attendance at meetings.²⁸

The Association dealt with innumerable problems which arose due to the parents' ignorance of school attendance regulations. For instance, parents often kept their children home from school when their labour was required on the farm. The farmers needed to be reminded that according to the 1901 amendment to the Public Schools Act, the age of compulsory schooling was seven to fourteen in cities and that in 1912 this was extended to all municipalities. In 1921 the age requirement for compulsory schooling was extended to fifteen years. In Japan, although compulsory education existed, school attendance was not always strictly enforced. According to Ministry of Education figures, when enforcement finally became stricter in 1899, school attendance rose from a low of 45 percent in 1887 to 72.8 percent in 1899 and 88.1 percent in 1901. The figures for girls were lower—less than 30 percent attended school in 1887, 59.0 percent in 1899 and 81.8 percent in 1901.²⁹ By 1906, elementary school attendance figures had reached 96 percent, 98 percent for boys and 95 percent for girls. Nevertheless, "children of poor farm families were frequently kept out of school to help on the farm and at

²⁸I found this very interesting because as far as I can recall, when I was a student during the years 1936 to 1942 at Strathcona School, the large public school in Vancouver in which the children from the Powell Street area were enrolled, few Japanese parents attended any of the school's activities. My parents certainly did not.

²⁹Aso Makoto and Amano Ikuo, Education and Japan's Modernization (Tokyo: The Japan Times, Ltd., 1983), pp. 34-35.

home or to take care of their baby brothers and sisters."³⁰ The Japanese government's "school enrolment" statistics do not tell the full story of "school attendance." Before the 1920s the issei in Canada did not always worry about strict school attendance. Later, they obeyed the law, but they still made maximum use of their children's labour. There is no doubt that the daily labour of children contributed to the financial success of these farms. Casual conversations, as well as carefully directed interviews with the children of these pioneer berry farmers, revealed that from early childhood they were working members of their families' enterprises. They weeded, hoed, and picked berries in the early morning before leaving for school, after school, and on weekends. They also chopped wood, hauled water, did the laundry, cooked meals, looked after younger siblings, and did whatever else was required that they were capable of doing.

By the mid-twenties, the vagaries of the berry market, exacerbated by the rapidly increasing crops produced by the growing numbers of Japanese farmers were intensifying the hostility of white society.³¹ Yamaga deplored the ignorance of the Japanese farmers who, not understanding the complexities of the marketplace, sold their produce haphazardly. Moreover, due to their inability to read English, they were unaware of the growing anger directed towards them that was reflected in newspapers and magazines. When admonished by a fellow Japanese

³⁰Mikiso Hane, Peasants, Rebels and Outcasts: The Underside of Modern Japan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982), pp. 51-52.

³¹Adachi, The Enemy, pp. 147-51; Yamaga, Hene'e, p. 50.

farmer, many a berry producer selfishly refused to think beyond the growing and selling of his own crop. He would reply, "I grew it myself so it's my own business where I sell it!"³²

However, in British Columbia, demands for legislation similar to the Alien Land Act in California and other western states in the U.S. were on the ascent. The 1913 California Alien Land Law prohibited "aliens ineligible to citizenship" from owning land.³³ The United States Revised Federal Statutes of 1875 had declared that "only two types of aliens, namely, persons of white and black descent, were eligible to become American citizens."³⁴ In 1882 the Chinese Exclusion Act of Congress barred Chinese from citizenship, but since this Act did not mention the Japanese, there was confusion in some lower federal courts.³⁵ In 1920, a further amendment to the Alien Land Law plugged some of the loopholes of the earlier legislation with the intention of "driving Japanese immigrants out of California agriculture."³⁶

³²Ibid., p. 51.

³³Ichioka, Issei, p. 214.

³⁴Ibid., p. 211.

³⁵According to the 1910 census, some 420 Japanese had been issued naturalization papers in the United States. However, following the Act of 1906 which standardized naturalization requirements and procedures, the United States Attorney General ordered the federal courts to cease issuing naturalization papers to Japanese applicants. Ibid., p. 211.

³⁶This amendment "prohibited aliens ineligible to citizenship to purchase or lease agricultural land, to hold stocks in agricultural landholding companies, to transfer or sell agricultural land to each other, and disqualified them from being appointed as guardians of minors who had title to such land." Ibid., pp. 224-25.

In British Columbia, the Japanese berry farmers feared that similar legislation might be enacted in the province. Since the late nineteenth century, farmers of British descent had been growing strawberries in Gordon Head on the Saanich Peninsula of Vancouver Island. Since sales in Victoria and Vancouver brought them much profit, they had expanded production and by 1925 were sending their berries east of the Rockies by refrigerated freight cars. The gradually increasing production by the Japanese berry farmers in the Fraser Valley, who also started sending their produce eastward by railway, was diminishing incomes of Saanich growers.³⁷ Since the Fraser Valley season began a week or so ahead of Vancouver Island's, Saanich berries missed the high prices producers could demand at the beginning of the season.³⁸

Yamaga reported that the white farmers were at first bewildered, but by 1925 had rallied and were demanding an Alien Land Act similar to that in the United States. They also demanded that people ineligible for the franchise should not be allowed to own land. Japanese farmers faced possible annihilation. Their leaders, including activists from Hiroshima like Yamaga, decided to meet the problem head on. They formed an organization which included all the Japanese farmers in the Fraser Valley, the *Ichigo seisansha rengō kumiai* [Union of Berry Producers' Associations]. Yamaga, representing the north Fraser farmers and Kumatani Jirō, the south Fraser, attended the 1925 annual meeting of the British

³⁷Yamaga, *Hene'e*, p. 50.

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 51.

Columbia Fruit Growers' Association in Kelowna. After a report was delivered by the committee campaigning for the adoption of an Alien Land Act, Yamaga addressed the Association assembly. He declared that Japanese farmers realized that through ignorance of the market-place they had caused monetary losses to themselves and to others. However, now quite aware of their past mistakes, the Japanese farmers were at this moment creating a cooperative and hoping to unite with farmers of all ethnic backgrounds in the interest of mutual aid and regulation of the market. Yamaga said that after his address a motion was immediately passed to dissolve the anti-Japanese committee. To him this signalled a tremendous break-through in inter-racial relations.³⁹

The Maple Ridge Berry Growers' Co-operative Exchange was organized in 1927 by Yamaga, "the dominant figure in the struggle to establish amicable inter-racial relations."⁴⁰ Later the Japanese growers' associations amalgamated into the Consolidated Farmers' Association, "and its annual meeting even attracted white growers."⁴¹ Later, under the Natural Products Marketing Act, white and Japanese groups regulated the marketing of small fruits and rhubarb produced in the Valley cooperatively under a local board.⁴² The board, consisting of two white farmers and one Japanese, met with Japanese objections since Japanese farmers were

³⁹Ibid., p. 52.

⁴⁰Adachi, Enemy, p. 150.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid.

responsible for over eighty percent of the products. But the protests never went beyond grumbling.⁴³ By 1934 the dire effect of the unregulated "buyers' market" for jam berries was also mitigated by exporting to England jam berries packed with sulphur dioxide in wooden barrels. The Maple Ridge Berry Growers' Co-operative pioneered this process.⁴⁴

Yamaga was the capable managing director of the Maple Ridge co-operative for fifteen years. The berry farmers gradually diversified into tree fruits, rhubarb and hops.⁴⁵ An extraordinary organizer of production and marketing and a skilled interracial diplomat, Yamaga highly valued the important part that women and children played on the berry farms. He had noticed how mothers with babies strapped on their backs aroused the concern and animosity of the white people, but he knew that many farms would have failed without their women working both inside and outside their homes. Farm women fed the seasonal workers as well as their own families, tended the berry plants, picked the

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Yamaga, "The History of Farming in BC, 1906-41," March 1958, UBC Library, Special Collections, pp. 6-15.

⁴⁵We are indebted to him for not only his contributions to the farming community, but also for his historical records. Yamaga's book had a photograph of the successful hop fields of the Imada family, the subject of my B.A. and M.A. theses. Yamaga spent the war years in the relocation camp at Tashme. There he started a small sawmill fourteen miles from Tashme and after the war, another one at 70 Mile House in the Cariboo. His life savings went into the establishment in 1958 of a retirement home for Japanese, the Nipponia Home in Beamsville, Ontario. There he wrote books and articles in both English and Japanese. Gordon Nakayama, *Issei*, pp. 50-55.

fruit, raised the children, and performed housekeeping tasks under difficult conditions.

There are a number of cases in which the woman played the dominant role in family farming. From the memoir of Imada Ito we learn that it was only due to Ito's persistence and hard work that the Imada family was finally able to make a down payment on eight acres of land in Haney in 1922. Her husband was reluctant to go into farming, and although for years she had gone to lumber and sawmill camps with him to cook and wash for many men, he had spent all her earnings on alcohol and gambling. She finally worked as her husband's partner at a cedar bolt camp at Stave Lake, wielding eight feet long saws to accumulate the money needed to get started as a farmer. Even then, Imada Ito worked on the farm alone and her husband remained in the lumber camp, returning to the farm in the off-season to help clear bushland. According to her, he did not contribute any money to the farm, but actually took money that she had earned from the farm when he returned to camp. It was only much later that he stopped logging and stayed on the farm year-round.

Imada Ito's story is not unique. Toshi Fudemoto (1919-), who grew up in Haney and attended school with Yamaga's daughter and Imada's sons related an almost identical story. Her father, Sasaki Tokubei (1878-1949), continued to work at a shingle bolt camp at Stave Lake even after her parents bought five acres of land in Haney in 1926. When Toshi was seven and it was necessary for her to attend school her mother, Sasaki Shizu (1892-?), like Imada Ito, settled in Haney.

Shizu farmed while tending to the needs of young Toshi and twin sons born in 1923.⁴⁶

The Mission Area

The Mission area, immediately east of Maple Ridge, was also cleared and developed into Japanese berry farms. According to a brochure distributed by the Mission District Historical Society in May 1992:

The dream of many Issei to farm attracted them to Mission where land, though hilly and densely forested, was plentiful and relatively inexpensive. Many cleared their land while supporting their families by working in established farms, sawmills, or other jobs.

By 1930, there were 103 Japanese-owned properties in Mission, averaging 9.54 acres each, and accounting for 979.304 acres all told. The majority of these farms cultivated strawberries along with other crops, including: raspberries, gooseberries, loganberries, blackberries, plums, apples, grapes, cherries, and rhubarb.

Having established homes, the Issei began raising families of their own. This second generation . . . accounted for 3% of the school population in 1918 and 30% by 1928. With growing families and productive farms, a thriving community was established in Mission which included: the Japanese Farmers' Association [*Nōkai*], the Judo Club, the Sewing Club, the Buddhist Church, and two Japanese Language Schools.⁴⁷

Two leaders of this community were Hiroshima emigrants, Kudō Minoru and Nakashima Teizō. Both of these farmers were fluent in English and were active in the Farmers' Association of Japanese agriculturalists in the Mission area.

⁴⁶Interview in Ottawa, October 1992.

⁴⁷Brochure. "Rites of Passage: The History of the Japanese Canadian Community in Mission, B.C." May 9-30, 1992. Mission Leisure Centre, Mission, BC.

Kudō later stopped farming when he and his wife became teachers at the Mission Japanese Language School, but he continued as an executive in the Association.⁴⁸

When Mission is recalled, Kudō is often mentioned by both issei and nisei.⁴⁹ About Kudō Minoru, Nakayama wrote even more effusively than usual:

You are educated, knowledgeable and talented. Whatever you do, you finish. Everywhere you are recognized as a capable and competent person. You are strong-willed and tenacious. You are a prudent thinking man of unparalleled calibre. You also possess a fine quality of helping others. . . .

By nature, you are a kind-hearted man and always willing to help others. When the Farmers' Association [*Nōkai*] was being formed in 1916, you spent considerable time and effort towards it, and were later recommended as its first chairman. . . .

You are knowledgeable in both Japanese and English and your excellent command of English enables you to respond forcefully to white men. You are also a nimble and acute-minded person.⁵⁰

I have briefly mentioned Kudō Minoru and his wife Hatsune in the preceding chapter. Kudō was from Ariho village in Takata county in the interior of Hiroshima prefecture, a mountainous area of terraced rice paddies. At one time his family had owned a great deal of land, but a few generations before, an

⁴⁸Both were praised in Nakayama as exemplary men committed to service to the community, pp. 336-37 and pp. 323-25.

⁴⁹Fortunately, all four of his surviving children agreed to interviews. The eldest son had boxes of documents pertaining to the Mission Berry Growers Association, copies of letters Kudō wrote to the government on behalf of his fellow evacuees in Southern Alberta during the Pacific War, and Kudō's diaries from about 1938. His earlier diaries were probably left behind when the family was forced to move in 1942. After these documents had been perused by one of his two daughters, many were shared with me.

⁵⁰Nakayama, pp. 336-37, translated by W. T. Hashizume, March 3, 1992, received from Roland Kudō.

incompetent family head had diminished the family resources. A family sake brewing business had also failed. After graduation from middle school and attendance at teachers' training school in nearby Miyoshi, Kudō Minoru went to Hawaii in 1906, and then to Vancouver in 1907.⁵¹ According to Nakayama, when Kudō first came to Canada he worked for two years as an office clerk for the Tairiku Nippō, a newspaper in Vancouver. After that he went herring fishing in Nanaimo, and in 1910 moved to Kelowna and worked on a farm. In 1911 he bought six and a half acres of land in Mission, and when the Farmers' Association was formed in 1916, Kudō Minoru became an active leader in it. His children mentioned that he had learned English through a close relationship with a MacKenzie family in Chilliwack. He later continued his study of English with Mr. H. E. Barnett in Mission.⁵²

⁵¹The Japanese Ministry of Education Normal School Ordinance of 1897 and an amendment to it in 1907 specified that a male student could enter a normal school after graduation from middle school if he was recommended by a local official. There were different rules for women. Only 20 to 25 percent of normal school applicants were accepted, however. Since the successful entrant received room and board, he was obligated to teach where assigned for seven years if he received a stipend while a student, or three years, if he had not. A graduate from eight years higher elementary school could also enter normal school but the number of years of study for such a student was longer. Kudō had graduated from middle school and if he had also attended normal school, he must have had to put in his years of obligatory service before emigrating. Kudō's daughter Kathleen wondered whether he had been a qualified teacher. See Kikuchi, Japanese Education, pp. 282-96 and Aso and Amano, Education, p. 19.

⁵²Mr. and Mrs. Barnett, enduring ostracism from white families, had a close relationship with the Japanese community. They are fondly remembered by all Japanese who lived in Mission before the war. Roland Kudō, in a personal communication dated January 24, 1992 wrote: "Around 1922 when Kim Nakashima [the son of Nakashima Teizō and Tsutayo] was sent home from his

Affectionately remembered by his children, Kudō was a naturalized citizen, a Christian, and a respected community leader. By the time he was able to return to Japan briefly in 1918 to marry, he was convinced that his future lay in Canada. Kudō Minoru and Hatsune farmed until they were asked to teach at the community Japanese school in Mission in 1928. Hatsune had taught elementary school in Hiroshima city before she had married Minoru. She had also studied classical Chinese with her father, an educated *shizoku* [ex-samurai]. After the Kudō family lived and taught at the school, Kudō Minoru continued on the executive of the Mission Japanese Farmers' Association.

Nakashima Teizō is invariably mentioned along with Kudō as the other most active leader of the Mission Agricultural Association. Nakayama described him and his association activities:

Currently, as leader of the farming community of Mission, you have taken up the heavy responsibility of secretary of the Farmers' Association [*Nōkai*] and gained the confidence of the community.

first grade because he did not understand English, the Barnetts took him in, to live with them, and tutored him." Mrs. Barnett ran a kindergarten for the Japanese children. I had the privilege of meeting her in 1964 in Mission, when my husband looked up his kindergarten teacher on a trip west from Ottawa. She soon had two of my children sitting on the floor of her home playing a game. During the wartime incarceration of the Ayukawa family in New Denver, the Barnetts unfailingly sent them a Christmas parcel of festive paper napkins and tablecloth and sprigs of holly. I have copies of letters that were written by Mr. Barnett to the British Columbia Security Commission defending his right to retain the money that he had "paid" my father-in-law for his truck. He insisted on his right to use it to send "a half a dozen yards of flannel and a dozen diapers" when needed by the family. National Archives of Canada. RG 117 File 4611 Reel C-9346. Letter to R. P. Alexander, office of custodian, dated May 20, 1943.

Incidentally, the Mission *Nōkai* is an influential public organization. It not only sets the policies regarding farming matters but also undertakes considerable discussions with the outside white community. The *Nōkai* was founded by you in cooperation with Mr. Kudō. During Kudō's absence in Japan, you took over his post as chairman and held this position for two terms. During this period, you brought the members together and provided them with good leadership and direction. Whereas your predecessor was very brilliant and talented and was best suited to the planning and organizing of the *Nōkai*, you, as successor had the ability to hold the members together. This was the main reason why the *Nōkai* grew stronger.⁵³

Nakashima Teizō (1889-1981) came from the town of Eba, an area where seaweed and clams were abundant.⁵⁴ Many from that region near Hiroshima City emigrated to Hawaii and the United States' mainland. Nakashima Teizō's family was quite affluent. They lived in a grand house, fished and farmed, and managed quite well without going overseas as others in the neighbourhood had done. Nevertheless, from childhood Nakashima had dreamed about going abroad. In 1907 when he was seventeen he and a friend decided to emigrate together. They went to Hawaii where Nakashima worked for half a year in the sugar-cane fields. Then he went on to Canada.

From the beginning, Teizō's goal had been to settle permanently as a land-owning farmer. He laboured for three months at the Burnaby Lake logging camp, and then he worked at the Christina Lake Resort Hotel as a bellboy for two years

⁵³Nakayama, pp. 323-25. W. T. Hashizume translation, 1992 03 12, received from Roland Kudō.

⁵⁴Eba, on a delta in one of the branches of the Ōta River, adjacent to the Inland Sea, was about one *ri* [approximately five kilometres] from the centre of Hiroshima city.

in order to learn English.⁵⁵ Nakashima Teizō went to Vernon to investigate prospects for farming there but soon returned to the coastal area. In December 1910 he bought twenty acres of uncleared land in Mission for fifty dollars an acre. By 1916 when his picture bride came, he had cleared a portion of the land and was growing strawberries. Nakashima was not only active in the Mission Agricultural Association but also in the Japanese Christian Church in Mission. He was instrumental in the founding of the Japanese language school as well as the English language kindergarten for the children.

Makabe Tomoko offers a vivid portrait of Teizō's bride, Nakashima Tsutayo.⁵⁶ A city-bred girl, Tsutayo was startled when she arrived in Mission to discover the wilderness home and the work she was required to do. She had to cook and do the laundry not only for her husband but also for the full-time farmhands that lived with the couple. She did, however, enjoy much more physical comfort than did many. Although she had to draw water from a well and to heat it on the big wood stove which was also used for cooking, her home was large and cosy. She found her husband to be a caring and gentle man. The first winter after her arrival, Teizō arranged for her to go in the slack season to

⁵⁵Communication from Miyoshi Tanaka, Nakashima Teizō's daughter, by letter, July 1996. She wrote that Christina Lake Resort Hotel was near Kamloops, but there is a Christina Lake in southern B.C. near Grand Forks where some Japanese families "self-evacuated" after Pearl Harbor.

⁵⁶Tomoko Makabe, Picture Brides: Japanese Women in Canada, trans. Kathleen Chisato Merken (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995) of *Shashinkon no tsumatachi* (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1983), pp. 127-49. In Makabe's book she is called Tami Nakamura, a pseudonym for Nakashima Tsutayo.

Vancouver to do housework for a rich white family on Broadway. Tsutayo said that her English did not improve at all but that she did learn Western methods of cooking and housework.⁵⁷ Nakashima Tsutayo remembered that her husband came to fetch her in February when it became busy on the farm. "I got \$15 a month. It didn't do anything for my English, but it was a good thing to do, I think."⁵⁸

On her return, she was soon plunged into the busiest months on a berry farm. She recalled:

In four months, May to September, all kinds of strawberries come out, one after the other. Those months, it's war. My work was cooking and supervising meals for the pickers. I'd get up at four in the morning, cook rice and *miso* soup, and feed everybody. It was food for 40 people at least, so we had a cook, but it was a lot of work just to manage the house. Anyway, I was busy, busy every day and I had no spare time at all. . . . For meals we had Japanese food, rice and *miso* soup. Sometimes for lunch I would broil salmon that the local Indians used to come selling in secret, and for the rest, I would cook vegetables from the fields. Once a week we could buy food, such as dried lotus root and burdock root, *hijiki* seaweed, tofu, and *kamaboko* (boiled fish paste) from a peddler from Vancouver. As long as you had money you could buy anything. My job was cooking more than anything else; day after day I would cook rice from morning on, all year long without stopping.⁵⁹

⁵⁷Many Japanese women went to work in white households. I had assumed that they had done so to gain income, but Tsutayo informed Makabe that she had told her husband she wished to do so in order to learn English and also "because I wanted to see how white people lived, and what their households were like." Makabe, Picture Brides, p. 136.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

⁵⁹Makabe, Picture Brides, pp. 137-38.

Tsutayo recalled that during the peak of the berry season they had "Indians, Chinese, whites and Japanese" all working together.⁶⁰ They lived in big bunkhouses that were racially segregated. "The Chinese lived apart with other Chinese, and cooked for themselves, and when berry-picking was over, they'd go home."⁶¹ She also reported that "the Indians came from their villages with their children in groups of 10 or 20, so my husband would go to pick them up in his truck. They lived in a bunkhouse for Indians only."⁶² Young nisei who came from the urban areas to help with the picking were also housed and fed by farm wives like Tsutayo.⁶³ There were also full-time *yobiyose* in the Nakashima home. Tsutayo deplored the decadent ways of the single men who spent their meagre earnings on Chinese gambling every weekend in Mission city although she recalled that there were also many conscientious men who eventually married picture brides and settled down in Canada.

According to Tsutayo, although the family eventually worked forty acres of land, growing berries, hops, potatoes, apples and plums, they were always in debt to the Co-op and the bank. The Nakashima borrowed money to send their eldest

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 140.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 141.

⁶²Ibid., pp. 140-41. By "Indians," Tsutayo was referring to First Nations' people. The Japanese immigrants' term for East Indians was '*hinzu*' [Hindu].

⁶³I recall my two older brothers going strawberry picking in the summer months. The younger brother who was in his early teens was brought back to our home by the farmer after a few days. It appears that Japanese food even for breakfast was something my brother could not tolerate!

son, Kimiaki (Kim), to the University of Washington in 1936 where he earned a Bachelor of Commerce degree.⁶⁴ Teizō and Tsutayo also managed to sponsor two younger brothers of Teizō, two cousins (brothers) of Teizō, and two of Tsutayo's siblings, who came to Canada as *yobiyose*.

Ohno Kenzō (1894-1985) emigrated in 1912 and in 1920 his younger brother Tadao (1903-1939) joined him. Their father, the brother of Nakashima Teizō's father, had been adopted into the Ohno family. The death of Kenzō and Tadao's mother followed by their father's remarriage, had created family tensions which compelled the two young men to emigrate. Frank Ohno, Kenzō's son, noted that his mother, Kimiyo (1896-1987), who came to Canada in 1918, was also from Eba. She had been cared for by her grandparents while her parents had been working in Hawaii.

Ohno Kenzō bought land of his own and together with his wife Kimiyo grew berries and later, rhubarb. Frank recalled that in the thirties, his father

⁶⁴Kim later obtained his M.A. in Economics from McGill University in 1946. His thesis was "Economic Aspects of the Japanese Evacuation from the Canadian Pacific Coast." He continued his studies at McGill and in 1950 became the first Japanese Canadian to be admitted to the Institute of Chartered Accountants. Kim Nakashima was a leader of the Japanese community in Montreal for many years. His home was the gathering place for many and from there the Montreal Bulletin, published monthly in Japanese, English and French, which recently celebrated its fiftieth anniversary has always been produced. Kim was also instrumental in organizing the interviews of Japanese in Montreal and area to record the community's history. These were begun in the fifties and the work is still continuing. He died in 1990 but his legacy will live on. As for his father, he worked as a night watchman in Montreal from 1943 until his children were all educated and then he returned to his first love, farming. In 1953, Teizō and Tsutayo moved to Southern Ontario and started farming with their second son, who like his father, loved the land.

worked full-time at the Pacific Berry Co-op during the berry season and grew rhubarb in the off-season.⁶⁵ Kimiyo and the other children looked after the berry farm while, like many other young men who grew up on farms, Frank went elsewhere to labour. In 1938 he worked at Britannia Mines and later at Ocean Falls.⁶⁶

Some sons of Hiroshima immigrants were able to receive post secondary education as Kimiaki Nakashima did. On the other hand, young men like Frank Ohno, his brother and the Imada brothers, left the farm to work elsewhere when they reached maturity. In the majority of such cases, they sent their earnings back to their families. At times, they were called home to help on the farm, as happened to the eldest Imada son when his parents went to Japan for several months in 1939-40.⁶⁷ On the other hand, daughters were hardly ever allowed to leave home to work.

The South Fraser, Surrey and Environs

There were also pockets of Japanese berry farmers on the south side of the Fraser River; one of which was in the Surrey area where Inouye Zennosuke (1884-1957) was an active leader in the Surrey Berry Growers' Association. Like

⁶⁵Rigenda Sumida mentioned that in 1934, of the 215 members of the Fraser Valley Rhubarb Growers' Association, two hundred were Japanese. Rhubarb was grown in the open fields in spring and summer and in greenhouses during the winter. Sumida, M.A. thesis, p. 311.

⁶⁶I interviewed Frank Fusao Ohno in Lethbridge, October 1993.

⁶⁷Ayukawa, B.A. essay, 1988, pp. 80-81.

some other Hiroshima men who assumed leadership in the farmers' associations, during much of his life Inouye expended a great deal of his time and energy in association affairs to the neglect of his own family enterprises.

Inouye Zennosuke was from the village of Imuro in Asa county. Close to Hiroshima city, Imuro has been part of that city since 1971. Zennosuke's father worked in his village and nearby areas as a building contractor with thirty to thirty-five employees. Zennosuke was expected to carry on the family enterprise but he was afraid of heights—he would crawl around on all fours on the roofs. With little sympathy for what he thought was disgraceful behaviour, Zennosuke's father would deliberately push Zennosuke with a pole. This experience may have influenced Zennosuke's decision to emigrate in 1900 at the age of sixteen.⁶⁸

There is little written information about Inouye Zennosuke and his early years in Canada, but his daughter, Beverley Inouye, said that he first went to Cumberland. Later, he learned English and became a Canadian citizen in 1914.⁶⁹ His daughter said he was the first Japanese in Canada with a chauffeur's license. He worked for a real estate company on Powell Street run by Saeki Tadaichi who was also from a village in Asa county.⁷⁰

⁶⁸Interview with Zennosuke's nephew, George Inouye, Barriere, BC, September 1992.

⁶⁹Information from Beverley Inouye, August 1996.

⁷⁰Nakayama, pp. 316-17 gives some information on Saeki. He came from Kameyama village which is very close to Imuro. Saeki was also mentioned in chapter 3.

Soon after the start of the First World War, Inouye joined the Volunteer Corps of Japanese Canadians who trained in Vancouver under Major-General E. A. Cruikshank. The men were hoping to be sent overseas to Europe.⁷¹ Although 227 aspiring Japanese Canadian soldiers had trained diligently, a Japanese battalion was refused by the Canadian and British governments. Later, hearing rumours that in Alberta they would be allowed to enlist, 174 Japanese men proceeded to that province. Inouye sold some of his belongings to purchase a train ticket to Calgary. He enlisted in the Thirteenth Canadian Mounted Rifles. After arriving in England, he was transferred to the Princess Patricia's Fifty-second Battalion (Infantry) and was wounded at Vimy Ridge.⁷²

In 1919, through the Soldier Settlement Board, Inouye bought eighty acres of "wild land" for \$3,200.⁷³ In 1920 he married Morikawa Hatsuno (1900-1993), daughter of Hiroshima emigrants, Morikawa Yasutaro and Tora. Zennosuke and Hatsuno gradually cleared their land and by 1942 had tamed thirty-two acres and had twenty-five of these acres producing berries. Hatsuno bore five children.

⁷¹See Roy Ito, We Went to War, pp. 18-76.

⁷²Itō, We Went to War, pp. 47, 287. David Iwaasa referred to "the 13th Cavalry Battalion which later became the famous Princess Patricia's." Iwaasa, "Canadian Japanese," p. 27. Private communication from daughter, Beverley Inouye, August 1996.

⁷³Information from a copy of personal letter written by Inouye Zennosuke addressed to Prime Minister Mackenzie King, October 4, 1944, in which Inouye protested the sale of his eighty acres. Received from daughter, Beverley Inouye.

Like Yamaga, Kudō, and Nakashima, Inouye Zennosuke was a community-minded individual. He was president of the Surrey Berry Growers' Association, also served on the local Japanese School Board, and in the Buddhist Church.⁷⁴

Inouye sponsored his younger brother Otoichi (1891-?) who arrived in 1906 at the age of fifteen and a number of other young men who came as *yobiyose* workers. George Inouye, Otoichi's son, was taken to Japan in 1929 when he was eight years old and lived there with his mother (1900-1932) and two younger siblings until his mother died three extremely difficult years later. The money that Inouye Otoichi remitted to Japan was inadequate for the family's survival, so his wife in Japan had to struggle, raising silkworms, going from door to door selling chicken feed and eggs. George, still a young child of eight to eleven, tried to help by gathering pebbles from a riverbed for two *sen* per four-gallon can. He also cut, split firewood, and carried it two and a half miles to earn a few *sen*. Soon after his mother's death, George returned to Canada and lived with a family friend on a farm while his father laboured in a shingle bolt camp. As soon as George turned fifteen he joined his father in the camps. They worked together until

⁷⁴After the Second World War, due in part to feelings of gratitude for the magnanimous help he had received from Christian ministers such as W. H. Norman and W. R. MacWilliams, he became a devout Christian. To my knowledge Inouye is the only Japanese Canadian who was able to successfully reclaim his land after the forced removal from the coast in wartime. Persistent and determined, he wrote letters to the British Columbia Security Commission, the members of the British Columbia Legislature, Members of Parliament, the Canadian Legion, and even to Jack Pickersgill and Mackenzie King. Copies of these letters are in my possession. See also Ed Ouchi, 'Til We See the Light of Hope (Vernon, BC: Vernon Japanese Seniors' Association, undated), p. 58.

George rebelled against his father's practice of taking all his earnings. Then he struck out on his own.⁷⁵

While leaders such as Inouye Zennosuke were admired for the work they did for the farming community they served, many other Hiroshima settlers needed all their energies for their own families' survival. Such individuals included the parents of Zennosuke's wife Hatsuno. Inouye Hatsuno was the eldest daughter of Morikawa Yasutarō and Tora who emigrated to Hawaii in 1901 through an immigration company.⁷⁶ They were from the hamlet of Arashita in Kameyama village in Asa county near Hiroshima city. In Japan they left behind a baby daughter, Hatsuno, in the care of Tora's sister and parents. The three years in Hawaii were difficult, and unable to achieve their dreams, they moved to Canada. In Hawaii, another daughter, Asano Essie had been born in 1903.

In Canada, Yasutarō worked in a mill at Crofton, Vancouver Island where Tora bore a son Katsumi in 1907. Yasutarō heard of many Hiroshima people who had settled on the mainland on potential farmland. He bought a piece of land with a small house, located in Port Hammond, on the north shore of the Fraser after the couple had brought their daughter Hatsuno from Japan to

⁷⁵Otoichi's son George (1921-) was an excellent source of information not only on his uncle Zennosuke, but also on the impoverished life of a peasant family in a small village in Hiroshima, and the arduous but carefree life of a young nisei male in the 1930s.

⁷⁶Hazel Takii Morikawa, Footprints, One Man's Pilgrimage: A Biography of Jitsuo Morikawa (Berkeley: Jennings Associates, 1990), p. 12. Hazel Morikawa is the widow of Jitsuo Morikawa (1912-1987), the son of Yasutarō and Tora. After Jitsuo died, Hazel wrote his biography.

Canada. Hatsuno was then ten years old. Another son Jitsuo was born in 1912 but soon after his birth Tora died. Yasutarō, with the help of his two daughters, aged thirteen and eleven managed to carry on and later bought a ten-acre farm in the same neighbourhood. The Morikawa family lived in a converted barn for nine years and produced apples, strawberries, and garden vegetables.⁷⁷ Morikawa Yasutarō became well-known for his *nappa* [Chinese cabbage], which he sold fresh as well as pickled. A passage in the book that Jitsuo's widow Hazel wrote vividly describes the atmosphere in that converted barn:

A part of what made home such a special place was the mingling of many different smells. There was the pervasive aroma of the father's roll-your-own cigarettes that lingered long in the air over the large open barrels of *nappa* pickling in different stages in the mid-section of the barn. At mealtime meat and vegetables bubbled together in soy and sugar while next to it fish fried in a pan. The added smell from the kitchen would drift in the air, creating a rich mingling of smells to give their home that special appeal of soul food, simple living, a time for rest after work, a table full of people, good friends, the sound of Hiroshima dialect, happy voices, laughter and the contentment of belonging to a loving family.⁷⁸

Yasutarō went to Japan to remarry in 1919 just before his eldest daughter Hatsuno married Inouye Zennosuke in 1920. His second daughter Asano Essie Morikawa (1903-1996) married Shigehiro Otoichi a short while later, also in 1920.

⁷⁷Morikawa, Footprints, p. 22.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 24.

Essie and Otoichi farmed in Langley where they had seventeen children of whom fourteen survived to maturity.⁷⁹

Inouye Zennosuke also sponsored as *yobiyose* a relative of Shigehiro Otoichi, Shigehiro Saburō (1894-1995), in 1924. He was from Yagi village in Asa county. His wife Shizuko (1907-1986) joined Saburō in 1928, the year Saburō bought twenty-one acres of land in Surrey. Saburō and Shizuko had three sons, two of whom I interviewed together in October 1993 in Lethbridge. Although their mother had two siblings in Canada, the sons said that their parents had never given up their dream of returning to Japan. In 1936 the couple took their eldest son, Bob Minoru, to Japan and left him there. Anticipating return to the land of their birth, they had wanted this son to be educated there.⁸⁰

Sunada Naotarō (1879-1962) and Yuki (1890-1984), who farmed in Whalley, also found supporting their family a full-time challenge. Sunada Naotarō mentioned in chapter 4, had worked in a coal mine in the United States but eventually moved to Canada and became an independent logging contractor. The enforcement in 1924 of legislation prohibiting the employment of Japanese on

⁷⁹When I met Essie in 1989 she was a vibrant woman, appearing much younger. She died in March 1996, survived by fourteen children, thirty-five grandchildren, thirty-one great grandchildren, and three great great grandchildren.

⁸⁰Bob was able to return to Canada in 1949. In 1942, after they had been forced off their Surrey farm, Saburō, Shizuko and their two sons, Tom Kazumasa and Joe Shōzō moved to Alberta and farmed together for years. When Bob returned, he also worked with them. Saburō died in 1995 at the age of 101 years, and to his dying day rued the loss of his farm in Surrey. Interview with Bob and Tom Shigehiro, Lethbridge, October 1993.

Crown land halted Sunada's operations, according to Sunada Naotarō's second son Masato who was born on Lasqueti Island in 1924.⁸¹ Naotarō purchased twenty-five acres of bushland in Whalley in 1927.⁸² By 1941 he had cleared fifteen of these acres. Naotarō was the second son of a farming family with land that was not large enough or productive enough to feed many mouths so unsurprisingly Naotarō had emigrated. His older brother Shōjirō (1874-?) came to Canada in 1900 at the age of twenty-six but returned to Japan to take over his family's headship. Naotarō's wife, Yuki, joined her husband in 1908. Between the years 1914 and 1924, they had two girls and two boys, all born before they settled on the farm. The family struggled to make ends meet and it was necessary for the eldest son, Kenichi (1915-1973), to leave high school to help on the farm.⁸³

A *yobiyose* might be brought over not only to help on the farm but also to become a *yōshi* [adopted into the family] husband for a daughter. Itō Gihachi (1875-1962) and Kikuyo (1896-1962) started farming on fifteen acres in Surrey in 1929 after the closure of the Campbell River sawmill at White Rock, at which Gihachi was working. Okita Yonesō (1919-) came to the Itō farm as a *yobiyose*

⁸¹The Crown Timber Act is complicated legislation that is difficult to unravel. It appears to have been enforced on and off from 1903. See Adachi, Enemy, pp. 139-40 for some far from complete information.

⁸²Interview with Masato Sunada, in Lethbridge, October 1993.

⁸³Michael Hoshiko article, "How We Got to School in Surrey," Nikkei Voice (Toronto, June 1994), p. 6. The youngest, Masato (1924-), did graduate from high school but since he had "skipped" a year his schooling was shorter than his fellow graduates. He was certainly very eloquent and had a strong sense of family responsibility.

in 1935, when he was sixteen years old. Since the only son of Gihachi and Kikuyo had died in 1935 at the age of eight and the Itō family were concerned that there would not be a male heir, in 1940 Okita Yonesō and the daughter of Gihachi and Kikuyo, Itō Yeiko (1922-) were married and Okita was to be a *yōshi* husband. Because of the wartime emergency the marriage was not registered as an adoption into the family, and thus Okita has retained his surname.⁸⁴

Yamaga, Nakashima, Sasaki, Imada, Ohno, Inouye, Morikawa, Shigehiro, Sunada and Itō are only a few of the many Hiroshima families who achieved various degrees of success with their farming enterprises. None of their farms could have survived without the constant cooperative labour of wives, husbands, and children. Women in particular bore double burdens. Essie Shigehiro, for instance, the Hawaii-born nisei had seventeen babies and yet worked on the farm while raising her brood. Motherless at the age of eleven, she herself as a child had lived in a barn for years. The challenges were grim, not all women however could endure the poverty and the isolation. At least one that I am aware of committed suicide. The despair that drove this wife and mother to leave her young children behind and take her own life must have been overwhelming.

⁸⁴Itō Gihachi was from the village of Yoshitome in Futami county in eastern Hiroshima prefecture; Kikuyo from Fuchū village in Aki county; Okita was from Midori village in Asa county.

The Okanagan Valley

According to Charles Young and Helen Reid, the Japanese population in the Okanagan Valley in 1934 was about 750.⁸⁵ Distance from the coast and the harsher climate were likely reasons that Japanese immigrants did not gravitate there, although the biographies of men such as Yamaga, Nakashima, and Kudō remind us that individuals had gone there to see how things were. Those who did settle in the Okanagan found its relative lack of racial tension to be an attractive feature.

Well-documented records of the first Japanese men who went to the Okanagan area are sparse but stories abound.⁸⁶ The earliest Japanese arrival in the Okanagan Valley is said to have been a certain Mr. Katō from Hiroshima prefecture who was "boss" over thirty-four men at the Coldstream Ranch in Vernon. He had been recruited in Vancouver by the manager of this Ranch in about 1900. A few years later in 1903 a man from Shiga prefecture, Koyama

⁸⁵Young and Reid, Japanese Canadians, p. 56.

⁸⁶A 1995 publication, The Vision Fulfilled: Historical Sketches of Central Okanagan Japanese Canadian Families and Community Organization, 1894-1994, is to date the best source of information about Okanagan pioneers. Hoshizaki, Bill, ed., The Vision Fulfilled: Historical Sketches of Central Okanagan Japanese Canadian Families and Community Organizations, 1894-1994 (Kelowna, BC: Kelowna and District Association of Japanese Canadians, 1995). Fortunately, shortly before the publication deadline of this book, a 1930 Japanese language publication, *Kanada Nipponjin nōgyō hattengo* [Development of Japanese Farming in Canada] was discovered by the project researchers and in its original text was included in The Vision Fulfilled. It had been published by Jūzō Suzuki in 1930 as a supplement to The Canada Daily News [Kanada nichinichi], 116 Main Street, Vancouver, BC.

Eijirō, took over from Katō and remained boss until 1911.⁸⁷ The often mentioned Canadian Nippon Supply Company [*Nikka yōtatsusha*], in 1907 reputedly supplied men to work on a Coldstream Ranch irrigation project. Japanese men also picked fruit and worked in the packing plant of Coldstream Ranch. During the busy summer months they were paid \$1.40 a day for ten hours of labour. In the late fall and winter they were paid \$1.00 to \$1.25 per day. They were charged \$4.50 per month for room and board. In 1907 a fifty-pound bag of rice cost \$2.00, beef was seven cents a pound and liver was free.⁸⁸

According to one article in Kanada Nipponjin nōgyō hattengō, by the 1930s many of the packing houses in the Valley had mechanized, but smaller companies still hired Japanese workers. Some of these men apparently could work as fast as and more efficiently than machines.⁸⁹

From this beginning at the Coldstream Ranch, men gradually moved into farming either leasing land or arranging half-share contracts. In a half-share contract, one person provided the land, and the other, in this case the Japanese, the labour. The costs of fertilizer, seeds, and seedlings were shared equally and the profits were also divided equally. In 1930, 109 out of 134 Japanese

⁸⁷Hoshizaki, Vision, p. 279. Coldstream Ranch, a huge orchard fruit enterprise, became a familiar place to many during the Second World War when young nisei from the Slocan Valley camps were recruited to pick fruit at this ranch.

⁸⁸Ouchi, Ed. ed. 'Til We See the Light of Hope (Vernon, BC: Vernon Japanese Senior Citizen's Association, undated), p. 13.

⁸⁹ Hoshizaki, Visions, p. 295.

households in the Okanagan Valley were growing vegetables and tomatoes under this system on land owned by "Canadians."⁹⁰ In the Kanada Nipponjin nōgyō hattengō, there were articles by Japanese farmers who lived in the area, explaining practical aspects of their agricultural pursuits including the costs of farming, the long hours, the busy periods and the months of unemployment. Some writers urged emphasis on quality, not quantity, and discussed the advantages of producing ahead of the regular season.

It was not until January 1935 that the Vernon Japanese Farmers' Association [*Nōkai*] was organized. As soon as it was organized, it requested that the Federal Government include two "Orientals" [sic] on the Interior Vegetable Marketing Board in February of the same year. This was granted and at the March Marketing Board meeting a representative from the Japanese Farmers Association and one from the Chinese Growers were part of the five-member board.⁹¹ The *Nōkai* decided on wages and prices for its members' produce. For instance, the General Meeting in March 1936 discussed canning tomato prices and decided to ask canners for \$12.50 per ton ungraded, or fourteen dollars for Number One grade, and ten dollars for Number Two grade. They agreed that they would pay their workers twenty dollars per month with room and board from

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 304.

⁹¹Ouchi, Til the Lights, p. 29.

April to June and raise the wages to forty dollars per month with room and board from July to the end of the season.⁹²

The Okanagan Valley does not seem to have attracted many Hiroshima people. Of the total of eighty-five listed in the 1930 publication Kanada Nipponjin nōgyō hattengō, there were only five from Hiroshima.⁹³ The largest numbers of Japanese in the Okanagan were from Kagoshima, Shiga, and Wakayama prefectures. However, two Hiroshima men were especially important to the story of Japanese settlers in the Okanagan: Maehara Takuji (1888-1982) and Peter Cobyace (1895-1975).

Maehara Takuji was the eldest of three sons from Yoshino in Kōnu county in east central Hiroshima. As a seventeen-year-old he went to Hawaii before coming to Canada. Soon he and a few others were recruited by the Canadian Nippon Supply Company [*Nikka yōtatsusha*] and sent to Maple Creek, Saskatchewan only to discover that no employment existed for them there. They were abandoned with no provisions for transport back to British Columbia. They walked back, sharing one blanket, sleeping wherever they could, depending upon the kindness of farmers along the way.⁹⁴ Maehara Takuji arrived in Kelowna after a forty-two day ordeal on the road and remained there labouring at a variety of

⁹²Ibid., p. 30.

⁹³Hoshizaki, Visions, p. 269.

⁹⁴Nakayama, Issei, p. 99; Hoshizaki, Vision, p. 72. Maehara was mentioned earlier in chapter 3.

jobs before finding steady employment at the Rainbow Ranch in Okanagan Centre.

In 1919 Maehara Takuji returned to Japan to marry Tanabe Ayame (1901-1992) who had been born in Hawaii but had gone with her parents when they returned to Hiroshima. Together Takuji and Ayame went to the Rainbow Ranch where Maehara Ayame became the camp cook. Three daughters were born in 1921, 1922 and 1925. In 1926 the family went to Japan, but Takuji travelled back to Canada alone after a stay of one year. In 1929, leaving her two elder daughters behind, Ayame went back to Canada. The hard-working Maehara family, which soon included three sons as well as youngest daughter Mitsuko, grew fruit and vegetables in Bear Creek (across the lake from Kelowna) for many years on leased land until purchasing an orchard in Rutland.

According to Gordon Nakayama, a variety of apple named the Maehara Delicious, was discovered by Maehara Takuji in 1956. Maehara noticed some "brilliant red apples" on a lower branch of a green apple tree.⁹⁵ He propagated these apples and sent samples to experimental stations across North America. He was clearly a keen and capable orchardist.

Like many members of the farming community, Maehara Takuji became a Christian and was an active member of the Japanese United Church. As eldest son, he would have been the sole heir to his family's property in Japan before the end of the war and would have been one of the heirs to it after the war. But no

⁹⁵Nakayama, Issei, p. 100.

legal transfer of such property to him seems to have been made during his lifetime.⁹⁶

Kobayashi Peter Takeyoshi (1895-1975) commonly known as Peter Cobyace, arrived in Kelowna in 1918.⁹⁷ Little other information is available about his early background except that he was a Waseda University graduate and he was from Hiroshima prefecture. While *en route* to New York on a student visa, he suddenly took a detour after meeting a Japanese resident of Kelowna during a stopover in Vancouver.⁹⁸

Cobyace worked at first on a white man's farm in the Kelowna area but soon started growing vegetables independently on leased land. He had a good command of English and negotiated freely with white owners in packing and shipping businesses. Soon he was expanding and hiring many Japanese workers. He was described as "one of the first J/C [Japanese Canadian] farmers to own his own land, and use modern power equipment, to farm on a larger scale."⁹⁹

He was not just a successful farmer. Gaining the confidence of the Japanese community, he became an organizer and an executive officer of the

⁹⁶A fairly complete biography of Maehara can be assembled since his story has appeared in Gordon Nakayama's Issei and the recent Kelowna District book. (Nakayama, Issei, pp. 99-101; Hoshizaki, Vision, pp. 72-73.) I also interviewed Maehara's third daughter Mitsuko (Mrs. Roy Ito) in Hamilton, November 1992.

⁹⁷Hoshizaki, Visions, pp. 18-20.

⁹⁸There is no listing in any of my other sources, except in the Tairiku 1941 publication in which he is listed as Kobayashi Takeyoshi, Box 773, Kelowna, BC.

⁹⁹Hoshizaki, Visions, p. 19.

Kelowna *Konwakai* [literally, "a gathering for familial talk, a social club"]. A colourful character, he drove large ostentatious cars even though "he needed a couple of cushions to get himself up high enough to see through the windshield."¹⁰⁰ Similar to other women who lived on the Fraser Valley berry farms, his wife Kimi (?-1988), whom Peter married in 1935, also worked. There is a photo in the Kelowna Japanese history book of Kimi Cobyace on a ladder, picking apples.¹⁰¹ Kimi and Peter were Christians, active in the Okanagan United Church.¹⁰²

Southern Alberta

According to the 1941 Canadian census, there were only 578 Japanese living in Alberta in 1941; in other words, only 2.5 percent of the Japanese in Canada.¹⁰³ The majority were farmers who made a "significant contribution to the economy and development of Southern Alberta."¹⁰⁴ They were not restricted by discriminatory statutes as in British Columbia. Unlike their counterparts in

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Cobyace and the *Konwakai* tried to assist Japanese Canadians to relocate into the Okanagan Valley during the Pacific War. They were largely unsuccessful in this effort since coastal Japanese Canadians were, except for exceptional cases, prevented from moving into the Okanagan area. See Patricia E. Roy, "A Tale of Two Cities: The Reception of Japanese Evacuees in Kelowna and Kaslo, B.C.," BC Studies 87 (Autumn 1990): 23-47.

¹⁰³ Audrey Kobayashi, A Demographic Profile of Japanese Canadians, Dept. of the Secretary of State, Canada (September 1989), p. 6.

¹⁰⁴ Iwaasa, Two Monographs, Preface.

British Columbia who could not vote municipally, provincially, or federally, Albertans of Japanese ancestry had the franchise, and some had even held public office.¹⁰⁵ As noted earlier, during the First World War issei who were refused enlistment in the armed forces in British Columbia travelled to Alberta to join the armed services.

To date, the only noteworthy research on the Alberta Japanese community has been carried out by David Iwaasa as a summer project in 1972 while he was a student at the University of Lethbridge.¹⁰⁶ Iwaasa found that some of the early Japanese pioneers had come across the border from the United States but that the majority of Japanese in Alberta had come from British Columbia. After living for a short period in the coastal province, they "had either been frustrated in their efforts to accumulate wealth or were not satisfied with the restricted situation that existed in that province and moved to Alberta."¹⁰⁷ However, many who came during the seven years from 1908 to 1914 were eventually driven out of Alberta by the extreme weather and the harsh working conditions.

The largest number of Japanese workers brought to Alberta came to work on the railroad and on an irrigation system near Gleichen under contract to the

¹⁰⁵In British Columbia, since the Japanese were not on the provincial voters list, they could not vote federally or municipally. See Young and Reid, Japanese Canadians, pp. 129-30.

¹⁰⁶Iwaasa, Two Monographs.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 3.

CPR by the Canadian Nippon Supply Company in 1907.¹⁰⁸ The Knight Sugar Company also brought in Japanese labourers in 1908 and 1909 to "break land" and to work on the sugar beet farms, but these workers earned only fifteen to sixteen dollars after a whole year and consequently many left.¹⁰⁹ However, some hardy souls remained and eventually started farming individually or as part of co-operatives. These individuals later formed the nucleus of the Japanese community in Southern Alberta. In 1910 some started producing potatoes and other vegetables for market.¹¹⁰

Iwaasa Kōjun (1882- ?), a Hiroshima emigrant was one of these early farming pioneers. He was a relative of Iwaasa Matsutarō, one of the first group of contract workers that had arrived in Cumberland in 1891. Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs' records note that Kōjun emigrated as a student in 1898 at the age of fourteen. He went to Cumberland and worked in Matsutarō's grocery store and in the Dunsmuir mines. Later he went to San Francisco where he learned English working as a houseboy. After a stint on the railroad in western United States, in 1907 he went to Alberta. Undoubtedly it was his command of English that enabled him to work as a foreman for a sugar beets work crew. By 1909 he was established as an independent farmer in Raymond. His earliest years after

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 14.

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 17.

emigration were recorded meticulously in his diaries.¹¹¹ In 1914, Iwaasa Kōjun was prepared to settle down and have a family so he wrote to his parents in Japan for a wife and in 1915, his wife Ito (1893-?) arrived.¹¹² She was a cultured, well-educated divorcee and mother of two children whom she left behind with her natal family when she emigrated. (See Chapter 5.) It was a lonely, alien life for her but the couple produced ten children, nine of whom grew into adulthood and became active members of the community.

Supported by his wife, Kōjun settled into the life of a farmer and community leader. He helped build a small credit union among the Japanese and in 1914, the Raymond Japanese Society [*Raymond Nihonjin kyōkai*] and the Meirō Youth Society [*Meirō seinenkai*].¹¹³ Under Iwaasa Kōjun, its first president, the Raymond Japanese Society had five objectives: to promote the social well-being of the Japanese in Raymond; to create better relations and greater cooperation with white residents; to stimulate progress and development of the Japanese in Raymond; to provide financial assistance to those Japanese in need; and to assist in bringing more Japanese farm labourers to Southern Alberta. This organization played a major role in the establishment of a Buddhist Church in Raymond in 1929. Yet, Iwaasa in 1944 joined the Mormon Church following his children who had already done so. His activities were not solely within the Japanese

¹¹¹Information received from interview of grandson, David Iwaasa, April 1993, in Tokyo when David was on the staff of the Canadian embassy there.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 30.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 21.

community; in the late 1920s, he served two three-year terms as a public school trustee. He is probably the first Japanese Canadian to hold public office. Iwaasa brought two younger brothers to Alberta as well as other *yobiyose* farm workers such as Kubota Takayuki and Hino Takao.

Plagued by difficult family circumstances, Kubota Takayuki (1898-1993) was unable to do little more than give his five children shelter and sustenance. Yet he doggedly fought poverty and illness and lived to the age of ninety-five, determined to carry on to the end. Kubota came from Nishiwa village in Kamo county in central Hiroshima and was the second son in a peasant family with six sons and one daughter. The family property was only about four *tan* [approximately one acre], so he was adopted by an uncle, a Mr. Uyeki who was a post office clerk. However, Takayuki was reluctant to follow in his uncle's occupational footsteps, aspiring to farm. His birth father had spent six years in San Francisco and had returned with savings that were used to improve the family property. In 1917, Kubota Takayuki's reluctance to take up his adopted father's occupation together with dreams of making a fortune in "*Amerika*" led him to Alberta as *yobiyose* to Iwaasa Kōjun.¹¹⁴ A few years later, Kubota Takayuki's brother, Hino Takao (1901-1992) who had been adopted into the Hino family also came to Canada. Takao, however, returned to Japan ten years later. He seems to have done

¹¹⁴David Iwaasa noted that in his conversations with Southern Alberta pioneers he was told that the *yobiyose* paid their own fare to Canada and that they guaranteed three years labour to their sponsors who paid them \$150 the first year but by the third year they often received \$300, along with room and board. *Ibid.*, p. 34. It appears that contracts varied from region to region.

relatively well because in Alberta he managed to buy property on which he grew potatoes before going back to Japan.¹¹⁵

Kubota Takayuki apparently borrowed his boat fare to Vancouver from his adopted father. When he arrived, he stayed at the *Hiroshimaya*, Satō Mohei's rooming house on Alexander Street before leaving for Alberta. In 1928 he travelled to Japan and married but was unable to bring his wife to Canada because during that year immigration laws had been tightened to bar picture brides.¹¹⁶ With the 1928 changes women under very stringent regulations became included in the 150 quota allowed for Japanese immigrants. If Kubota had pushed hard, he eventually might have persuaded authorities to permit his wife to come to Canada, but probably his straightened economic circumstances made pursuing this end difficult.¹¹⁷ At any rate, in 1936, he married a young girl of Czechoslovakian descent and they had five children. The marriage was a stormy one, for he was a dour, hard-working man and his wife, who was years younger than him, wanted much more than he could offer. He eventually raised the children on his own. Kubota Takayuki, who had eight years of schooling, kept a

¹¹⁵Takao sold his farm to Iwaasa Jirō, a nephew of Kōjun before Takao returned to Japan to look after his adopted parents. When one of Kōjun's daughters visited him in Japan in 1972, she observed that Takao appeared to have done well. Married in 1936, he had fathered six children and was living in an impressive house in 1972. Hino Takao died in 1992 at the age of ninety-one.

¹¹⁶Adachi, *Enemy*, p. 138.

¹¹⁷Kado Shizuo (1904-), a Surrey farmer, related how difficult it had been for his wife, Tokuyo (1908-), to emigrate in 1934. Shizuo had to show he had assets valued at \$2,000. The immigration authorities came to his farm to check whether he had suitable housing and other facilities. Interview, November 1992.

diary. When he was struggling with his marriage partner and later singlehandedly raising his children, he poured out all his problems in his diary. His next wife, Tamako, whom he married in Japan in 1962, thought it was much too private for others to read.¹¹⁸

The farming life was difficult for the families that lived it, especially the children. Children were involved in the family farm from an early age because their labour was essential. This was especially so in the Fraser Valley berry farms. The children not only travelled long distances to school but also worked on family farms before and after school hours. The fortunate ones had bicycles but others walked to and from schools and elsewhere. In the busy season, some youngsters worked in the fields from daybreak and were driven to school just before the last bell. I recall my husband Karl Ayukawa telling me that he envied his younger sister "who had to only babysit" while he and his older sister hoed, picked berries and did other field tasks. When farmers' sons reached maturity, the majority left to work elsewhere in lumber camps, sawmills, pulp and paper mills and mines. Yet, they were obliged to give their earnings to their families. Few were able to

¹¹⁸In the early 1960s, Kubota sold his farm, went to Japan and remarried. Although in 1966 he had a colostomy after an operation for cancer of the bowel, he carried on, riding his exercise bike seven miles and running on his indoor power walker every day. Tamako proved to be a devoted partner who brought some well-earned sunshine to his long and difficult life. She teaches Japanese brush painting and calligraphy while basking in the love and companionship of Iwaasa Kōjun's children. Kubota was interviewed by David Iwaasa in 1972 and the tape from the interview is available in the Lethbridge National Association of Japanese Canadians Archives. My interview of Kubota Tamako was carried out in Lethbridge, October 1993.

receive post-secondary education. Yet by the 1940s many such children, like their elders, were part of flourishing family farming enterprises while other nisei and issei had laid promising foundations for agricultural production.

Farming communities benefitted from some dynamic leadership but all Japanese farming families, by necessity, had to learn to deal co-operatively with the market, each other, and white growers. But farming families felt independent because they worked their own land. Their long hours were their own; they decided what they would grow and what they would do every day. By the 1930s, they were usually assured of shelter at least, and grew much of their own food. This however, did not apply to those Japanese who continued to labour in the primary industries of British Columbia and were much more dependent on others—at work, their bosses, and in their daily lives, the Japanese communal collectivity. Such people did not have the assurance of shelter or food. Their jobs were not guaranteed, nor were their wages, and often they were undermined by their "benefactors," the "bosses."

CHAPTER 7

THE URBAN COMMUNITY: LABOUR VERSUS CAPITAL?

By the 1930s, approximately half the population of Japanese Canadians in Canada lived in cities of over 30,000 population. One third of these urban dwellers lived in Vancouver.¹ There were the tradespeople with their assorted businesses that provided goods and services; some to the city at large, and others mainly to residents of the Japanese community. Many of the city dwellers were also labourers who worked in the urban area sawmills and other labour intensive industries. Many families of men who worked in the remote areas preferred to live in Vancouver where educational facilities for the children were better and their men-folk returned to them in the off-season. Families with female househeads or families that required the women to work for survival also lived in the urban areas. In the finer residential neighbourhoods in Vancouver, there were a few doctors and dentists with families, affluent households of men who were "bosses," owners of prosperous stores, managers or owners of lumber camps, sawmills, and fish processing companies. The Japanese community was not a uniform mass since there were vast economic differences within it. And despite

¹Young and Helen Reid, Japanese Canadians, p. 68.

its cooperation, mutual aid and socialization, the community also harboured hidden grievances and open animosities.

Tradespeople and Free-Lancing Women

There were many Japanese small businesses. According to Young and Reid, in 1931 trading licenses were held by one out of every ten Japanese and 858 out of a total of 12,532 trading licenses in Vancouver were in Japanese hands.² These tradespeople included dressmakers, cleaners and pressers, and grocers scattered throughout the city; within the Powell Street area were lodging-house keepers, fish dealers, bathhouse managers, and proprietors of shops specializing in Japanese goods. In Victoria too, there were a number of Japanese-owned shops.

Wherever there was a substantial concentration of Japanese as in a company town related to primary industries, there was usually a Japanese food and goods store.

Many of these enterprises were run by Hiroshima emigrants. The Kumamoto family that had a cleaning and pressing establishment in Vancouver's West End was mentioned in Chapter 5. Such businesses were well-patronized by non-Japanese clientele since the service was very good. The Japanese cleaners not only painstakingly spot-cleaned each garment but also made alterations and repairs at moderate cost. Most of these businesses were family owned and operated. The husband did the cleaning, pressing, pick-up and delivery and the

²Ibid., p. 74.

wife and adult daughters did the alterations. In addition, many such enterprises included dress-making. The female contributions were vital.

Businesses such as the Kumamoto's relied on white customers, but businesses along Powell Street in the heart of Vancouver's Little Tokyo served the Japanese. The majority of these shops were owned by emigrants from Shiga prefecture, but some were run by Hiroshima people. Barber shops were common since they required relatively little cash to set up. Sumida noted that in 1927 fifty-three barber shop licenses had been issued to Japanese in Vancouver. Based on an interview he did in 1934 of an executive member of the Japanese Barbers' Association, Sumida wrote:

The first Japanese barber shop was opened about 1907, and by 1910, there were about 15. These shops were all small, but the trade attracted many who wished to settle down, and who liked to live in the city. For about \$50 one could take a course at a barber school, and then open a small shop with about \$500 to \$800. These barber shops were first opened on Powell Street, and were often run by wives, while their husbands worked outside, usually in the saw-mills. Since then, the number of shops gradually increased, and spread to other parts of the city. Before the depression following 1930, there were about 100 Japanese barber shops in the city, each earning an average of \$150-200 gross income. At present, there are about 55-60 shops, earning an average of \$80-100 gross income.³

The Tairiku 1909 noted that Kumamoto Kasaku (1886-1951) had a barber shop on 207 Powell Street. He was the older brother of Kumamoto Jun (1900-1985)

³Sumida, M.A. thesis, p. 391. The income quoted is presumably, per month.

who together with his wife, Toshiko (1906-1994), operated the dry-cleaning and alterations business, mentioned earlier.⁴

Another early Hiroshima emigrant who became a barber was Nakagawa Gentarō (?-1935). According to the 1909 list, Nakagawa with two employees ran a barber shop at 307 Powell Street.⁵ Nakagawa was from Shitami village in Kamo county. This area has now become part of East Hiroshima city. His wife, Mine (1884-?), joined him in Vancouver in 1911. Doubtless because they were childless, they adopted a young man, Kuroda (later, Nakagawa) Masashi (1899-1982), the second son of five sons in a family in their home village. Masashi emigrated in 1919 at the age of nineteen. At that time Nakagawa Gentarō and Mine owned a toy store on Powell Street. The adopted son returned to Japan to marry and records note that his wife Ai (1905-) came to Canada in 1926 at the age of twenty-one. Their son Paul Masaaki Nakagawa was born in 1930. Gentarō died when Paul was about five or six years old. There appears to have been a major disagreement between the widow and her adopted son for the store was sold and the widow returned to Japan.⁶ Masashi started working at a sawmill in

⁴Kasaku came to Canada in 1907 at the age of twenty-one. Later he became a berry farmer in Port Hammond.

⁵He was on the interim board of trustees of the Hiroshima prefectural society in 1906 according to Nakayama, Kanada no hōko, p. 1610. He was also one of the founding members of the Buddhist Church in Vancouver. Kanada Bukkyōkai Kyōdan, Kanada Bukkyōkai enkaku shi [History of the Buddhist Church of Canada] (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1981) p. 21.

⁶The adopted son's son, Paul, whom I interviewed in Toronto in October 1992, had been a young child at the time and only recalled that his father had been a teacher's training school graduate and was not accustomed to physical

Port Alice but his marriage ended shortly after. His wife and son went to Japan, but he stayed behind. One of the two employees in Nakagawa Gentarō's early barber shop in 1909 at 307 Powell Street was, according to Paul Nakagawa, Shishido Masajirō. Paul recalled that Shishido was more like a son to Gentarō than Paul's own father, Nakagawa (former Kuroda) Masashi, the adopted young man. Shishido (1881-195?) came from Takeya district in Hiroshima city, and came to Canada in 1908 at the age of twenty-six. His wife Shū (1888-?) arrived with a three-year-old daughter at the age of twenty-six in 1912.

Shishido was a barber himself and a father of four children by the time he enlisted in the 192nd Overseas Battalion of the Canadian Armed Forces in the First World War.⁷ Shishido was injured on August 16, 1917, when a shrapnel hit the area near a shoulder blade and penetrated his right breast.⁸

labour and had difficulty finding suitable employment. If Masashi emigrated when he was nineteen, it appears that he could not have put in the mandatory years of teaching so there may be some misunderstanding here. Discussed in Chapter 6.

⁷"The 192nd Battalion of Blairmore, Alberta, enlisted 50 Japanese Canadians. . . . The Japanese Canadian volunteers were sent to France to join the 10th Battalion." Roy Ito, We Went to War, p. 61.

⁸Shishido's service history was noted from a copy of a claim Shishido later made to the Dominion H.Q. Service Bureau on May 9, 1931, appealing for a renewal of his pension since his injuries made it difficult to support himself and his family of five children. The copy was received from his granddaughter, Sharon Ault of Port Alberni by mail, January, 1995. Shishido was "repatriated" to Japan in October 1946 with his wife, son, daughter-in-law and two of his daughters. They were unable to return to his home in Hiroshima city which had been destroyed by the atom bomb and were forced to remain at Uruga where they had disembarked. A nephew, back from battles overseas, eventually took them to Tokyo. There, bedridden with a stroke, Shishido was cared for by his daughter-in-law. It was only after his death that his son and wife were able to return to

Another early pioneer from Hiroshima who was the proprietor of a barber shop at one time was Hayami Kometarō (1868-1950). He was an adopted son of the Hayami family of Takasaka village in Toyota county an area east of Hiroshima city. Hayami married in 1897. Three years later, after a failed business venture in Kobe, he emigrated with his wife Kise (1879-1953) in 1900. The couple at first worked for a white doctor's family in Victoria, then went up the coast to work at the Arrandale Cannery on the Nass River before settling in Vancouver in 1907. There they operated a barber shop and a western-style bathhouse at 105 Pender Street. During this period, Kise gave birth to six sons of whom four survived. The businesses must have done well because Kometarō and Kise returned to Japan in 1911 and Kometarō paid back the money that he had borrowed from his adopted father for his failed Kobe business venture.

In 1913 Hayami Kometarō, Kise, and family returned to Canada and started another barber shop in the Powell Street area. In 1930, after their eldest son Masato (1902-1992), who had taken a bride, Kaoru, from Kuwanashi village in Toyota county in 1928 was well settled, the elder Hayami couple returned to Japan with their fifteen-year-old daughter Chiyeko.⁹ The sons who remained in

Canada to resume their lives. Information received from Sharon Ault, who received it from Katie Shishido, wife of Masaichi's son George.

⁹Chiyeko returned to Canada in 1953 after her father had died in 1950, and her mother in 1953. She had spent twenty-three years taking care of her parents. Determined to return to Canada someday, she married only after her return.

Canada thrived, successfully operating Hayami Radio, and Hayami Wood and Coal, on Powell Street.¹⁰

Thus, it appears that Hayami Kometarō and Kise achieved their goals and were able to retire in Japan. Although they lost two sons in infancy, when they retired to the land of their birth, they left four adult sons behind in Canada. These sons may have sent money to them regularly. The fourth son, Yoshio, went to Japan in 1936 when he was twenty-seven to care for his parents and to later inherit his parents' property there. He was conscripted into the Japanese army a year later, however, and was killed in action in China in 1940.¹¹

As the Japanese population in British Columbia increased, many still lived in the Powell Street area, but others moved away from this central core that served predominantly Japanese permanent and transient residents. Social life was still concentrated in the Powell Street region and although some Japanese Canadians bought cars, many relied on taxis. The first Japanese taxi business was begun in 1914 and by 1920 there were seven, one of which was owned by Yamashita Shintarō.¹² Yamashita was from Ogata village in Saeki county, just west of Hiroshima city. He had emigrated in 1912.¹³ By the 1930s, his company, Yama

¹⁰They are listed in the 1941 Japanese Business Directory as being on the 300 block Powell Street.

¹¹Interviews with Hayami Kaoru and her daughter Kathleen were conducted in Montreal, October 1992.

¹²Sumida, M.A. thesis, pp. 391-92.

¹³There is very little written information about him. His daughter, Teruko, was a classmate of mine in 1937-38, but we have lost touch with each other. I

Taxi, located at 205 Gore Avenue was the best-known taxi company in the Japanese community with the largest fleet. His clientele was almost entirely Japanese.

Although there were a number of Japanese confectioners who produced and sold sweets, and other people who made *tofu*, two Hiroshima emigrants had an enterprise that required much more daring and investment. The two manufactured *miso* [fermented soy-bean paste] and soy sauce. Amano Teiichi (1890-?) was from Yamate village, and his brother-in-law, Sakamoto Noriyuki (1906-) from Fukuyama city, both in Numakuma county which is in the easternmost region of Hiroshima prefecture.¹⁴ Amano came to Canada at the age of seventeen in 1907. According to Canadian government records, he re-entered Canada in 1910 as a "logging camp boss" and his wife Asano (1891-?) came in 1916. The designation "logging camp boss" shows that he was an enterprising man. He amassed sufficient money to buy a truck and carry on a transport business.¹⁵ Then with his brother-in-law he started manufacturing *miso* and soy sauce in Vancouver in the early thirties under the trade name of Maruten.¹⁶

recall that one of the drivers was another Hiroshima emigrant's son, a well-known singer, "Fatty" Kumano.

¹⁴Amano's and Sakamoto's given names may have been pronounced differently since the Chinese characters [*kanji*] that make up a given name can be read in different ways.

¹⁵Chūgoku Shinbun, *Imin*, p. 126.

¹⁶The Vancouver and Area Japanese Phone Directory, published in June 1941, gives the address as 2141 Dundas Street, Vancouver.

Sakamoto was the younger brother of Amano's wife, Asano, and had come to Canada in 1926 at the age of twenty. Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs records list him as a "domestic."

After Amano and Sakamoto decided to produce and sell these two very basic condiments for Japanese cuisine, Sakamoto went to Japan to learn the manufacturing process for *miso*. It was not necessary to formally study the brewing of soy sauce since Amano had come from a family of soy sauce producers.

Miso had the shorter production period so the would-be entrepreneurs started with it. At that time in the early 1930s imported *miso* sold locally at thirteen cents a pound. Selling their product at ten cents a pound created an immediate market. Soon they proceeded to make soy sauce with Canadian wheat, which they found to be very suitable. In less than a decade, they had a booming business with three employees.¹⁷

On the seven hundred block of Powell Street, a few blocks from the crowded shops in Little Tokyo was the highly successful shrimp business of Araki Buemon (1891-1974). A third son, trained as a master carpenter in Hiba county in the north-east corner of Hiroshima prefecture, he emigrated in 1908 at the age of seventeen and spent his first Canadian years boat building in Steveston. Later,

¹⁷Chūgoku Shinbun, *Imin*, pp. 126-28. During the Pacific War, the two families "self-evacuated" to Revelstoke where due to repeated requests by the Japanese Canadians for *miso* and soy sauce, they began manufacturing again. They have since returned to Burnaby and Amano's son-in-law and grandsons have continued the business, now under the trade name of Amano.

he fished, and in the off-season built boats. However a disastrous fire in the early 1920s left him destitute. Another boat builder, Hisaoka Bunji, also from Hiba county, offered him temporary accommodations in Bidwell Bay on the north shore of the Burrard Inlet. There, Araki started shrimp fishing.¹⁸ There were a number of shrimp fishermen at that time. They all dragged their nets on to the shore. Araki was more innovative and venturesome. He invented traps and on the advice of a white man, fished outside the First Narrows, outside the entrance to Burrard Inlet, which is now spanned by the Lions Gate Bridge. He did very well. By the beginning of the 1940s he had a well-established business at 762 Powell Street. Araki constructed the building himself which included his store, working area and family apartment. Although it was a family operation, he hired many hand shrimp peelers in the busy season.¹⁹

A rather unusual enterprise, which comprised a beautiful Japanese garden and a pavilion that served English tea, was the Japanese Tea Garden at Gorge Park in Victoria on Vancouver Island. Kishida Yoshijirō, from Kanagawa prefecture and Takata Hayato, from Hiroshima prefecture formed a partnership in 1903 to create a popular playground for family outings adjacent to the Gorge Inlet. Kishida was the "idea man," who summoned his father, Isaburō, a landscape gardener, to British Columbia to design and landscape the Japanese

¹⁸A short biography of Hisaoka appears in Nakayama, pp. 314-16. My father also at one time worked at his boat works in the mid-1930s.

¹⁹Interview with Araki Buemon's second son, Takeru Araki, July 1993.

garden at Gorge Park. Kishida was later commissioned to plan a Japanese garden at Butchart Gardens and also at Hatley Park which was the home of James Dunsmuir.²⁰ Takata looked after the everyday management of the popular tea-house.

Takata Hayato was from Niho village in Aki county, now Mukainada an area within Hiroshima city. During the Tokugawa era, his family had hired people to harvest sea-weed and make *nori* [laver]. Their ships ventured through the strait of Shimonoseki going as far as Tsushima Island to catch squid. The inhabitants of Niho village depended almost entirely on the sea for their livelihood since there was very little land which was suitable for growing rice. In the Meiji era the prosperous Takata family, like many others, fell on hard times.²¹ As discussed in Chapter 2, the building of a deep-sea port at Ujina near Niho village destroyed oyster and seaweed beds and destroyed the livelihood of fishermen.

Takata Hayato was the second son of a branch line of the Takata family. The eldest three of this family of four sons emigrated, although the eldest, Naoto, eventually returned to Japan. Hayato emigrated in 1899. Hayato learned English by working in white homes and hotels for several years before starting the Tea Garden with Kishida. The third Takata son, Kensuke (1884-1979), emigrated in

²⁰Takata, *Nikkei Legacy*, p. 76.

²¹Interview with Takata Motoko, niece of Takata Hayato in Hiroshima city, April 22, 1993. Toyo Takata, Motoko's Canadian-born cousin, son of Kensuke, was unaware of this. He recalled that the family had been soy sauce producers.

1903 at the age of nineteen. He joined his brother Naoto at Rivers Inlet, fished in summer and worked in a sawmill in the winter before he joined his brother Hayato's enterprise in Victoria after Kishida left in 1923. By the time Kensuke became his brother's partner, the business was not doing as well as it had been. Previously the park had been a popular picnic area where families went on excursions, had English tea at the pavilion, paddled boats in the Gorge Inlet, and enjoyed the beautiful garden. But many families now had motor cars and they were travelling further afield. Nevertheless, the two brothers continued to operate the Tea House until they were "evacuated" in the spring of 1942. In an interview in Hiroshima, the daughter of the fourth Takata son, the only one who had remained in Japan, recalled that her father used to go to Miyajima, a popular island for tourists near Hiroshima city to buy trinkets to be sold at the Takata tea-garden.²²

The Takata Kensuke family was the sole Japanese Canadian family that lived in Esquimalt. Kensuke had promised his wife that she would not have to

²²Miyajima is also called Itsukushima and is noted for its spectacular fall foliage, the giant *torii* [Shinto shrine archway] surrounded by water, and especially for the beautiful Shinto shrines "dedicated to the three daughters of Susano-o: Tagori-hime, Takitsu-hime, and Itsukushima-hime, the last of whom has given her name to the island." (Papinot, Dictionary of Japan, p. 219.) Miyajima has been connected with the twelfth century Taira clan of warriors which was descended from one of the sons of emperor Kwammu [Kammu] who ascended the throne in 782. See also Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan, 1983, s.v. "Itsukushima," and "Itsukushima shrine."

work outside the home in Canada.²³ The promise was kept, but she lived a lonely life rarely meeting with other Japanese women. She devoted herself to her children, undertaking their Japanese language education. At one time she returned to Japan with her children; yet, finding life with her husband's family difficult, she again came to Canada. She chose loneliness in Canada over the difficulties of living with an autocratic sister-in-law who had returned to her natal home after a failed marriage. Takata Kensuke had more contact with people than his wife did because he went every Saturday to the Ozawa Hotel at 820 Fisgard Street, Victoria, to play Japanese card games with other Japanese men.²⁴

One of the first Japanese medical doctors was Ishihara Meinosuke who started his practice in 1901. It has been suggested by some informants that he was from Hiroshima prefecture but this could not be confirmed. His name does not appear in any of my Hiroshima data lists. His educational background is also unknown. Dr. Ishihara, a tall, grey-haired, bespectacled and very kind man treated me twice for a dislocated shoulder in the early 1930s.²⁵

²³Mrs. Takata's natal family was Miyake. She was from Yagi village in Asa county.

²⁴Interviews with their eldest son, Toyo Takata, carried out on a number of occasions, 1992-1995.

²⁵There were a number of younger men who practised, but they were most often graduates from medical schools in the United States since British Columbia did not have a medical school, and other provinces did not accept Japanese. See M. Miyasaki, My Sixty Years in Canada (Kamloops, BC: By the author, 1973), p. 110.

Practitioners of Japanese medicine were popular in the Japanese community. They used massage, moxa and other Asian treatments. One of these was Takeyasu Nobuichi whose clientele reached beyond the Japanese community and even into the United States. Takeyasu was mentioned in Chapter 5 regarding his close relationship with his wife, Shizuyo, who gave up a life of luxury to be with him. Takeyasu studied medicine in Hiroshima city from 1921 to 1926. During most of his time in Canada he was legally unable to practise medicine but from approximately 1927 to 1932 he did so. His son George recalled to me in a letter dated May 27, 1996 that his father had an office that overlooked Powell Grounds [Oppenheimer Park]. Takeyasu's treatments attracted many white people. George wrote:

I don't remember very much of the time he was practising but I do remember a young girl or lady with a leg problem. Since the building didn't have an elevator, she had to be carried up by her two attendants. But in the end she was able to walk up by herself. She made quite a lasting impression on my very young mind because on her last visit she gave me a big hug and I remembered how nice she smelt.

Very much later, I was probably in about grade six or so, as I was rummaging through Dad's medical books and correspondence, I came across a letter from a lady in Texas thanking Dad for all he was able to do for her. From the content and the faint scent, I surmised that it was from the same lady. There were [sic] a whole apple box of other testimonial letters. Most of them were from all over USA, at least, the English ones were.

I don't know what exactly he practised. I know it wasn't acupuncture or herbs. . . . Whatever it was, it must have been effective. What I can remember about his medical books, they seemed like it was conventional medicine.²⁶

²⁶Letter, May 27, 1996.

In an earlier letter, George mentioned the American girl.

Her father was a rich oil millionaire and she had been taken to doctors all over USA before coming to Dad and the letters were telling Dad how she was cured and what a happy life she was leading. [There was another] from a person from New York in a similar vein.²⁷

It appears that Takeyasu may have been forced to close his medical office because after 1932 the family moved to Ruskin in the Fraser Valley.²⁸

Within the urban setting, there were other independent individuals who worked as gardeners for a predominantly white clientele. Some worked alone, while others ran larger operations that involved seeking and arranging contracts, and then assigning workers their daily schedules. Working in such a setup was highly convenient for those who lacked facility in the English language. For people like my carpenter father with language difficulties, gardening under a "boss" was a periodic life-saving source of income.

Many of the businesses along Powell Street were small shops and shoe-string enterprises. Some had hired help, but such concerns were staffed predominantly by family members; all worked extremely hard to make a living. There were a few large businesses such as T. Maekawa, a dry goods store, and Furuya, which handled dry goods and foodstuffs. The latter was a branch of a Seattle company

²⁷Letter from George Takeyasu dated October 23, 1993.

²⁸Takeyasu, who had been a journeyman carpenter before he emigrated in 1906, henceforth worked as a boat carpenter in Vancouver from spring to fall. Letter from George, August 1996.

that not only operated a large store in the Japanese town but also sent young men [*banto*, clerks] throughout the province to receive requisitions and make deliveries. The service was a godsend to housebound women everywhere.²⁹

There were a number of unheralded strong women who worked at various jobs to support their families or provide their families with "extras." Such contributions have rarely been recognized except in the recollections of the children of such women. Ishihara Kikuno mentioned earlier in Chapter 5, supplemented her husband's meagre Workmen's Compensation payments by taking in laundry and ironing.³⁰ The influence of a strong determined woman was clearly evident in an interview I conducted in October 1992 in Montreal with Dr. Henry Ryusuke Shibata, a renowned cancer surgeon and specialist. Henry's father, Shibata Hatsuzō (1895-?), was from Koami district in Hiroshima city. He was the second son of a family that had been in the entertainment business and had at one time owned a great deal of property. But much of the family property was lost through mismanagement. Because there was little left that Hatsuzō could inherit, he emigrated to Canada in 1919 at the age of twenty-four. In British Columbia he worked primarily as a cook here and there, but he was restless. His wife Tomiko (1906-1962), whom he married in 1929, supplemented his earnings

²⁹I recall the regular visits of the "order-taker" in the months preceding and following the birth of my younger brother. My mother relied on the Furuya salesman for practically all the family needs.

³⁰Montreal, October 1992, telephone interview with Joe Horibe, husband of eldest daughter Ruth.

by working evenings as an entertainer. She played the *samisen* [Japanese lute] at Fukusuke, a restaurant in the Powell Street area. Their eldest son Henry, born in 1930, said that while his parents were working he looked after his younger siblings even though he himself was a child.³¹

Bosses, Labourers, and the Union

The trades people who ran their small businesses worked long, arduous hours and the widows and wives who laboured for the survival of the family rarely had any time to rest. And yet, the services they provided were needed and desired by others, they were independent and probably received some satisfaction from their demanding labours. On the other hand, the vast majority of the urban Japanese community members were labourers who were recruited by bosses who were in turn employed or paid "percentages on goods" by the most affluent in the community. The Japanese labourers in the remote company towns and camps along the west coast of British Columbia too were dependent on these "bosses" who had the power to hire and fire the workers. Beneath the seemingly peaceful, cooperative, and united facade was an intricate web of internal strife, unequal distribution of power, rewards and social status.

³¹The family was "repatriated" in 1946 to Mrs. Shibata's family home in Tenma district of Hiroshima city. Due to family need and language difficulties few nisei who were repatriated in their teens, were able to graduate from Japanese universities, yet, all the Shibata sons did. Henry became a medical doctor. He attributes his success to his mother's strength of character. Interview in Montreal, October 1992.

The most powerful and prosperous in the Japanese community were the owners of large forestry enterprises. Two were Hiroshima men, Kaminishi Kannosuke (1881-1933) and Sasaki Shūichi (1891-1986).³² In 1917 Kaminishi and eleven others formed the Royston Lumber Company. Kaminishi owned sixty percent of the shares. One of the minor shareholders was Iwaasa Matsutarō, one of the first Japanese Cumberland miners.³³

Sasaki Shūichi emigrated from Hiura village in Asa county in 1907 with a "dream of one day playing a part in promoting trade between Canada and Japan." And to achieve this end, he learned English, and worked in positions which eventually led to a partnership with a company in Japan and formed the Canadian Lumber Company. He also formed the Cameron Lake Logging Company which had a logging operation and sawmill in Coombs.³⁴ Both Kaminishi's and Sasaki's operations hired Japanese labourers, in total approximately two hundred. Their enterprises were confiscated and sold in April 1943 for a fraction of their worth.³⁵

³²Kaminishi, from Nishihara village in Asa county had emigrated in 1900 after teaching elementary school in Japan for two years. In Canada within a few years he became a logging contractor and shortly afterwards, with his wife Shigeno, he established himself with a rooming-house on Powell Street, participating in many social organizations in Little Tokyo. Shigeno, a well-educated daughter of a Buddhist priest came in 1907 and was appalled with "the retrogression and decay" she found among the Japanese women; she took the initiative in volunteering to counsel them. Nakayama, Kanada dōhō, pp. 557-58.

³³Interview with Kōichi "Kaye" Kaminishi, in Kamloops, September 1992.

³⁴Interview with Fred Sasaki in Toronto, October 1992.

³⁵Vancouver Province, April 9, 1943, p. 29.

Much more numerous than these lumber magnates, but still influential, were the "bosses" or recruiters who did the hiring for these companies as well for white enterprises. Many of these recruiters operated solely on Powell Street, but others conducted business in company towns and in remote lumber camps. While large employers and other bosses made up a distinct elite, the hundreds of labourers who depended upon them were at the bottom of the social and economic pyramid. While the labourers sought a decent living, the company owners wanted to maximize profits and the boss-recruiters wanted to keep their well-paying positions.

This of course is only part of a very complex story. Much of what passed between those who hired and those who were hired was rooted in customs and viewpoints brought from Japan. The persons who provided the jobs were believed to be the benefactors [*onjin*] of those who received the positions, and thus, the labourers owed the bosses their allegiance.

In addition, the Japanese consulate in Vancouver that from the earliest days of Japanese immigration to British Columbia had played a major role in the lives of the Japanese immigrants was heavily involved in employer-employee relations. As seen in Chapter 3, contract labourers from Japan had appealed to the Japanese consulate when they found themselves in a difficult position in Cumberland in 1892. When the British Columbia Legislature added "and Japanese" to the British Columbia Coal Mines Regulations Act which excluded

Chinese from underground mining, the Japanese consulate appealed to Britain.

As Ross Lambertson has noted:

The Japanese consul general in Vancouver normally scrutinized provincial legislation for anti-Japanese clauses and passed this information on to the Japanese legation in London, which in turn protested to the secretary of state for the colonies. Since Britain was endeavouring to improve relations with Japan at this time, it in turn put pressure upon the Canadian government to disallow such legislation.³⁶

The Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902, the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Commerce and Navigation of 1906 and its renewal in 1911 for another ten year period were cited by the Japanese consulate in appeals to Britain.³⁷ Britain then notified Canada and the federal government in turn forced the British Columbia legislature to withdraw the legislations which were being protested. There is no doubt that national pride drove the Japanese government and its representatives in Canada to make demands on behalf of the emigrants. Nonetheless, the Japanese in British Columbia sometimes benefitted from consular moves. Emigrants appreciated consular help and felt indebted to the officials representing Tokyo.

³⁶Ross Lambertson, "After Union Colliery: Law, Race and Class in the Coalmines of British Columbia," in Essays in the History of Canadian Laws, Volume VI, British Columbia and the Yukon, eds. Hamar Foster and John McLaren (Toronto: The Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History, 1995), p. 390.

³⁷Adachi, Enemy, pp. 44, 45, 134.

Similarly, they felt beholden to the Canadian Japanese Association (CJA), which had been established in 1897 to aid Japanese immigrants in job-finding and English language training. It may have begun as an altruistic group with leaders dedicated to assisting their fellow emigrants, but as the years went by, Association leaders became rich, and the Association gradually became the bailiwick of wealthy businessmen, employers and other bosses. After the Canadian Japanese Association was recognized officially by the Consulate in 1909, it became necessary to go through the CJA when one had Consulate business such as passports, deferment of military service, registration of births, marriages and deaths.³⁸ In 1934, the CJA tried to seize even more power than it already had by claiming that all Japanese organizations were to be under its umbrella. Its official newspaper, the Tairiku Nippo reached three thousand subscribers.³⁹

The leaders of the CJA were members of the "elite" of Japanese Canadian society. These powerful and influential men fully intended to maintain their positions of prominence within their communities. Therefore, it is not surprising that when Suzuki Etsu organized the Japanese Labour Union among Japanese labourers there were loud outcries from this Japanese establishment. The response to the union from many labourers was also unenthusiastic. Their

³⁸For information concerning the deferment of military service, see Ichioka, Issei, p. 162. According to Adachi, the CJA was "essentially oriented towards Japan, stressing the superiority of Japanese ethics and culture." Adachi, Enemy, p. 124.

³⁹Adachi, Enemy, p. 123.

obligations to their "benefactors," the men who had hired them, and who sometimes provided a home away from home were often heavier than concerns about discriminatory wages.

Prefectural ties also complicated matters, for many felt that loyalty to their regional "family" took precedence over personal gain. From the first day of arrival in British Columbia, a newcomer received lodging, familiar food, and jobs from men and women from the same prefecture as the new arrival. Among their *kunimono* [literally, fellow country people], who spoke their dialects and shared their customs and tastes, they could relax. In the prefectural cocoon, some of the stress of leaving their home and village was assuaged. Emigrants of the two fiefs of Aki and Bingo which had been combined to form Hiroshima prefecture by the Meiji government after 1868 met in 1902 to form an organization they named the *Geibidōshikai* [Association of Geibi friends]. (This title took the Chinese character Ki from Aki and gave it the more common reading of Gei and the Bi from Bingo to form the name GEIBI.) It was the very first prefectural association organized in British Columbia. Later, other similar organizations were formed.⁴⁰ In 1906, the *Geibidōshikai* was reorganized and renamed the *Hiroshima Kenjinkai* [Hiroshima prefectural association]. The leaders of the prefectural associations were in large part also active in the CJA.

⁴⁰Sasaki Toshiji and Shimomura Yuki, "Senzen no Bankūba nihonjingai no hatten katei" [The Development Process of the Prewar Vancouver Japanese Quarter], Kobe International University Bulletin 46 (June 15, 1994): 36.

The solace and the companionship the prefectural associations provided, and the bonding they represented is evident in the enthusiasm with which Kazuta Kiyosō (1899-) talked about the Hiroshima *Kenjinkai*.⁴¹ Kazuta was active in the Hiroshima prefectural organization on Powell Street. The youngest of four sons, born in 1899, he came to Canada in January 1917 from Hesaka village in Aki county. An older brother Sentarō, who came in 1907 had made the arrangements for immigration to Canada. Kazuta was well-educated for his time and circumstances, with higher elementary and higher vocational education. Even at the age of ninety-six, he wrote a beautiful Japanese script and the minutes and records of the Hiroshima prefectural association he had kept as well as letters he had written for the association were the works of an educated man.⁴²

⁴¹Interview in Vancouver, October 1995.

⁴²The day after his arrival in Vancouver, eager to further his education, Kazuta started working as a "school boy" for a white family. For performing a number of duties while he attended public school, he was paid five dollars per month including room and board. Later, he attended a business school. To pay for his tuition fees there, he shared a job as a night janitor with a friend and also set pins at a bowling alley. (Nakayama, *Issei*, pp. 171-72.) Such initiative was richly rewarded later when he worked as a bookkeeper for Kagetsu Eikichi. The Deep Bay Logging Company was owned by Kagetsu who was one of the wealthiest and most influential leaders in the Japanese Canadian community. (Takata, *Nikkei*, pp. 84-85.) He wrote agricultural reports in the Kanada nichinichi newspaper. He remembered that the Japanese farmers told him that they read his daily articles on the current prices and trends of agricultural produce much more eagerly than the latest news of the events in Manchuria and China. In 1931 Japan had invaded and moved into Manchuria and in 1937, Japan was engaged in all-out war in China. News reports of such events were covered by Japanese language newspapers such as the Tairiku and Kanada nichinichi.

Kazuta was especially active in the Hiroshima Young Men's Association, the *kōryō seinen kai*. The two Hiroshima prefectural associations helped organize picnics, sports days, helped with the care of children, made hospital visits to the sick, and provided funerals for the deceased. The association also facilitated return passage to Japan for the old, lonely and destitute with unachieved dreams, who were unable to support themselves.⁴³

When I interviewed Kazuta in 1995 he showed me a copy of the 1937 Hiroshima prefectural association's constitution. The constitution carefully laid out rules for every contingency. Details of hospital visitations, the amount of *kōden* [money gifts] given to the family of a deceased, occasions in which flowers were to be sent, were all carefully stipulated according to whether the person concerned was an association member or not, the number of years that the person had been a member, and the person's activities in the organization. There was to be no room for accusations of favouritism.

One of the cultural support systems utilized by the Japanese Canadians which "permitted the immigrants to bypass white credit and lending institutions which often discriminated against them" was the *tanomoshikō* [mutual financing

⁴³Chugōku Shinbun, *Imin*, p. 125. Unfortunately, very little remains of the records of the Hiroshima organization except for materials Kazuta had. He said that in the spring of 1942, at the last meeting of the Hiroshima Young Men's Association, a part of the Hiroshima prefectural association, the members decided that several of them would share the responsibility of safeguarding the prefectural associations' records. Since the amount of baggage that was allowed per family was limited, it would have been impossible for any one person to be responsible for all the organization's papers. Unfortunately, they were all lost except for the few that had been entrusted to Kazuta.

associations or rotating credit associations] connected with the latter.⁴⁴ The cash was most often used to obtain capital for developing a small business and involved large amounts of money. But at times a *tanomoshi* was held for purchasing clothes. Some members of groups were such squanderers of their money that they had to belong to a *tanomoshi* even to buy a suit of clothes. These were called *yōfuku tanomoshi*; that is, "*tanomoshi* for Western style clothes." These *tanomoshi* meetings were also social gatherings and "the members . . . met regularly and used these occasions as opportunities to build social bonds with one another. . . . If an individual was not known to the other members of the group

⁴⁴An explanation of a *tanomoshikō* is given by O'Brien and Fugita: "The *tanomoshi* . . . was an association of persons who made regular contributions to a common economic 'pot' whose goal was to provide the capital necessary to finance the startup or expansion of small businesses or other major purchases. Procedures varied from one *tanomoshi* to the other with respect to how individuals were chosen to get the money in the 'pot.' In some instances, lots were drawn; in others, a type of 'bidding' procedure was used.

"The underlying premise of the rotating credit association was that eventually every individual who contributed to the common pot would have a chance to use the money for a given time period. Obviously, some individuals experienced the benefits of the *tanomoshi* before others. Moreover there was no legal recourse to get money back should those who benefitted early elect not to return money into the common treasury.

". . . Ultimately, the success of the *tanomoshi* depended upon the trust which individuals had in one another." David J. O'Brien and Stephen S. Fugita, The Japanese American Experience (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), pp. 27-28. I participated in one in 1954 in Ottawa. A scientist from Tokyo who was a postdoctoral research fellow at the National Research Council needed financial assistance to have his wife and son join him so a *tanomoshi* was organized. It was an interesting adventure in a Japanese tradition. When I told my parents about it, I was warned to "be careful" and that such ventures should only be embarked upon with trusted friends.

s/he had to be appropriately introduced by someone known to the group who was willing to vouch for the stranger."⁴⁵

These associations reinforced bonds among people of similar interests and status but also excluded many, the common worker. The majority in the Japanese community were unskilled labourers who depended on the labour contractors, the "bosses" for jobs. Whether employment was in one of Vancouver sawmills, in a remote lumber camp, or a pulp and paper mill, due to language difficulties, Japanese workers could only obtain jobs through the Japanese "bosses." Yoshida Ryūichi tells us "the boss . . . could give promotions and better and worse jobs or fire men if they did not work hard enough. He also negotiated on the workers' wages with white employers. So much for this 'boy' so much for that 'boy.' The wages at logging camps were not standardized."⁴⁶

Moreover, "many Japanese working outside of town would not be able to find a job without the help of a Japanese boss."⁴⁷ Yoshida added that some unscrupulous bosses not only overcharged for the food but also received commissions from the stores they bought the food from.⁴⁸ The food suppliers profitted also, so clearly several people took portions of each labourer's pay.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 28.

⁴⁶Knight and Koizumi, Man of Our Times, p. 34.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 61.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp.38-39.

In the negotiations for jobs outside the Japanese community, Japanese contractors volunteered to accept low wages for their men. As for the white companies that hired the Japanese workers, they were pleased with the "split labour market" where wage rates varied according to the racial origin of the labourer.⁴⁹ Eager for maximum profit, employers were pleased to hire reliable workers as cheaply as possible. The Japanese "bosses," in turn, were eager to provide as many labourers as the companies wished so that they too could increase their gains.

However, this "racialization of labour" understandably led to bitterness among the labourers themselves, both white and Japanese.⁵⁰ The whites resented it because they felt their jobs were threatened by the Japanese; the Japanese because although they worked just as hard and produced just as much, they received less pay than did the whites. Yet, feeling grateful to the Japanese bosses who got them work, Japanese labourers did not usually blame their "benefactors" who were in fact exploiting them. Japanese labourers, naively trustful of their fellow countrymen, attributed the imbalance in wages entirely to racism.

⁴⁹Edna Bonacich, "A Theory of Ethnic Antagonism: The Split Labour Market," American Sociological Review 37 (October): 547-59 and Gillian Creese, "Class, Ethnicity, and Conflict: The Case of Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1880-1923" in Workers, Capital, and the State in British Columbia eds., Rennie Warburton and David Coburn (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988), pp. 55-85.

⁵⁰Kobayashi and Jackson, "Japanese Canadians," pp. 33-58.

As noted in Chapter 4, labour recruiters were not exclusive to the Japanese community. Robin John Anderson's article on Vancouver's employment agencies for white male workers described the "employment sharks" who operated in Vancouver in 1898-1915.⁵¹ Such agencies were a barrier to organizing unemployed and unskilled migrant workers.⁵² Union leaders accused recruiters of fee-splitting with camp foremen, and causing a great deal of employee turnover.⁵³ A much greater threat were unscrupulous agents who provided scab workers to undermine strikes. These agents used such perks as "the shark's 'den' [where] unemployed men could play cards (for real money), play pool (for more money) and drink whatever they wished."⁵⁴ The economic depression which began in 1913 drove the employment sharks out of business since such outfits could only operate when there was a high demand for labour. In the absence of these unscrupulous operations, unions were able to organize workers more readily. And yet, the union movement "sought protection from cheap labour competitions and strikebreakers by excluding Asians" as "it tried to raise its standard of living and job security through collective bargaining rights that would weaken the power of

⁵¹Anderson, "Sharks," p. 81.

⁵²Ibid., p. 75.

⁵³Ibid., p.73. Fee-splitting was a process by which "an employment agent and an employer agree to divide the fee [paid by a job] applicant, who is kept on the payroll for a limited time. In order to maximize profits, a turnover of employees is accelerated through firing."

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 75-76.

capitalists in the province."⁵⁵ Anderson believed that compared to the white "sharks," Asian labour contractors were more permanent fixtures since they "were not seen to be in conflict with their worker clients."⁵⁶ He attributed this to the complex traditions and social relationships in the Japanese community.

Indeed, the "bosses" were firmly entrenched in the social fabric of the Japanese community. The bosses who found employment for them were often in executive positions in the prefectural organizations that came to their aid in times of financial, social and personal crises. Labourers did feel that they owed their jobs to their benefactors and were grateful for the help they received from their prefectural associations. Although at least some harboured doubts as to the true motives of the recruiters, many Japanese workers seem to have struggled with their feelings of loyalty, gratitude and indebtedness.

But others did have a better comprehension of the situation. Suzuki Etsu (1886-1933) devoted two decades trying to change the thinking of Japanese labourers in British Columbia. A charismatic journalist, he was a Waseda University graduate who had been recruited by the Tairiku Nippō newspaper. He arrived in Vancouver in May 1918 at the age of thirty-three years, to be joined in October by his companion, Tamura Toshiko (1884-1945), a "modern" Japanese woman who was a highly acclaimed novelist.

⁵⁵Gillian Creese, "Class, Ethnicity and Conflict," p. 72.

⁵⁶Anderson, "Sharks," p. 43.

Suzuki, a translator of Tolstoy into Japanese, was a strong advocate of Taisho democracy. Journalists in Japan were taking the lead in organizing rallies and opposing the government. Some of the newspapers in the forefront of this movement were the *Asahi Shinbun* and *Mainichi Shinbun*.⁵⁷ Suzuki had been a reporter on the *Asahi* newspaper. He began to write articles in the Tairiku trying to awaken the consciousness of the Japanese labourers. From November 1919, Suzuki, and sometimes even the Japanese consul in Vancouver, Ukita Gōji, wrote columns urging the Japanese labourers in British Columbia to think in terms of becoming permanent immigrants, and to work together with their white coworkers to improve their situation.⁵⁸

Such exhortations did not fall on deaf ears. In May 3, 1920, at a lumber and pulp mill at Swanson Bay white loggers struck against the lowering of wages.

⁵⁷The passing of the Meiji era and the beginning of the Taisho period [1912-1926] heralded the anticipation of a "second restoration' . . . to fulfill the constitutional promise that Meiji had satisfied in 'form but not in spirit of substance.'" Carol Gluck, Japan's Modern Myths (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 228, 232.

⁵⁸Tamura Norio, Suzuki Etsu (Tokyo: Liburopōtō, 1992), pp. 141-49. Tamura noted that Ukita was unusually "liberal and wise" for a Japanese diplomat (p. 145). Doubtless this was the reason why Ukita's replacement in 1925 was an extremely nationalistic "hardliner," Kawai Tatsuo. A 1990 publication by the Consulate General of Japan, Vancouver, "Hands Across the Pacific," refers to Ukita Gōji as Ukita Satotsugu (which is another reading of the Chinese characters) and notes that he was Consul from 1916-1921, and was followed by Gomyō Isago (1923-1925) and Kawai Tatsuo. A paper by Sasaki Toshiji described Consul Kawai's high-handed activities. Sasaki Toshiji, "The Japanese Association of Canada: Its Democratic Reform and the Destruction of its Democratic System by Vancouver Consul Kaai [sic]," Kirisutokyō shakai mondai kenkyū [Christian Social Problems Research 41 (July 1992).

On the tenth, the Japanese and the Chinese mill workers joined the strikers.⁵⁹ The seventy-nine Japanese labourers employed by the mill were all in agreement: they made a joint declaration that in order to combat racial discrimination and to promote mutual understanding with the white coworkers they were all refusing the company offer and were standing together with the Chinese and white workers.⁶⁰

According to Tamura Norio, only thirty Japanese men were able to return from Swanson Bay to Vancouver via Union Steamship, the only transportation available to Vancouver.⁶¹ It had been agreed that the rest of the Japanese would go to Prince Rupert to another job. However, as soon as the thirty men left, the strike was broken. Several white men, forty Chinese who were under contract, about sixty management people and the Japanese who were supposed to be leaving for Prince Rupert went back to work. Tamura wrote that the men who had broken the agreement were from Mie and Shiga prefectures. They had been coerced by their "bosses" into returning to work.⁶² Kudo Miyoko and Susan Phillips noted that in the May 26, 1920 edition of the Tairiku there was an

⁵⁹Swanson Bay is four hundred kilometres north of Vancouver Island on the mainland coast at Hartley Bay. See Map 3.

⁶⁰Tamura, Suzuki, p. 154.

⁶¹A Hiroshima emigrant Funamoto Shōichi (1889-1959) worked as an oiler on the Union Steamships. He usually made day trips to Bowen Island, Squamish, and Woodfibre. But at times he went on the five-day trip to Prince Rupert according to his son George whom I interviewed in Hamilton in October 1992. Shōichi emigrated in 1908 from Hiura village in Asa county to marry Mitsuyo (1896-1972) the widow of his elder brother Zenichi (?-1918) who had been a victim of the 1918 influenza epidemic.

⁶²Ibid., p. 159.

advertisement by the Maekawa Department Store seeking strike breakers for Swanson Bay. This illustrates the close relationship between owners of stores and bosses—both were from Shiga prefecture.⁶³ The strike had lasted fifteen days.

Meanwhile, the strikers who had reached Vancouver consulted Suzuki. A meeting of more than fifty Japanese labourers was held on July 1 at the Japanese Language School. According to Tamura Norio, congratulatory messages for uniting with the white workers were received from Consul Ukita and leaders of the Japanese community.⁶⁴ The Japanese Labour Union of Canada [*Kanada nihonjin rōdō kumiai*] was formed that night with Suzuki Etsu as its advisor.

Within a short time 120 of the five thousand Japanese labourers in the lumber industry joined the union but there was great resistance to the Japanese Labour Union. Suzuki wrote articles in the *Tairiku* urging everyone to join the union, but many advertisers and readers were against his views. Then on August 11, 1920, *Rōdō shuhō* [Labour Weekly] with Suzuki as editor, published at the *Tairiku*, made its debut. The publisher of the *Tairiku* allowed that newspaper's printing presses to be used by the *Labour Weekly*. The weekly was distributed in Vancouver and remote areas; readers sent in donations, many anonymously.

⁶³Kudo Miyoko and Susan Phillips, *Bankuba no Ai* [Vancouver Love] (Tokyo: Domesu shuppansha, 1983), p. 113.

⁶⁴Tamura, *Suzuki*, p. 163.

The Japanese Labour Union was officially recognized on August 24, 1920, but it was refused affiliation with the Vancouver Trade and Labour Council.⁶⁵ One of the union's first fights occurred in February 1921 when the more than eighty Japanese workers at the Alberta Mill in Vancouver, after being forced to accept gradually decreasing wages from the 1920 rate of forty cents an hour to thirty-five cents, then to thirty cents, were told by the foreman that their wages would be further lowered to twenty-five cents. They consulted the Japanese Labour Union. Sada Shōji, the union leader, conferred with the company but it refused to back down so the Japanese mill workers struck. They were quickly replaced by white World War I veterans. The all-white International Union of Lumber Workers picketed in support of the Japanese workers—a breakthrough in interracial relations. In spite of contributions by the Japanese community and a "borrowing" of five hundred dollars from the treasury of the Fukushima Prefecture Association by a member of the union executive who was also the treasurer of the prefectural association, the Japanese union had to admit defeat. It simply did not have the funds to support the strikers and their families. Suzuki finally urged the strikers to return to work.⁶⁶

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 166 and Gillian Creese, "Exclusion or Solidarity? Vancouver Workers Confront the 'Oriental Problem,'" *BC Studies* 80 (Winter, 1988-89): 42.

⁶⁶Tamura, *Suzuki*, pp. 166-74.

Much of the union's difficulties was due to what Kobayashi and Jackson called the "place-specific social ties" involved in the recruiting of the workers.⁶⁷ This increased "the level of solidarity among the workers since they would often have been recruited from the same prefecture or village that their recruiter came from; on the other hand the level of activism is likely to have been reduced by the groups' dependence on the goodwill of the boss."⁶⁸ At the Hastings Mill, for instance, there were two hundred Japanese mill workers, but they were all from Shiga prefecture, and they had their own separate "union."⁶⁹ Although it was called a "union," it was more like an association of millworkers. One of its advisors was Yoshiye Saburō of the Nikka jihō, a rival conservative newspaper. Yoshiye was also closely connected with the Canadian Nippon Supply Company [*Nikka yōtatsu kabushiki kaisha*] which had a monopoly in the hiring of workers for the CPR Railway. The conflict between Yoshiye and Suzuki virtually split not only the labourers but the entire Japanese community in two.⁷⁰

The Canadian Japanese Association was the single most influential organization in the community. It had been taken over by the Japanese consulate and forty-three "big store owners" on Powell Street and been entrusted with a

⁶⁷Kobayashi and Jackson, "Japanese Canadians," p. 42.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 44.

⁶⁹Tamura, Suzuki, p. 174.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 174.

great deal of power by the Japanese consul.⁷¹ It was the pipeline through which all undertakings with the Japanese government were carried out—registration of births and deaths, requests for emigration, and deferment of military duties. Suzuki and his group decided that it was necessary to try to reform the conservative CJA from within. They got themselves elected to the executive in 1922 but after the election they were stalled since neither the labour nor the business faction had a majority.⁷²

Meanwhile, the Labour Weekly continued to publish articles against the boss system and to promote the Japanese Labour Union. Yoshida Ryūichi started to write a series exposing the actions of the Canadian Nippon Supply Company. He accused the Furuya Company, the supplier of foodstuffs and miscellany to this company, of skimming profits from the labourers by charging double the actual cost of the foodstuffs.⁷³ Yamasaki Yasushi, the publisher of the Tairiku ordered Yoshida to stop these articles condemning the two companies. Although Yoshida complied, a week later, Yamasaki informed Suzuki that the Labour Weekly could no longer be published using the facilities of his paper.⁷⁴

⁷¹Shimpo Mitsuru, Tamura Norio, Shiramizu Shigehiko, Kanada no nihongo shinbun [Japanese Language Newspapers in Canada] 2nd ed., 1992 (Tokyo: PMC Shuppansha, 1991), p. 54.

⁷²In 1925, a new consul, Kawai Tatsuo, a very conservative nationalist, backed the business group and Suzuki and his cohorts resigned in frustration. Later the CJA denied membership to labour union supporters. Tamura, Suzuki, p. 218. See also Sasaki Toshiji, "The Japanese Association of Canada."

⁷³Ibid., p. 195.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 196.

This created a serious crisis since there were no other printing presses available. Realizing that they had to become self-sufficient, the labour group bought a used press. Although they were unable to publish for a short period, on March 21, 1924, the first issue of the Nikka Minshū [Daily People] appeared. It operated on a shoestring. The Daily People's monthly costs were seven hundred dollars, but it survived on donations and volunteer help. A subscription cost forty-five cents per month, but only about half the readers paid for their subscriptions.⁷⁵ Suzuki and Yoshida were to have been paid one hundred dollars and seventy-five dollars per month respectively but they were unable to draw their salaries.⁷⁶ Yoshida, plagued by family responsibilities, eventually left but Suzuki continued to work full time for the labour cause.

The Japanese Labour Union was finally accepted by the white labour union. In August 1927, it became affiliated with the Vancouver, New Westminster Trades and Labour Council as the Japanese Camp and Millworkers Union, Local 31. (Henceforth, referred to as the CMWU.) This was a major triumph for Suzuki and the Japanese Labour Union. Rolf Knight wrote:

A combination of factors finally led the Vancouver Trades and Labor Council to drop its anti-oriental position and affiliate the (Japanese) Camp and Millworkers Union in 1927. Involved were the patient lobbying of the C.M.W.U., the continual efforts of men like Ernest Winch and Angus

⁷⁵Shimpō et al., Kanada, p. 61.

⁷⁶Tamura, Suzuki, p. 249.

McInnis, and probably the declining power of organized labor during the 1920's no matter what it did.⁷⁷

However, as Gillian Creese noted, although Japanese affiliation indicated a greater degree of racial tolerance within the VTLC, it did not end exclusionary practices," and the Japanese were still not welcome in the white unions.⁷⁸

Meanwhile, from the women at the Daily People came an idea for the paper to serve as an employment agency.⁷⁹ Running an employment agency through advertisements in the Daily People seemed an excellent way of undermining the "boss" system. Tamura Norio's book contains a copy of an advertisement which was run in the Daily People on March 20, 1925. The advertisement asked readers to send in information about available jobs and positions sought so these could be published in the paper.⁸⁰ The newspaper stressed that there would be absolutely no charge for these listings. A job applicant was asked to designate the type of work desired, the preferred location, his/her work experience, name, address, and telephone number. A person who had a job available was to describe the type of job, whether experience was necessary or not, the wages offered, and his or her name, address, and telephone

⁷⁷Knight and Koizumi, A Man, pp. 117-18. In a footnote, Knight elaborated on the activities of Winch and McInnis in the labour movement.

⁷⁸Creese, "Exclusion," pp. 42-43.

⁷⁹Tamura, Suzuki, p. 222.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, p. 227.

number. Tamura noted that in 1925 there were 1018 employment opportunities listed and 771 applications for jobs in the Daily People.⁸¹

The Union was ignored by many, and yet the membership increased gradually from 644 in 1926, to 936 in 1927 and 1009 in 1928.⁸² Japanese businesses refused to advertise in the newspaper and the paper struggled on with unpaid workers, surviving on donations and by publishing educational pamphlets, Japanese books and magazines.⁸³

The loss of advertisements was a big blow which the labour newspaper tried to counter with a cooperative food store which cost its members fifty dollars per share. The store was begun in 1928, but in 1929 it was declared a failure. Doi Hajime (1906-199?), an emigrant from Nagatsuka village in Asa county, now South Asa ward in Hiroshima city, was manager of this enterprise. He recalled his experiences in 1990 to Nishimoto Masami of the Chūgoku Shinbun.⁸⁴ Doi emigrated in 1924. Soon after his arrival in Vancouver, he met the harsh reality of a Japanese emigrant's life in a sawmill where he discovered that he was being paid much less than his white co-workers. (When in 1925 the Male Minimum Wage Act was passed by the British Columbia Legislature, the minimum wage was set at forty cents an hour. The Japanese at that time were receiving not more

⁸¹Ibid., p. 228.

⁸²Shimpo et al., Kanada, pp. 108-9.

⁸³Ibid., p. 127.

⁸⁴Chūgoku Shinbun, Imin, pp. 134-35.

than twenty-five cents an hour for the same work. The Act did not help the Japanese, for "986 Japanese were dropped from the payroll in camps throughout the province." Later a modification was made to the Act stipulating that a quarter of the workers in the sawmill industry might be paid twenty-five cents an hour while the general rate was set at thirty-five cents. In practice the lower wages were paid to the Japanese.)⁸⁵ Laid off from the mill, Doi survived by digging potatoes on a farm. This was likely a white farm. He was sharing a room with four other men in a boarding house on Powell Street when he read the first issue of the Daily People. He was moved by Suzuki Etsu's insistence that the Japanese labourers were not Japanese of Japan but Japanese of Canada and thus should become active members of the labour movement. Doi became active in the Japanese Labour Union and when the co-operative store [*Kōbai kumiai*] was opened in 1928 he became its manager. He was married by then and it was necessary for his wife to go work as a waitress in a noodle shop in order for them to survive.⁸⁶

According to a memoir written by a self-pronounced "socialist," Genshichi Takahashi, the co-operative store was doomed from the start.⁸⁷ Takahashi wrote that "the co-op was an idea created by those who knew how to earn their bread with a pen but not with a scale. To me it was obvious from the beginning that it

⁸⁵Adachi, Enemy, p. 146.

⁸⁶Chūgoku Shinbun, Imin, p. 135.

⁸⁷Keibo Ōiwa, Stone Voices, pp. 157-205.

would fail. . . . It was childish to think that a business could be set up in such a simple way.⁸⁸

There was a distinct difference of opinion between the followers of Suzuki and the young "red" group of which Takahashi was a member. The Japanese Labour Union had among its membership people who were "not exactly labourers . . . like laundry store operators."⁸⁹ The union felt that small business operators and tradesmen were also workers and that together with them contract labourers could fight against discrimination, an endeavour that the young "radicals" felt was beyond the pale of the union. The union itself labelled these dissenters "red." These disagreements within the union did little to improve opinions of the union held by some sections of the Japanese community.

Opposition to the union was also abetted by developments in Japan during the 1930s. Following the Manchurian Incident of 1931 and Japan's departure from the League of Nations in 1933, there was a rise in ultranationalism and state repression of the left.⁹⁰ The conservative newspapers in the Vancouver Japanese community sympathetically reported on these developments and the sentiments behind them. Many readers of such reportage came to view the members of the Union as "reds" and "radicals," and even accused them of disloyalty to Japan. The

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 173.

⁸⁹Knight and Koizumi, A Man, p. 61.

⁹⁰Stephen Large, Organized Workers and Socialist Politics in Interwar Japan (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 138.

Daily People wrote against Japan's aggressive activities in Asia, infuriating those who could not tolerate criticism of this kind.

In spite of these problems, there is no doubt that Suzuki Etsu and his followers had a tremendously positive impact on the Japanese community. While not entirely destroyed, the power of the "bosses" and their partners, the food and sundries suppliers had been gradually diminished. By 1935 there were eight locals of the CMWU despite the fact that "some of the largest concentrations of Japanese sawmill workers remained under local benevolent societies or Japanese bosses, as at Ocean Falls, Woodfibre, Fraser Mills and Royston."⁹¹

According to Yoshida Ryūichi, at the start of World War II the membership in the CMWU was 1200, but others have stated that it was one thousand.⁹² At that time there were 1,839 Japanese in the lumber industry, and a total of 8,321, including women in the work force.⁹³ All in all, membership in the Camp and Mill Workers Union was surprisingly strong given the resistance to it.

Within this milieu, the nisei were maturing and entering the workforce. Many worked alongside the issei, but their attitudes were different from those of their parents. Imbued in varying degrees with traditions of Canada as well as Japan and unlike their elders able to converse in English, they viewed injustices of

⁹¹Knight and Koizumi, A Man, p. 119.

⁹²Ibid., p. 59.

⁹³The National Association of Japanese Canadians, Economic Losses of Japanese Canadians After 1941 (Winnipeg: Hignell Printing, 1985), Schedule IV-5.

the "boss" system through a less rosy lens than did the issei. But in the 1930s nisei were relatively powerless junior partners whose time was yet to come.

CHAPTER 8
NISEI, THE SECOND GENERATION

When the Hiroshima emigrants first arrived, their main concern was personal survival; their second, earning sufficient funds to return to Japan with a nest egg. Later, with marriage, and children, their attentions turned to economic and social stability. Many of the issei learned and adopted only enough Canadian ways to survive, and within their families and the Japanese community continued to practise customs they had brought with them from the old country. Faced with public intolerance and discriminatory wages and laws, they turned to their own group for solace and support and to Japan for dignity and respect. What Eileen Tamura observed about Japanese in Hawaii applies to the issei in Canada too. "The Japanese sense of superiority helped them maintain pride in themselves . . . and helped them overcome many difficulties."¹

Did the issei endeavour to develop in their children a pride in their Japanese heritage because of the difficulties their children faced in Canada? Is this the reason why they carefully "acculturated" their children with Japanese customs and traditions? Undoubtedly, many tried to rear their children just as they themselves had been brought up, knowing no other way, but some made

¹Eileen H. Tamura, Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994), p. 142.

deliberate and concerted efforts to make their off-spring realize that they were "Japanese."

Yet there was in general a gradual transition to more and more acceptance of Canadian customs. At first, when the aim of returning to Japan was strong, there was a heavy emphasis on moulding children according to the issei's perceptions regarding children in Japan and there were organizations and educational facilities within the Japanese community that promoted this indoctrination. But as the years went by and the dream of returning to Japan was given up, the issei realized that their children needed to learn to function within British Columbia.

It is not possible to make generalizations about families' goals regarding "acculturating" children in the ways of Meiji and Taisho Japan or about their feelings regarding assimilating into the mainstream. There was a wide range: there were families that in efforts to be Canadian, lived completely apart from Japanese society except for brief trips to Powell Street and there were families living within a community such as the Powell Street one, emphasizing "proper Japanese behaviour." Rose Kutsukake (1918-) attended Japanese language school for thirteen years. The youngest daughter of Satō Mohei and Matsuyo, proprietors of the boardinghouse *Hiroshimaya* from 1901 told Nishimoto Masumi of the Chūgoku shinbun in 1990, that her father had insisted, "First and foremost

you must be Japanese."² Some parents sent their children to Japan to be educated, as did Kaminishi Kannosuke with his son, Kōichi (Kaye). Some parents, especially those who continued to hope some day to return permanently to Japan with their children, chose to rear children to fit into the society that they thought existed in Japan. Such parents volubly stressed "proper Japanese behaviour" and continuously reaffirmed such behaviour in their daily lives. Others who cherished the same dreams of returning to Japan taught "Japanese behaviour" and ways of thought with only an occasional verbal injunction. The variation in the amount of traditional Japanese behaviour taught at home was a subject in a recently published journal kept by Kuwabara Tom Sando during his time in the Angler internment camp during World War II. Kuwabara mentioned why he thought many of the interned nisei, imprisoned because they were Japanese, did not bear any allegiance to Japan.³ He was a *kika nisei* [literally, a "returned to Canada nisei"; that is, someone who was born in Canada but raised and educated in Japan], who had returned to Canada at the age of fifteen in the mid 1930s. Kuwabara felt that many parents had been so busy with their working lives that they had neglected home training in Japanese morals and traditions. This may have been so in many cases but he obviously did not consider the possibilities that some families either believed that children learn "naturally" by the example of

²Chūgoku shinbun, *Imin*, p. 129. After graduation from Britannia High School she worked as a saleswoman at T. Maekawa Department Store.

³Kuwabara, Tom Sando, with Hayano Yumiko. *Toraware no mi* [Prisoner] (Edmonton: Print Stop, Inc., 1995), p. 193.

their parents or preferred to rear their children as Canadians. Nor did he realize that most nisei had grown up in a completely different environment from himself and, although incarcerated because they were of the Japanese race, did not necessarily feel that they were Japanese.

Many fathers were closely involved in their children's upbringing and with but a few stern words saw to it that their views were understood and their wishes were followed. This picture of the taciturn, uncompromising father may be common in many other societies too, but the nisei believed that it was a uniquely Japanese trait. Nevertheless, a recent study by Yamazaki Masakazu has convincingly argued that this kind of father was not a "traditional figure" at all but a product of modernization in Japan during the Meiji era in which urbanization rapidly nuclearized the Japanese family.

The father heading a household in the loneliness of the city separated from the extended family of the village, had to strengthen the authoritarian side of his character to shore up the family's morale and fortify it for the struggle to survive. By the same token, the mother took on stronger features of family guardian.⁴

In the everyday lives of the second generation, from infancy the female influence was undoubtedly strongest. What Kitano noted about Japanese Americans is also true of the Japanese in Canada:

⁴Yamazaki Masakazu, Individualism and the Japanese, trans. Barbara Sugihara (Tokyo: Japan Echo Inc., 1994), p. 12. Substitute "alien land" for "city" in the above quotation and the result is a description of the Japanese family in Canada.

In many cases, the father was simply unavailable except for major disciplinary issues, and many everyday problems were handled by the mother. In some families, both parents were unavailable because they worked, or because a language barrier made communication too difficult.⁵

The majority of the women were isolated within their homes, or at best, within the confines of the ethnic community. The mothers were less exposed to mainstream society than were their husbands; many lived entirely within their rural community, mining camp, segregated company town or Powell Street neighbourhood. Whatever knowledge they obtained about the Anglo-Canadian community came through the information they gleaned from their growing children. Isolated within their ethnic group, it is understandable that these mothers tried to mould their children to their own familiar ways. Yet many went beyond that—they tried to teach their children what they perceived to be the "upper class" behaviour of contemporary Japan. Thus, the nisei were "acculturated" by their parents from childhood.

Elementary school was often the child's first introduction to people of other cultures. Where the Japanese children were numerous, the influence of the mainstream culture was minimal since Japanese children continued to socialize with each other and to talk to each other in Japanese—often to the chagrin of public school teachers.⁶ In some areas, however, the introduction to Canadian

⁵Harry H. L. Kitano, *Japanese Americans: The Evolution of a Subculture*, second ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1976) (first ed. 1969) p. 48.

⁶The Japanese students at Strathcona School, where the Powell Street area children went were constantly reminded by the teachers to speak English on the

schools meant a sudden leap into a completely alien world. The eldest children in families were often the most distressed, since many had never been exposed previously to the English language nor had they had any pre-school association with white children.⁷ In my family, in 1930 when my eldest brother entered Grade One at Seymour School in Vancouver where there were not many Japanese, he did not speak any English and had never played with any white children. He was so timid that my mother had to sit with him in class for a number of days. At least, this is what I have been told! But by the time I entered school six years later, I had been speaking English with my elder brothers and had been playing with neighbourhood children of various ethnic backgrounds.

Once the children became of school age, the great purveyors of Japanese tradition were the Japanese language schools. Nevertheless, the impact of these schools on second generation children depended on the frequency of attendance, individual teachers, the philosophy of the school's Board of Trustees [*Gakumuiinkai*] and the emphasis that the different parents placed on Japanese education.⁸ Moreover, individual characters of the children determined their

school ground.

⁷In the 1920s and 1930s, there was of course no television and very few Japanese families, even if they owned radios, listened to English language programmes; many preferred to listen to short-wave broadcasts from Japan.

⁸The Japanese language school on Alexander Street in Vancouver had a number of groups that participated in the running of the school. There were the Maintenance Association [*Ijikai*] and also the Women's Association [*Boshikai*] which appears to have functioned like a Parent Teachers Association. Information received from Hiroko Noro.

receptivity to the additional demands that these schools made on their lives. Even within one family there were differences. My two older brothers resented every moment they spent at Japanese school and although they were promoted regularly, they learned very little. Whereas I found it a challenge to memorize the Chinese characters, enjoyed writing compositions, and was further driven by the parental pride that my annual "firsts" in class generated.

In 1897 an informal school for some twenty children was begun in Vancouver.⁹ The first official institution, the Vancouver Japanese National School [*Kokumin-gakkō*], was opened in 1906 under the auspices of the Japanese consul. The curriculum followed that prescribed by the Ministry of Education in Japan with the only difference being the addition of English language courses. The teachers' salaries and other costs were all borne by the parents and the Japanese community.¹⁰ A few years later, similar schools were opened in Steveston and Cumberland.

Those schools satisfied the desires of the Japanese parents in the sojourner period, when the majority planned eventually to return to Japan with their children. Some sent their children to their home villages in Japan to be raised by relatives, usually grandparents, but not all could afford the expense of the sea passage and other financial costs. Some could not bear to part with their

⁹Hiroko Noro, "The Japanese Language Schools in Canada from 1902 to 1941: The Role of Ethnic Language Schools," working paper.

¹⁰Information received from Noro.

children, so an acceptable alternative was to provide an education believed to be the equivalent of that which the children would have received in Japan.

Gradually however with the increase in Canadian-born children, changes slowly came. As many nisei began to attend Canadian public schools, Japanese schools evolved into language-only schools held after regular school hours. For a time the two curricula, the course of studies in elementary schools in Japan and a Japanese-language training programme, co-existed in the Japanese school in Steveston and in the one in Vancouver; that is, regular Japanese school subjects studied all day and an after school Japanese language-only curriculum. More and more language schools were opened in other centres where there were populations of Japanese children and by the mid 1920s most Japanese schools had become supplementary language schools. By 1940, there were fifty-one Japanese language schools in British Columbia.¹¹

The school year began on April 1, following the school calendar in Japan, despite the fact that the British Columbia school year began in September.¹² The number of hours of instruction varied. In the rural areas where students had to travel considerable distances, classes were held on two or three weekdays and Saturdays. Some nisei lived in areas where Japanese language education was not

¹¹Satō Tsutae, Kodomo to tomo ni gojūnen [Fifty Years Together with the Children] (Tokyo: Nichibō Publishing, 1954), p. 636.

¹²In order to be enrolled in Japanese school a child had to have turned six before April 1. Because my birthday was in June, I could not start with my playmate whose birthday was in February.

available. In the 1930s Roy Honda lived in White Rock where at one time there was a fair-sized Japanese community made up of the Japanese who worked at the Campbell River Sawmill and their families. There were company houses for families, and a boarding house for single men, and even a Japanese language school.¹³ When the sawmill closed in 1929, many Japanese left and Japanese language education was no longer available so that Roy and his siblings did not receive any Japanese language education. His mother, Honda Tami (1889-1980) and her children remained there, while the father, Honda Genichi (1889-1972), left to work in Englewood on Vancouver Island.¹⁴

In Cumberland, on the other hand, the Japanese lived in two closely-knit Japanese communities called Town Number One and Town Number Five. (See chapter 3.) The children in these towns spent more than twenty hours per week at Japanese school and as a result, many achieved great proficiency in the language.¹⁵ Two Hiroshima nisei, Harold Hirose (1918-1994) and Hiroshi Okuda (1914-1994) who had grown up in Cumberland became active leaders in the Japanese Canadian Citizens League and later similar organizations. Their ability to converse in both Japanese and English was most useful in presenting the nisei

¹³Mrs. Yeiko Okita, nee Itō, whom I interviewed in October 1993 in Lethbridge, said that she had lived in White Rock until she was seven years old and had lived across the road from the Honda family.

¹⁴Honda Genichi of Furuichi village in Asa county, married Tami when they were both seventeen years old. Genichi came to Canada in 1917, followed a year later by Tami. In Japan she left their son Kiyoto, born in 1909, but he was able to join them later. Interview with Roy Honda, October 1992, in Hamilton.

¹⁵Itō, We Went to War, p. 182.

viewpoints to the issei as well as to the mainstream public.¹⁶ The ten-year period between 1930 and 1940 when Japanese language schools flourished has been called "the golden period" by those who have documented the history of those schools.¹⁷

Satō Tsutae, principal from 1917 to its closure in December 1941 and again from 1952 to 1966 of the largest school in British Columbia, the Vancouver Japanese Language School on Alexander Street, always maintained that the goal of that school was to produce loyal Canadian citizens.¹⁸ However, a great deal more than just instruction in the Japanese language took place there. In the teaching of the language, the schools were closely modelled upon the elementary schools in Japan with the same strict routines and demands for proper etiquette.

¹⁶Interviews with Harold Hirose of Winnipeg in Toronto, October 1993; with Hiroshi Okuda in Montreal, June 1991 and October 1992. For further information on Harold Hirose, see indices of Roy Itō's books. Hirose's father, Tokugi, and Okuda's father, Kasaku, were mentioned in Chapter 3.

¹⁷Satō Tsutae, Kanada nihongogakkō kyōikukai shi [History of the Japanese Language School Education Society] (Vancouver: The Japanese Language Society, 1952), pp. 33-34. Matsubayashi Yoshihide also refers to the years from 1928 to 1941 as "the golden period of the Japanese language schools" in the United States and Hawaii. Matsubayashi Yoshihide, "The Japanese Language Schools in Hawaii and California from 1892 to 1941" (Ed.D. dissertation, University of San Francisco, 1984). In 1927 the United States Superior Court had guaranteed the rights to educate children in the Japanese language schools in that country after a series of litigations had jeopardized their existence.

¹⁸Satō, Kodomo, p. 186.

All the teachers in these schools were supposed to be graduates of Japanese teacher training schools or women's higher schools.¹⁹

In spite of the adherence to curricula in Japan, the use of textbooks published in Japan, and the way in which many classes were conducted, the degree to which the Japanese schools indoctrinated the nisei children in Japanese nationalism appears to have been relatively minimal. While personal experiences in the wider world embittered some, causing them to turn to Japan for solace and to ease their injured pride, to many nisei who attended Japanese language schools the stories of the gods who descended from the heavens to rule Japan and the divine wind that saved the country from the invading Mongols were nothing more than interesting tales.²⁰ Once, at the Alexander Street Japanese school, after his return from Japan, Principal Satō shared with the pupils the special ceremonial

¹⁹One of Education Minister Mori Arinori's reforms as soon as he took office in 1885 was to promulgate the Normal School Ordinance by which the teacher training school curricula were rigidly "regimented," to mould those who were to "become teachers for children in the future." Candidates for these schools had to be recommended by chiefs of regional administrative units and in return for scholarships received, graduates were obligated to serve where they were sent after graduation. "The education these students, hailing from rural communities, received at normal schools was marked by a patriarchal order. Later they would return as teachers to schools rooted in rural communities, as it was by these teachers that a national sense of unity was formed." Aso Makoto and Amano Ikuo, Education and Japan's Modernization (Tokyo: The Japan Times, Ltd., 1983), p. 19.

²⁰Children in Japan were no more likely to be impressed by the attempts to teach "'traditional' moral education" in late Meiji according to the study made by E. Patricia Tsurumi of the "confusing array of ideals" in the Japan's textbooks. E. Patricia Tsurumi, "Meiji Primary School Language and Ethics Textbooks: Old Values for a New Society?" Modern Asian Studies 8:2 (1974): 260.

cakes that had been presented to him by the emperor. As Satō did so he solemnly declared that everyone should appreciate the honour that the emperor had bestowed upon the school. He instructed the children to receive with humility and gratitude the pink and white crumbs which they were to take home to share with their families. After Japan was at war with China, students were asked to line up and sew knots for the *senninbari* ["thousand stitch belt"] which was believed to be a talisman to save the life of a soldier. In composition class students also were told to write letters to soldiers. In spite of such events and the desires of at least some adult members of the community, in the majority of cases the school failed to produce Japanese nationalists.²¹

Despite his patriotic fervour, Satō did insist on the school's independence from the Japanese government. He objected strongly to the proposal in November 1925 by the Japanese consul, Kawai Tatsuo, that the planned Japanese school building and hall on Alexander Street be placed under the administration of the Canadian Japanese Association. Satō and the board that governed the school felt that to do so would not be beneficial and insisted on autonomy.²²

²¹Certainly, extensive interviews and long observation of the behaviour of nisei show that years of Japanese schooling did not indoctrinate the nisei with *Yamatodamashii* [the Japanese spirit], let alone teach them very much Japanese language. Some did learn some Japanese and many who did not learn any of it eagerly joined the Canadian Army in 1945 to serve as interpreters in South East Asia. See Roy Itō, We Went to War.

²²Satō, Kodomo, pp. 181-84. This is the same consul who was instrumental in the ousting of the CMWU supporters from the CJA.

Province-wide representatives of the Japanese schools held regular meetings to discuss matters of common concern. On April 19, 1935, for instance, at a meeting of the Japanese Language Schools Educational Society [*Nihongo gakkō kyōiku kai*] held at the Marpole school, a detailed "aim" was written in which the members in attendance reiterated that the goal of Japanese language education was to supplement the public school curriculum with the teaching of the Japanese language.²³

In spite of such public declarations that the schools just taught language, the daily routines within their walls were unlike those in the Canadian public schools. There were strict procedures of lining up, bowing, and marching to classrooms. Reading and writing postures, public speaking styles and classroom deportment were very different from what was learned in the public schools. The academic demands were heavy, hours of homework every night, reading, memorizing the Chinese characters, and preparing for compositions that were to be written the next day in class.

"The Japanese language school was . . . an institutional device for reaffirming traditional Japanese values that attempted to perpetuate these values in the growing children."²⁴ The teachers insisted on pupils' "proper" behaviour—at school, at home, in the Japanese community, and in mainstream society.

²³Satō, *Kanada*, pp. 223-24.

²⁴Adachi, *Enemy*, p. 127.

Shameful words and actions, we were told, reflected on the family, the school, and the Japanese community as a whole.

The language readers, similar to the ones used in Japan, contained tales of historical heroes and their legendary deeds meant to teach students Japanese morals. From the mid-1930s, due to the demands of the British Columbia Ministry of Education, a concerted attempt was made by the Education Society to produce textbooks that were more suitable for children who lived in Canada.²⁵ However, due to many disagreements among the members on the book committee, progress towards this goal was slow. A few primary textbooks were ready by 1941 in Vancouver, and Satō Tsutae went to Japan to arrange for their publication, but war between the United States and Japan appeared imminent and he rushed back on November 1941 on what became the final boat to Canada before the bombing of Pearl Harbor.²⁶ The books were still unpublished by the time the schools were closed in December 1941.

In 1940 the provincial government changed the School Act to place all language schools in British Columbia directly under the control of the Department of Education. In the spring of 1941, due to accusations of subversion made by members of Vancouver City Council and escalating public antagonism towards the Vancouver Japanese School, representatives from the Japanese community went to City Hall to explain the importance of the Japanese language. Among them

²⁵Satō, Kanada Nihongo, p. 228.

²⁶Satō, Kodomo, pp. 82-83.

was Thomas K. Shoyama, the editor of The New Canadian, a nisei newspaper. Shoyama spoke from personal experience. He had degrees in both Commerce and Economics from the University of British Columbia but had not been able to obtain a position with any Anglo-Canadian firm due to racial discrimination. His lack of Japanese language ability also precluded him from employment with any Japanese Canadian firm.²⁷

Because of racial discrimination in the Anglo-Canadian community, there were few employment opportunities for the nisei. Many were forced to work within the ethnic community for which Japanese language ability was absolutely necessary or as labourers in the primary industries.

Since Japanese was the only language that the issei spoke nisei needed to learn Japanese to communicate with their elders, but few nisei managed to attain the linguistic expectations of their parents and educators. Many attended language school reluctantly, resenting the hours "wasted" there.²⁸ Part of the annoyance of the nisei was that attendance at Japanese language school made it

²⁷Hiroshi Okuda had similar Canadian academic qualifications, but had the advantage of a good knowledge of Japanese and thus had obtained a position with Sasaki Shūichi's organization. (See Chapter 7.) Okuda's facility in Japanese was known to the Canadian authorities. In 1943 when he was principal of the elementary school in Tashme the relocation camp near Hope, he was brought to Vancouver and secretly asked to work for British Army Intelligence. He refused, was soon fired from his job as principal and ordered to leave for eastern Canada. He left for Montreal on January 1, 1944. He said he could not find any employment there until June but somehow managed to survive. Interview in Montreal, June 1991.

²⁸Adachi, Enemy, pp. 129, 166.

impossible to participate in after-school activities like sports. I recall that in the spring of 1941 my seatmate in Japanese school was a soft-ball star at Strathcona School. Since he missed some Japanese school classes and was often late, the teacher loudly berated him as soon as he walked in. The class tried to ignore the ensuing commotion but many secretly admired him for his courage. Although parents' goal for their children was self-sufficiency in two languages, unfortunately many nisei "were genuinely and instinctively at home with neither language."²⁹ Thus lack of fluency in Japanese led to misunderstandings within the family and many nisei also tried to avoid contacts with their elders.³⁰

The issei wanted their children to conduct themselves like their counterparts in Japan; or rather, as they imagined the youth in "good" families in Japan were acting. Western ways were alien to the issei. One of the most contentious issues was social relationships between the sexes. Controversy regarding this escalated as the decades wore on and as the nisei became more and more exposed to mainstream culture in their high schools, in movies, in magazines. In the 1910s and 1920s, when there were fewer adult nisei, the issei appear to have had much more authority over their children. Marriages were often arranged between nisei women and issei men. A recent study by Hyang-Sae Kang of the nisei women in Winnipeg found that the majority of the women in

²⁹Ibid., p. 130.

³⁰Yamamoto Misako, "Cultural Conflicts and Accommodation of the First and Second Generation Japanese," Social Process in Hawaii 4 (1938): 47.

the study who had matured and started families before 1942 had had their marriages arranged for them by their parents and that some had married issei.³¹

Among the people I interviewed were some in marriages between a nisei and an issei. Toshi Sasaki, a nisei who grew up in Haney in 1939 married Fudemoto Chiyoto Frank who had emigrated in 1934 as an agricultural worker. (See Chapter 6.) Toshi, like many other young nisei women, had studied sewing and was a skilled seamstress. The couple operated a drycleaning and alterations shop in Vancouver. In 1940, nisei Yeiko Itō was married at the age of eighteen to Okita Yonesō who had emigrated in 1935. (See Chapter 6.) These marriages were arranged by parents after a careful check of the backgrounds and the characters of the potential mates. This checking of backgrounds was done routinely in Japan.

While nisei women were wed to issei men, it was more common for nisei men to have marriages with women from Japan arranged for them. As mentioned in Chapter 5, Masao, the eldest son of Kobayakawa Gōichi, one of the first Hiroshima emigrants in Cumberland, went to Japan to marry Yokota Haruko. Hayami Masato also travelled to Japan to marry. When a marriage was arranged between two nisei, in most cases the families had been close friends for years.

However, there were also love matches, the truly fortunate of which gained the acceptance of both families. It was especially fortuitous if families of the two

³¹Hyang-Sae Kang, "Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Work and Family: The Experiences of Second Generation Japanese Canadian Women in Winnipeg, 1942 to Present" (M.A. thesis, University of Manitoba, 1996).

involved in such a marriage were from the same prefecture, as was the happy situation for nisei Suzue Enomoto (1911-) and issei Inouye Takuo (1904 -1969). Suzue Enomoto was the daughter of Enomoto Tsunetarō and Mume. (See Chapter 5.) She had lived in New Westminster with her elder brother, her mother and stepfather, Miyagawa. After completion of grade eight, she did housework in New Westminster and later in Vancouver, where she was a live-in maid for a superintendent of British Columbia Electric Company in Shaughnessy Heights. She said that on her Thursday afternoon off she used to go to Powell Street to meet friends and there she met Inouye Takuo, the brother of a friend. The son of Inouye Takuichi, a barber on Powell Street, Takuo had been born and educated in Japan. Suzue and Takuo married in 1936 and "lived happily ever after."³²

Many issei feared that dating, dancing, and close associations between the sexes would lead to unacceptable behaviour and perhaps even pregnancies. Their abhorrence of premarital sex and even social recreation involving young people of both sexes stands in sharp contrast to the acceptance of intimate relationships and premarital pregnancies among the young in villages in Japan where many issei

³²Inouye Takuo was an issei and thus was one of the first men to be sent to road-camp in the spring of 1942. He was sent to the present-day Yellowhead Highway area, at Lempriere. For further information, see Yon Shimizu, The Exiles: An Archival History of the World War II Japanese Road Camps in British Columbia and Ontario (Wallaceburg, ON: Shimizu Consulting and Publishing, 1993). The couple later settled in Salmon Arm, and raised eight children. Suzue has been widowed since 1969 but she has lived an active life surrounded by her grown children, and her in-laws. Interview, September 1992.

grew up. This has been well-documented by Japanese scholars and in English the detailed study The Women of Suye Mura by Robert J. Smith and Ella Lury Wiswell of a 1930s village in a remote area of Kumamoto prefecture richly documents the "sexual looseness" that was an accepted part of the villagers' lives.³³ The society depicted in the village Smith and Wiswell call "Suye Mura" was not unlike that in the home villages of Hiroshima emigrants who went to Canada in the 1910s and later. Another example of the difference between issei goals for their children and the Japanese realities they left behind is the high expectations that my father, who had grown up in a remote mountainous village in a family that could barely feed itself, had for me. He insisted that I should take lessons on the *koto* [Japanese harp], an instrument that was played by only the elite and the rich, and certainly by no members of his family when he was growing up. With the exception of the well-to-do strata in the countryside, young Japanese peasants commonly chose their own marriage partners, but the issei believed marriages were between families and that the parents choose their child's spouse and they told their children that this was the way Japanese marriages were made. The nisei, most of whom merely wanted to emulate their white peers, could not understand nor sympathize with their parents' fears and demands.

For the nisei, the struggle was not just against their parents, and the Japanese community at large. Differences between the social customs of the issei

³³Robert J. Smith and Ella Lury Wiswell, The Women of Suye Mura (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

and those of Anglo society made it difficult to relax outside their own nisei groups. "Neither comfortable in the larger society nor in the Japanese society, they developed their own particular subculture."³⁴ This was written about the American nisei but is applicable to the Canadian nisei as well. In their own ranks the offspring of Hiroshima emigrants combined various aspects of their two cultures. Nisei participated in concerts organized for the entertainment of the Japanese community. As a child, I recall Hiroshima prefectural society concerts held at the Japanese Language School with nisei performers in Japanese language plays as well as English language skits. George and Lily Shishido, the adult children of Shishido Masaichi, sang modern Japanese songs and nisei Roy Kumano and his harmonica band entertained the audience with both Japanese and American popular songs. Japanese dancing, as well as Western tap-dancing by young children were also features of the programme.

Although some nisei, such as Hiroshi Okuda, had enough ability to play soccer at the University of British Columbia and others like Akira Okimura shone in rugby at Britannia High School, the majority of nisei participated in sports only within their ethnic community.³⁵ Nisei were very involved in sports within the

³⁴Mei Nakano, Japanese American Women: Three Generations, 1890-1990 (Berkeley: Mina Press Publishing, 1990), p. 104.

³⁵A rare exception was Masao "Massa" Kuwabara, the eldest son of Kuwabara Bunpei of Victoria. The August 31, 1940 Victoria Daily Colonist had a headline, "Tillicum Athletes Win City Baseball Honors" and in a sub-headline noted: "Double by [catcher] Massa Kuwabara Sends Across Two Runs in Last Frame."

Japanese community. Japanese martial arts such as jūdō and kendō [fencing] was practised. According to T. K. Shoyama, the editor of The New Canadian, its circulation was high due to the regular sports columns reporting on activities in such sports as badminton, basketball, bowling, and baseball. The most popular game was baseball. Virtually every company town fielded a Japanese baseball team but the famous Asahi players were the dazzling stars.

The Asahi Baseball Team were the local heroes in Vancouver. Possible recruits came not only from the hometown but from every surrounding town, village and farming area and even from south of the border. Wearing the Asahi uniform and being part of this illustrious group of ball players was the dream of every boy.³⁶

Sons of Hiroshima emigrants were in this "top gate attraction."³⁷ Tom Matoba, who is reputed to be the first nisei born in Cumberland, was on the first team in 1914; he appears in the photograph of the 1915 team.³⁸ Reputedly a "slugger" and an excellent fielder until 1930, he was called the Babe Ruth of Japanese Canadian baseball.³⁹ Gakuto Hayami (1904-1993), the second son of Hayami Kometarō and Kise (see Chapter 7) and also, Mickey Shigeru Satō (1908-1967), the son of Satō Mohei and Matsuyo were on the Asahi team in their

³⁶Pat Adachi, Asahi: A Legend in Baseball (Etobicoke, ON: Coronex Printing and Publishing Ltd., 1992), p. 5.

³⁷In the introduction, William Hunter noted that "By the late 1920s the Asahis were the top gate attraction on the coast and they joined the prestigious Senior City League at Athletic Park." *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 10.

³⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 19, 2.

youth.⁴⁰ George Shishido, not only was well-known for his singing voice but also as an athlete who played second base and shortstop for the Asahi team.⁴¹

The son of Kaminishi Kannosuke, Kōichi (Kaye) Kaminishi (1922-), who had been sent to Japan as a child also made the team. When he returned to Canada at the age of eleven after the sudden death of his father, he was a misfit. Only when he joined the Asahi at age sixteen did he feel comfortable with his fellow nisei.

Playing against the tall Caucasian opponents did not faze him. There was no discrimination in baseball. Wearing the Asahi uniform for the first time made him so proud he was unable to sleep at night.⁴²

The Asahi baseball team was the pride of the Japanese community. It provided hours of entertainment for men and women whose lives were very dull and difficult.⁴³ For the sons and daughters of Hiroshima and other Japanese Canadians an exciting aspect of the team was that it earned the respect of the white community. Here was something in which the Japanese could hold their

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 22, 64.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 83.

⁴²Ibid., p. 45 When I interviewed Kaye in Kamloops in September 1992, he proudly showed me his Asahi uniform—his most prized possession to this day.

⁴³I recall with considerable nostalgia attending Asahi baseball games with my father. He was a rather stern but dedicated father who worked long hours as a carpenter to support our family. I suspect that he had little joy in his life but in the bleachers at Powell Street Grounds he was a completely different person from his usual sober self, cheering the team on, chatting with his contemporaries and harassing the umpire. The Asahi brought out in him a side that I would otherwise have never known.

own; nay, even outdo the whites. The Asahi played not only against other Japanese teams within British Columbia, the United States and Japan, but at different times played in the Vancouver leagues such as the Terminal, the Burrard-Commercial, the Burrard, often winning the championships. They thrilled nisei, issei, and white spectators "with their brilliant fielding, pitching and spectacular running games."⁴⁴

Roy Kumano's harmonica band and another instrumental band provided a focus for the musically minded. There were also nisei church groups, and the University of British Columbia Japanese Students' Club, where nisei met and socialized, although some believed that all-nisei groups encouraged undesirable insularity. An editorial in The New Canadian in 1939, expressed concern that nisei clubs were "tending much too strongly towards an increasing isolation of the Nisei from the community as a whole. Instead of aiding the process of contact and assimilation, these social functions, by monopolizing the entire interest of an individual definitely retards this process."⁴⁵

But not all second-generation Japanese Canadians were comfortable within nisei society. There were some who had experienced little exposure to other nisei except perhaps within a Japanese school setting and thus felt alienated from fellow nisei. Others, from overwhelmingly strict traditional families could not

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 5.

⁴⁵The New Canadian, March 1, 1939.

adjust to the dual culture of the nisei. Nisei were definitely not a homogeneous group.

The burden of the nisei was that they were told that delinquent behaviour would bring shame "not only to themselves, . . . but to their parents, the family, the community, and finally by extension, to the entire race."⁴⁶ Such teaching was a potent method of control. Parents exhorted children to follow proper Japanese social protocol so that the family would not be shamed. And yet this "proper behaviour" was much stricter than what the parents themselves had complied with in Japan. In Canada obedience to parental wishes was stressed above all else. In the face of this, some nisei gave up their romantic attachments and reluctantly agreed to marry mates chosen by their parents. Others rebelled in a variety of ways; some eloped. But such action aroused gossip and damaged the reputations of the principals as well as their families.

The family was supposed to be paramount. Nisei children who had jobs were expected to add their earnings to the family coffers. Most complied, but a few refused, especially if their fathers were squandering family income on gambling and liquor. George Inouye (1921-) spent a few years in Japan, between the ages of eight and eleven. (See Chapter 7.) He was brought back to Canada by his father when he was eleven years old after his mother died, and lived with a foster family and attended school. But when he was fifteen he went to a camp at Stave Falls to cut cedar bolts. He worked with his father until he was seventeen

⁴⁶ Mei Nakano, Three Generations, p. 105.

and then left to become independent. George said his father had always taken his earnings and spent them for the father's own pleasure and for medical care.

George said his father had always complained of stomach ulcers and rheumatism, but that his ill-health had probably been the result of years of imbibing. At any rate, George was not sympathetic to his father and chose to free himself from parental control. It took courage to decide to ignore what would naturally be the negative opinion of the Japanese community.

In nisei, the acculturation to be "Japanese" that created confusion in childhood induced ambivalent feelings and at times resentment about their dual identity as products of both Canadian and Japanese culture. Toyo Takata (1920-) who grew up in Esquimalt, was the only Japanese in his high school in the late 1930s. Although he socialized freely with his non-Japanese classmates, he never dared to date any of them and could only wish that he were white.⁴⁷ The same desire to be like non-Japanese contemporaries is revealed in writings by female nisei that appear in The New Canadian from 1938 to 1949 who have been studied by Stephanie Jean Marie Camelon. In it nisei women eloquently expressed their confusion, frustrations, and eagerness to gain social acceptance as Canadians. Many of the writers of the articles before mid-1942 were students at the University of British Columbia at a time when few nisei, especially females, were able to receive such an education. These young women were exceptionally anxious to shed the restraints of parental control and racism and freely live as

⁴⁷Interviews on a number of occasions.

Canadian citizens in an Anglo-Canadian milieu.⁴⁸ As Marilyn Iwama who has studied the poetry of such young nisei women wrote:

One way for the nisei to try and resolve the tension of being discriminated against by their fellow Canadians was to erase the difference they believed lay at the root of discrimination. Thus they integrated even more the symbols of the dominant rejecting culture, in this case poetic forms, into their cultural memory. These nisei poets reveal a strong conviction, or hope, that they share an identity more with their non-Japanese Canadian classmates than with their very "Japanese" parents.⁴⁹

Hyang-Sae Kang's recent study of the experiences of nisei women living in Winnipeg from 1942 to the present offers an interesting contrast to the young nisei women whom Camelon wrote about. Kang studied twenty-three nisei women, dividing them into three groups according to the decades in which they were born. She found that over the years a change in the degree of their acculturation occurred. Of particular interest here is the group of Kang's nisei women that was born in the 1910s. They had spent "their childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood in institutionalized ethnic communities."⁵⁰ Of the three groups, they had been the most influenced by traditional Japanese culture and all

⁴⁸The New Canadian, "The Voice of the Second Generation," published its first edition on November 24, 1938 and after February 1, 1939 was printed weekly. Stephanie Jean Marie Camelon, "Sandwiches or Sushi?": Second Generation Japanese Canadian Women and The New Canadian, 1938-1949" (M.A. thesis, University of Victoria, 1996).

⁴⁹Marilyn Iwama, "If You Say So: Articulating Cultural Symbols of Tradition in the Japanese Canadian Community," Canadian Literature 140 (spring 1994): 20.

⁵⁰Hyang-Sae Kang, M.A. thesis, p. 69. This study was mentioned briefly in this chapter.

spoke fluent Japanese. The majority had had arranged marriages, some to issei men. Their education stopped at about grade eight due to the economic situation of their families and to the limited occupations that were open to them. After marriage most of them had worked at home and on the farm. They told Kang:

I washed my younger sisters' diapers, when I was still nine years old. I went through all these hardships. Although everybody says that the oldest is lucky. It's not true.

We could not finish school. The older one had to help look after little ones at even exam time.⁵¹

These women had not had the "privilege" of being exposed to the dominant Anglo society that Camelon's New Canadian writers yearned to enter completely. These studies of Camelon and Kang emphasize differences among the nisei population. The environment inside and outside the home, the decade in which one grew up, and education, all had their impact.

The dilemma of the young nisei was capsulized accurately by a December 22, 1939, editorial in The New Canadian:

In the years to come . . . the Nisei will find himself caught between two crossfires—between the Japanese community and the rest of Canadian society. It will require the utmost in moral courage and sincerity to battle criticism and prejudice on two sides.⁵²

Although at home and at Japanese language school considerable effort had been made to engender a pride of belonging to a "worthy people with a centuries-

⁵¹Ibid., p. 70.

⁵²The New Canadian, December 22, 1939.

old cultural heritage," this had met with varying degrees of success.⁵³ In many respects, the nisei reluctantly or otherwise accepted their parents' ways, customs, and demands, because the nisei desired their parents' approval. If they did not accede to their parental wishes they felt that they were selfish and self-serving. Try as they might, their behaviour was often not considered acceptable by many issei. Some issei thought they understood what the problem was and tried to remedy the situation. In the March 15, 1941 issue of the Daily People, published by the Camp and Mill Workers Union, an executive member of the CMWU, Sada Shōji, bemoaned the low morality and the crime rate among nisei. He attributed what he saw as a breakdown in public morality and discipline to the confusion wrought by the two ideologies of Japan and Canada, Japanese familism and Canadian individualism. The CMWU began an active campaign to provide wholesome entertainment and educational seminars and services in order to "not aggravate the antagonism of the white populace" that Sada and others feared nisei immorality and crime would trigger.⁵⁴ Unfortunately it is unclear what positive measures if any the CMWU did take actually in its "active campaign."

Trying to master an impossibly precarious balancing act, many nisei developed a sense of inferiority to the white community. This sense was reinforced by the second class citizenship that was their lot in British Columbia.

⁵³Adachi, Enemy, p. 158.

⁵⁴Tamura Norio, "Nikka Minshū shūka jijō-nichibei kanson to Bankūba-Local 31" [Last Issue Circumstances of the Daily People—the Japan-USA War and Vancouver Local 31], Communication Kagaku (June 1995) no. 3:31.

Public segregation in movie theatres, exclusion and discriminatory practices in public facilities, racism which denied them the franchise and consequently barred them from certain professions and areas of work, the "racialization of labour" which permitted only menial, lower paying positions—all seriously affected feelings of self-worth. Even the 1925 Male Minimum Wage Law passed by the B.C. Legislature was modified so Asians would receive a lower rate.⁵⁵ Yet not all nisei cowered, there were determined young people who took positive steps to make fresh beginnings in what they hoped would be less restrictive environments. Some travelled eastward to Toronto and Ottawa; some on the other hand, like Kazuma Uyeno, the eldest son of Uyeno Ritsuichi, went to Japan to work for an English language newspaper in Tokyo.

In the light of such individualistic actions of some nisei, it is obviously not possible to generalize about the ultimate legacy of the attempted "acculturation" of the nisei to their Japanese heritage that took place in the Japanese Canadian communities of the 1930s. Peter Nunoda has studied the leaders of the nisei organizations such as the Japanese Canadian Citizens Association that was first formed in 1932, was reestablished in 1936 as the Japanese Canadian Citizens League, and again in 1947 as the National Japanese Canadian Citizens Association. He claimed that these nisei organizations were the bailiwick of mainly university graduates and did not represent the majority of young nisei who were labourers concerned more with wages, hours of work and survival than with

⁵⁵Young and Reid, Japanese Canadians, p. 49.

the electoral franchise. And that although "the Nisei leaders were ready to assert themselves among their own people . . . they were ill-prepared to do the same in the wider community," and that lacking self-confidence, they "abdicated their responsibilities" as illustrated by the fact that in the struggle against the Canadian government concerning repatriation of the Japanese Canadians and better compensation for the sale of Japanese Canadian property during the war, the nisei subordinated themselves to the opinions of white middle class liberals in the Cooperative Committee of Japanese Canadians (CCJC) and allowed these liberals to make all the decisions, believing that "without the aid of the CCJC they would be politically powerless."⁵⁶ Nunoda's criticisms are much too harsh because he has not taken into consideration the attitudes of that period. Roberto Perin has observed in 1983 that "energetic and dedicated men . . . were effective only insofar as they could recruit Canadian opinionmakers to their cause" in the Jewish refugees' crisis and the evacuation of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War.⁵⁷ Nunoda need only study the National Association of Japanese Canadians' struggle in the 1980s for redress of the wartime injustices to see that without "the powerful unifying voice for Canadians from all backgrounds" there

⁵⁶Peter Takaji Nunoda, "A Community in Transition and Conflict: The Japanese Canadians, 1935-1951" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Manitoba, 1991), p. 398.

⁵⁷Roberto Perin, "Clio as an Ethnic: The Third Force in Canadian Historiography," Canadian Historical Review 64:4 (1983): 466.

was no chance of success.⁵⁸ Nunoda did mention the disagreements within the Japanese Canadian community—that with regard to the property claims, there were many outspoken dissenters and the final decision of the NJCCA to acquiesce to the advice of the CCJC was an extremely difficult decision. Yet he still concluded that the leaders had lacked the self-confidence to refuse to agree with the CCJC.

I believe that rather than manifesting the weakness of the nisei, the struggle in the late 1940s emphasises the fact that the nisei were not all alike, that they varied in their opinions and behaviour—some were very outspoken and aggressive while some wanted to halt the whole process of appeal so as not to attract undesired attention or criticism from the white populace. If there was such a wide variation of reactions and behaviour among the nisei and if we attribute it to the degree of "acculturation," can we say that there are differences in values between Asian and European culture as Gary Okihiro stated in his Margins and Mainstreams: Asians in American History and Culture?⁵⁹ In this book Okihiro claimed that family responsibility, personal sacrifice, and spirituality are Asian characteristics; and that individual freedom, pursuit of happiness, and materialism are European ones. Numerous Canadian and American scholars of the lives of Japanese immigrants in North America have similarly drawn up lists of Japanese

⁵⁸Roy Miki and Cassandra Kobayashi, Justice in our Time: The Japanese Canadian Redress Settlement (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1991), pp. 112-15.

⁵⁹Gary Okihiro, Margins and Mainstreams: Asians in American History and Cultures (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), p. 140.

and non-Japanese characteristics. Gordon Hirabayashi, for example, listed ten Japanese qualities to which the Japanese immigrants to Canada had been socialized and have therefore passed on to the nisei. They were, briefly—a sense of the group or communality; a strong sense of obligation and gratitude; a sense of sympathy and compassion for others; a strong sense of "we" versus "they"; an underlying emotionality and excitability which is controlled by a somewhat compulsive attention to details, plans, rules; a willingness to work and to persevere toward long-range goals; devotion to parents, and an especially strong and long-enduring tie to the mother persisting in almost its childhood form; an emphasis on self-effacement and a tendency to avoid taking responsibility for the actions of oneself or others; a tendency toward understanding and an emphasis on non-verbal communication; and a pleasure in the simple things of life.⁶⁰ Are we to assume that all Canadian nisei have these "Japanese" characteristics? Clearly, we cannot.

Is there such a large difference between Japanese and western cultural behaviour? In recent years due to the worldwide business successes of Japanese companies, speculation regarding "the Japanese way" and "the Western way" has become a popular pastime. Japanese "group society" has been proffered by westerners and Japanese alike as stereotypical, but scholarly and analytical

⁶⁰Gordon Hirabayashi, "The Japanese Canadian Identity: How We Perceive Ourselves," in The Japanese Experience in North America: Papers and Proceedings, N. Brian Winchester, Laurel H. Fujimagari and Akira Ichikawa, eds., (Lethbridge: Dept. of Political Science, University of Lethbridge, 1977), pp. 26-28.

literature featuring such discussions refutes it thoroughly. Outstanding examples of this refutation and such discussions are Ross Mouer and Yoshio Sugimoto's Images of Japanese Society and Yamazaki Masakazu's Individualism and the Japanese. Mouer and Sugimoto emphasized that it was wrong to treat the Japanese as "a homogeneous whole," to create stereotypes and to emphasize differences between peoples rather than similarities.⁶¹ In the same vein as Mouer and Sugimoto, Yamazaki claimed that individualism had always existed in Japan, especially in merchant societies, but even within agricultural society peasants had been eager for technical innovations.⁶²

The above arguments, that Japanese and Western society do not differ so radically and that common Japanese stereotypes are misleading, may be valid. Yet, my personal experiences and knowledge of the Japanese Canadian community, and especially of nisei characteristics force me to insist that Hirabayashi's opinions cannot be dismissed. Nisei do have behavioural and cultural characteristics which are judged by they themselves to be Japanese. Bill Hosokawa, an American nisei journalist with Hiroshima roots noted this about American nisei in the 1930s:

That they lived under unusual cultural, social and economic pressures is undeniable. Their Japanese cultural heritage demanded respect of elders,

⁶¹Ross Mouer and Yoshio Sugimoto, Images of Japanese Society (London, Eng.: Kegan Paul International Limited, 1986), p. 405.

⁶²Yamazaki Masakazu, Individualism and the Japanese, trans. Barbara Sugihara (Tokyo: Japan Echo Inc., 1994), p. 31.

filial piety even to the point of sacrificing one's personal desires and ambitions, unquestioning respect of authority, a deep sensitivity to the opinions of one's peers, a sense of group rather than individual responsibility.⁶³

Yet the degree to which nisei manifested such characteristics definitely varied, depending upon the degree of their "acculturation" into Japanese behaviour brought about by the family and community environment in which they had been raised, as well as disparities in individual personalities.

⁶³Bill Hosokawa, Nisei: the Quiet American (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1969, reprint ed., Niwot, CO: University Press of Colorado, 1992), p. 172.

CHAPTER 9
CONCLUSION

The Hiroshima emigrants' story began in 1853 with Commodore Perry and his demands to the Tokugawa rulers that precipitated the Meiji Restoration of 1868 and the consequent social and economic problems the new regime's rapid modernization created. In Meiji times the peasants, most of whom for centuries had barely eked out a living, were further burdened with increased taxation and the loss of cottage industries. *Dekasegi* emigration, which began in 1885 to Hawaii, was a hopeful solution—not only to relieve the impoverished peasants but also to bring foreign dollars into the country. The push-pull effect of this emigration led to further movement toward North America, South East Asia, and later to Central and South America, as well as to colonized countries such as Korea and Taiwan.

Japanese emigration to Canada is purported to have started in 1877 and at first it was a mere trickle. The first sizeable group from Hiroshima prefecture went under contract to the Union Collieries in Cumberland in 1891. The difficult experiences of these one hundred "miners" did not deter others from following. In fact, many others from Hiroshima gravitated to the Cumberland area. At times those who were here urged others to come but often fellow villagers asked those who had left to help them go to Canada. I found that the majority of the

Hiroshima emigrants had originated from areas very close to present day Hiroshima city, the counties of Aki, Asa, and Saeki. (See Map 2.) By the middle of the Meiji era, those three counties were very heavily populated, the farms were small, and the peasants inhabiting them were suffering from the consequences of industrialization: loss of markets for cash crops and the ruination of cottage industries. The construction of the deep-sea port of Ujina had also played havoc with the nearby seashore and waters on which many depended for their livelihood. It was necessary for the young men in these areas to make a fresh start in some other endeavour or in some other area of the country or world.

The Japanese immigrants to British Columbia congregated to form communities not unlike Japanese villages where people socialized together and assisted each other. The communities in Canada were scattered along the west coast of British Columbia in company towns. Powell Street in Vancouver became the main location where the Japanese settled and from which people and goods left for the remote areas. In Japan town in the Powell Street area there were organizations such as the Canadian Japanese Association and the prefectural associations to which the Japanese could reach out for aid and companionship. The Hiroshima emigrants gravitated towards boarding houses and contracting companies run by immigrants from their home prefecture. Powell Street was where most of these facilities were available. The overt hostility of white mainstream society drove the Japanese emigrants to associate with and to take solace in each other.

Anti-Asian prejudice which had led to institutional racism, and thus permitted only second class status to the Japanese immigrants was not meekly accepted by them. They responded actively to this treatment in such ways as discussed by James C. Scott. Scott has investigated how the dominated resist those who dominate them by "a hidden transcript," a "backstage discourse," and "by engendering a subculture and by opposing its own variant form of social domination against that of the dominant elite."¹ One of the ways in which this "hidden transcript" operated was in the retention of cultural identity by the Japanese community, for "culture [is] a medium in which power is both constituted and resisted."² Away from the white society they attempted to "acculturate" the nisei with pride in their heritage so that their offspring would not cower before Anglo society. Exhorted to out-perform their classmates in public school and in the work-place, the nisei were taught that the Japanese were morally and intellectually superior to their persecutors. But the issei and the nisei also hoped to improve the Japanese Canadians' marginal status.

The issei's agenda for the political franchise included using enlistment in the armed services during World War I. This worked at least to some extent because in 1931, the Japanese Canadian veterans were finally allowed to vote. Since the Japanese were not permitted to work on Crown land, some bought

¹James C. Scott, Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), pp. xii, 27.

²Nicholas B. Dirks, Geoff Eley, and Sherry B. Ortner, eds., Culture/Power/History (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 6.

tracts of forest land that were privately owned and developed large enterprises as did Kaminishi and Sasaki. When the white farmers began to agitate for an Alien Land Law such as existed in the United States, the Japanese farmers acted quickly to defuse this move. They also called upon the Japanese consul in Vancouver for support and interference with the British government whenever they decided that their dignity had been assaulted.

According to Michel Foucault: "Power is simply what the dominant class has and the oppressed lack. . . . It is a strategy, and the dominated are as much a part of the network of power relations and the particular social matrix as the dominating. As a complete strategy spread throughout the social system in a capillary fashion, power is never manifested globally, but only at local points as "micro-powers."³ The power of the white capitalists over the Japanese labourers was clearly manifested in the remarks made by Richard H. Alexander, the manager of the Hastings Mill, to the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration. For the company to be competitive in the markets of the world, he argued that "they should be here to supply that proportion of cheap labour in order that we may employ a larger number of whites." (See Chapter 4.) But the negotiators for this "proportion of cheap labour" were the Japanese "bosses" who maximized THEIR profits by recruiting a large number of Japanese workers to work for low wages. In remote areas these "bosses" profited by the percentages

³David Cousens Hoy, "Power, Repression, Progress: Foucault, Lukes and the Frankfurt School," *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, ed. David Cousens Hoy (Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1986), p. 134.

they took on the food and goods they provided. They worked closely with the suppliers who also profitted. This linkage was apparent in the 1920 strike in Swanson Bay when half of the Japanese strikers were lured back to work by the "bosses," and the supplier of goods, the Maekawa store on Powell Street advertised for strike breakers. (See Chapter 7.) When the Japanese Labour Union was organized, the "elite" of Powell Street fought hard to undermine it and its "voice," the Daily People by refusing to advertise in it, and the Daily People tried to counteract it by operating a free employment agency.

As we have seen earlier, the Japanese consul to whom the issei had turned for help in the early days whenever the British Columbia Legislature passed laws which discriminated against the Japanese, helped the cause of the issei by appealing to Japan. Japan, in turn, petitioned Britain on the basis of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, Britain contacted the federal government, and the latter then ordered the provincial Legislature to repeal the discriminatory law. In 1925 the Japanese consul, Kawai Tatsuo, tried to increase consular power over the issei by attempting to control the Vancouver Japanese Language School. He did manage to take control of the Canadian Japanese Association and ousted from it the Labour Union leaders who had been making use of some power themselves. (See Chapter 7.)

There was also a power conflict between the first and second generations. The issei had an upper hand while the nisei were young or small in number. The elders demanded strict obedience to their wishes, whether in social relationships,

marriages, or claims on earnings. They controlled by emphasizing strict adherence to Japanese social behaviour and customs, and with blackmailing comments such as, "What will others say?"

Of course the attitudes of white companies, as expressed by R. H. Alexander, persisted over the years as they continued to perpetuate the "split-labour market." The strike at the Alberta Mill discussed in Chapter 7 emphasized the extent to which white companies would go to preserve their advantage over the Japanese workers. The mill repeatedly lowered the wages of the Japanese workers until they struck in desperation; then the company hired white veterans to break the doomed strike. (See Chapter 7.) Clearly, there were tiers of power throughout the whole fabric of society in which the Japanese Canadians lived.

My research corroborated the fact that the theories of power of Scott and Foucault aptly accounted for the directions that the pioneers took. Although the Japanese immigrants encountered many obstacles in British Columbia, they did not always meekly submit to unfair treatment by the dominant society. Instead, they actively shaped their own lives, making modifications, trying new avenues of approaches, at times boldly facing antagonists (as Yamaga and the berry farmers did) and never giving up.

As dreams of returning home with a nest-egg faded, wives were requested from Japan and the picture brides arrived. Before they came, these adventurous women had no conception of what their future held. Some emigrated just to go

to "*Amerika*," some because they were obedient daughters and did as their parents requested, a few came to avoid spinsterhood, and others to escape the possible trials of a mother-in-law. None expected the hard lives that they had to endure. These women may have escaped the friction of in-laws, but they also lost the kinship support system they would have had in their homeland. Yet they endured, for the sake of the children that inevitably were born.

As the years went by, the hopes and habits of the immigrants were modified. Isolated from the mainstream, at first they clung to their old ways still dreaming of returning to Japan, and they registered their children's births with the Japanese government. According to a survey conducted in 1935, 85.8 percent of the nisei had dual citizenship.⁴ The issei tried to give their children the upbringing of children raised in Japan. But of course, they imagined a different situation in Japan than the one they themselves had experienced: better than their own childhood. Dreaming of living in Japan with hopefully a bigger farm, a grander house, or a respectable business, they tried to mould children who would fit into a well-to-do stratum in Japan. Thus they "acculturated" their offspring in what they believed would be the life style of the family when it succeeded in returning to Japan with its savings.

As the decades passed, many Hiroshima emigrants were forced to accept the inevitable. The issei realized that in spite of all their efforts, their dreams

⁴Special Collections, University of British Columbia, Canadian Japanese Association, Report of the Survey of the Second Generation Japanese in British Columbia, 1935.

were out of reach. Their children were becoming westernized; many of them would likely not fit into society in Japan so the family's future was perhaps to be in Canada. Yet because of the prejudice in British Columbia the issei realized the path ahead would be rocky for their children. Thus the issei tried to instill in the nisei a pride in their Japanese heritage. And so, the "acculturation" in the homes and the Japanese schools continued but for a different reason than before.

In spite of the issei's efforts, indoctrination in Japanese culture was not wholly successful. Many nisei were confused regarding appropriate behaviour in both Western and Japanese societies and never developed facility in either English or Japanese languages. As a result, many nisei were uncomfortable in both societies, some self-conscious and some feeling inferior to the mainstream population.

In 1941, power within the Japanese Canadian society was still in the hands of a small established elite, but despite great odds, the CMWU sympathizers were increasing in number. The nisei were still considered "*namaiki*" [brash, impertinent] by the issei who stubbornly hung on to their power. There were a number of university-educated nisei who were expressing themselves in The New Canadian: clearly they declared that they were Canadians first and foremost. At the same time, vast numbers of nisei laboured, as their father and mothers had before them, unable to see a bright future but hoping for one. Gradual changes within the community would inevitably have taken place as the issei aged and the nisei matured. However, the bombing of Pearl Harbor by Japan on December 7,

1941 and the expulsion of the Japanese Canadians from the west coast led to the destruction of this society, never to be rebuilt again.

To a considerable extent, this study of emigrants from Hiroshima prefecture is also a portrait of the pre-war Japanese society in British Columbia. But it is by no means the whole story. There are many more regional groups of emigrants besides the Hiroshima people and reasons for emigration varied. Moreover, the lives immigrants led in Canada were influenced by the regional backgrounds of a number of different home prefectures. The research needs to be continued.

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 Inouye Hatsuno (Burnaby, 1991, 1992)
 Kado Shizuo (Burnaby, November 1992)
 Kado Tokuyo (Burnaby, November 1992)
 Kazuta Kiyoso (Vancouver, September 1995)
 Kitagawa Kotoma (Vancouver, September 1992)
 Kubota Tamako (Lethbridge, October 1993)
 Kumamoto Toshiko (Vancouver, August 1992)
 Miura Suguye (Onomichi, May 1993)
 Nakamura, Yuki (Victoria, 1990)
 Niiya Yukio (Montreal, October 1992)
 Okihiro Kōichirō (Toronto, October 1992)
 Takata Motoko (Hiroshima, April 1993)

In English:

Takeru Araki (Vancouver, July 1993)
 Michi Ashikawa (Toronto, October 1992)
 Sharon Ault (Port Alberni, February 1995)
 George Doi (Surrey, September 1992)
 Manabu Doi (Toronto, October 1992)
 Chieko Endo (Montreal, October 1992)
 Suzue Enomoto Inouye (Salmon Arm, September 1992)
 Frank Fudemoto (Ottawa, October 1992)
 Toshi Sasaki Fudemoto (Ottawa, October 1992)
 Douglas Funamoto (Montreal, October 1993)
 George Funamoto (Hamilton, October 1993)
 Kathleen Hayami (Montreal, October 1992)
 Buck Higashi (Sooke, September 1993)
 Harold Hirose (Toronto, October 1993)
 Sachi Hirahara (Hiroshima, April 1993)
 Roy Honda (Hamilton, November 1992)

Ruth Ishihara Horibe (Montreal, October 1992)
Hatsumi Uyeno Hosoi (Kobe, April 1993)
Beverley Inouye (Burnaby, 1990-1996)
George Inouye (Barriere, BC, September 1992)
Mitsuko Maehara Ito (Hamilton, November 1992)
David Iwaasa (Tokyo, April 1993)
Hanae Iwaasa-Robbs (Lethbridge, October 1993)
Yasuko Iwaasa Hironaka (Lethbridge, October 1993)
Sachiye Iwaasa Karaki (Lethbridge, October 1993)
Eileen Yaguchi Izumi (Hamilton, November 1992)
Tom Kaga (Lethbridge, October 1993)
Koichiro Kaye Kaminishi (Kamloops, September 1992)
Mas Kawakami (Hiroshima, April 1993)
Alice Kudō (Montreal, October 1992)
Jack Kudō (Vancouver, August 1992)
Roland Kudō (Owen Sound, Ontario, May 1992)
Kathleen Kudō Merken (Montreal, October 1992)
Rose Satō Kutsukake (Toronto, October 1993)
Masao Kuwabara (Hamilton, July 1991)
Miyori Miyake Mayeda (Montreal, October 1992)
Sherry Kitagawa Mototsune (Hamilton, November 1992)
Paul Nakagawa (Toronto, October 1993)
George Nakano (Toronto, September 1995)
Jim Nishiyama (Victoria, September 1993)
Frank Ohno (Lethbridge, October 1993)
Fred Okimura (Montreal, October 1992)
Yeiko Itō Okita (Lethbridge, October 1993)
Yonesō Okita (Lethbridge, October 1993)
Hiroshi Okuda (Montreal, October 1992)
Fred Sasaki (Toronto, October 1992)
Henry Shibata (Montreal, October 1992)
George Shibata (Tokyo, April 1993)
Bob Shigehiro (Lethbridge, October 1993)
Tom Shigehiro (Lethbridge, October 1993)
Raye Matoba Shin (Mississauga, correspondence 1992-1996)
John Shintani (Vancouver, August 1992)
Lily Shishido (Toronto, October 1992)
Masato Sunada (Lethbridge, October 1992)
Toyo Takata (Victoria, October 1992 and on many other occasions)
George Takeyasu (Lethbridge, October 1993 and correspondence 1992-1996)
Eiji Tsukishima (Victoria, September 1993)
Mori Uyeno (Toronto, October 1992)